

Singing with Thanksgiving

-This summer I spoke about Singing with the Mind: how our singing is more than beautiful music or an emotionally moving experience.

While it may be those things, it is also a way for God to communicate truth and encouragement to us and a way for us to acknowledge those truths and encouragements together as a family of believers.

We looked at

Colossians 3:16-17, which Steve Hogan recently spoke about, as well.

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, (The focus is the communication between God and man, especially from God to man.)

with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms (striking the strings, instrumental) and hymns (praises to God) and spiritual songs (truths and encouragement), singing with **thankfulness [this is our focus for today; with the gratitude singing; adjective describing singing e.g. grateful, thankful; gracious, agreeable]** in your hearts to God.

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks [to give thanks with the character and example of Christ]** through Him to God the Father.

-Today what I thought that I would do is use the Psalms, which are in themselves songs to God with instrumental accompaniment, to help us 1) to see the importance of thankful singing, 2) to understand the purpose of thankful singing, 3) to know what to give thanks for in song and 4) the impact of thankful singing.

-Hopefully, you'll remember one thing from today that will cause you to sing thankfully.

Psalm 28:7 sums up nicely my entire message as it says:

The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart exults, And **with my song** I shall **thank** Him.

-It all begins with God's active kindness towards us – we have experiences that allow us to see that God actively helps and protects us, like overcoming a fear or facing financial difficulty.

-Seeing God at work in our lives produces in us a heart that trusts Him.

-And it produces a reminder that He will help us in the future.

-Then, the result of a heart that trusts in the kindness of God is thankful singing!

-Let's continue as we explore the Psalms to find out more specifically how to develop a heart that sings with thankfulness to our God.

Commanded vocally and instrumentally with purpose –

-First of all, we see that God's command to sing with thankfulness didn't originate with Paul in the New Testament. God made it clear throughout the Psalms.

-I found five verses that directly command us to sing with thanksgiving. Three of them make it clear that we are to sing with thanksgiving along with instruments.

Psalm 147:7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; Sing praises to our God **on the lyre,**

Psalm 33:2 Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre; **Sing praises** to Him with a harp of ten strings.

Psalm 95:2 Let us come before His presence with **thanksgiving,** Let **us** shout joyfully to Him **with psalms.**

-It is interesting to see that the commands are for 1) singing with your voice and 2) giving thanks with instruments as well. The thankful heart extends not only to the voice, but also to the musical instrument

as well as though it is an extension of the person.

-I've experience or you may have noticed it in musicians – their enthusiasm or countenance while playing; even in playing the rhythm instruments like the shaker or tambourine.

Psalm 150:3-5 makes it clear with what instruments we are praise Him.

Praise Him with trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre. Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals.

-Brass instruments, stringed instruments, tambourine, flute-like instruments and percussion. You can make a lot of joyful noise with those! It is pleasing to Him.

-God even uses the titles and subtitles of the Psalms to show us the purpose for thanksgiving.

Psalms written for the purpose of thanksgiving

-I found eight (8) Psalms that list Thanks or Thanksgiving in the title. It is interesting to note that they focus on the protecting and saving nature of God.

-Seven of them are thanksgiving for seeing God's character of justice, deliverance, salvation and goodness toward His people in rescuing them from their enemies.

-Thanksgiving is expressed in

- 1) watching God turn back or judge their enemies/opposition, **Psalm 9** [*A Psalm of Thanksgiving for God's Justice.*] **Psalm 136** [*Thanks for the LORD'S Goodness to Israel.*]
- 2) sparing them from death when facing their enemies, **Psalm 30, 116** [*Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Death.*]
- 3) His ultimate, eternal salvation – the Messiah, **Psalm 118** [*Thanksgiving for the LORD'S Saving Goodness.*]
- 4) restoration to their homeland out of their exile; showing His reconciliation with them, **Psalm 126** [*Thanksgiving for Return from Captivity.*] and
- 5) His merciful help to strengthen and embolden them with courage. **Psalm 138** [*Thanksgiving for the LORD'S Favor.*] :3 On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength in my soul.

-Our enemies may or may not be physical ones, but we can all relate to God's rescuing us from one or the other type of enemy.

-Maybe it is a family member or close friend who has slandered you or betrayed you in some way. God knows what it is like to be despised by each one of us, His creation, before He turned us to Himself. Jesus, as a man, was betrayed by one of His closest companions, Judas, and Peter denied Him just before His death sentence was pronounced, at His darkest human hour. God the Father and Jesus both can relate to our feelings of abandonment and are able to comfort us in the Holy Spirit.

-Maybe your enemies are internal like apathy, anxiety, nagging lust or fear. Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are, yet He did not give in to sin and He is able to direct us into the same strength which He found in the Scriptures and communion with His Father through the Holy Spirit.

-Psalm 100 is unique in that it does not focus on deliverance from our enemies, but it focuses exclusively on God's kingship and Lordship rule. It is a call to sing thankfully to Him for His eternal goodness and faithfulness to all peoples of all generations.

Psalm 100:1 [*All Men Exhorted to Praise God.*] [*A Psalm for Thanksgiving.*] Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.

-So then, even the titles of the Psalms teach us to thank God for being our Savior. And **Psalm 100:1** “Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.”, which we just looked at, helps us transition to our next point – that songs of thanksgiving are to be shared with others, not just sung alone; they are for everyone of God's creations.

-Just as Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 exhort us to teach and admonish one another as we sing, multiple Psalms give us the example of singing thankfully in a church congregation or, even, in the midst of unbelievers.

With and for others in the congregation and among all peoples

-It is interesting to recognize that all the verses related to singing thankfully, are verses that use the phrase “I will” in order to lead us by example. What it says to me is that singing with thanksgiving was a natural outflow from their hearts, not something that they were forced or coerced into doing. As we see the greatness and goodness and mercy of God, we should just overflow with songs of thanks to Him. It should almost be impossible to stop it from happening.

-It reminds me of **John 7:38** “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'”

-The first examples are Psalms to be sung in the congregation of the believers.

Psalm 35:18 I will give You **thanks in the great congregation**; I will praise You among a mighty throng.

Psalm 42:4 These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go along with the throng *and* lead them in procession to the house of God, With the voice of joy and **thanksgiving**, a multitude keeping festival.

Psalm 111:1 [*The LORD Praised for His Goodness.*] Praise the LORD! I will **give thanks** to the LORD with all *my* heart, **In the company of the upright and in the assembly**.

-Although they do not expressly use the words “singing or with song,” remember that these verses are extracted directly from the Jewish hymnal. So just as the Jewish believers would have done, they teach us to sing thankfully with one another.

-And, similarly, they teach us to fearlessly sing with thanksgiving among all of the peoples, which to the believing Jews, meant the unbelieving Gentiles.

-This was to testify to everyone about the greatness and glory of the one and only, magnificent God whom He had privileged them to represent. And now we, the Church, have the same charge given to us.

Psalm 18:49 Therefore I will **give thanks** to You among the nations, O LORD, **And I will sing** praises to Your name.

Psalm 57:9 I will **give thanks** to You, O Lord, **among the peoples**; I will **sing praises** to You among the nations.

Psalm 108:3 I will **give thanks** to You, O LORD, among the peoples, And I will **sing praises** to You among the nations.

Psalm 109:30 With my mouth I will **give thanks** abundantly to the LORD; And **in the midst of many** I will praise Him.

-So let's be known as the church that is always overflowing with thanksgiving to God. Whether it's in song or not! What a reputation that would be!

For what do we give thanks?

Psalm 107:8, 15, 21, 31 (*All identical*) Let them **give thanks** to the LORD for **His lovingkindness**, **And** for **His wonders** to the sons of men!

-I think that this verse gives us the key to the two primary things we are to give thanks for; God's nature and God's works. He said the same thing four times; God means it!

For the character/name of God

Psalm 69:30 I will praise the name of God **with song** And magnify Him **with thanksgiving**.

Psalm 118:28 You are my God, and I **give thanks** to You; *You are* my God, I extol You.

-Lovingkindness at least eleven (11) times. This is the equivalent of God's mercy. Sparing us from His punishment or wrath although we deserve those instead of His kindness. This is at the heart or center of all God's salvation. And we should be imitators of Him in it.

-Most of the time, God's goodness is paired with His lovingkindness. This means that, not only is God sparing us from the punishment that we deserve, but His very nature causes Him to be kind in everything that He does and all His ways. **Matthew 5:45** "...; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

Psalm 106:1 Praise the LORD! Oh **give thanks** to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalm 107:1 Oh **give thanks** to the LORD, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalm 118:1 Give **thanks** to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalm 118:29 Give **thanks** to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalm 136:1, 2, 3, 26 Give **thanks** to the LORD, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Give **thanks** to the God of gods, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Give **thanks** to the LORD of lords, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Give **thanks** to the God of heaven, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

-Similar to His goodness, thanks should be given for His righteousness. *God always does the right thing for us in the right way at the right time.*

Psalm 7:17 I will **give thanks** to the LORD according to His righteousness **And will sing praise** to the name of the LORD Most High.

-The first verse of Psalm 116, which is one of the Psalms of **Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Death**, says (**Psalm 116:1**) I love the LORD, **because** He hears My voice *and* my supplications.

-The very fact that the Lord of all creation, the Master of the Universe, would care to listen to us should on its own cause us to burst forth with love towards God our Father!

-But not only that He listens to us, he delights to let us make demands of Him! He pleads with us to bring our requests to Him.

-O, what a God we have to be thankful for!!!

-A fitting ending to this section on thanking God for who He is comes from:

Psalm 45:17 *I will cause* Your name to be remembered in all generations; Therefore the peoples will **give You thanks** forever and ever.

-We should purposefully praise and thank God in front of others so that He will not be forgotten and that will cause others to look to Him and give thanks to Him for all eternity – by His saving power!

-Not only are we to give thanks for who He is, but also for the things He has done. We began our worship service today by singing:

Psalm 105:1 Oh **give thanks** to the LORD, call upon His name; **Make known His deeds** among the peoples.

And the fact that it is to be done with joyful singing is emphasized by:

Psalm 107:22 Let them also offer sacrifices of **thanksgiving**, And tell of **His works with joyful singing**.

For the works/wonders of God

-What types of works and wonders were the Psalmists talking about?

-1) Not only did He keep the enemies from destroying the Israelites, he made them to be conquerors.

Psalm 30:1 I will extol You, O LORD, for You have lifted me up, And have not let my enemies rejoice over me.

-2) Those who trust in His lovingkindness, He makes productive and gives them security.

Psalm 52:9 "I will **give You thanks** forever, because You have done *it*," - made us to be like a green, olive tree planted in the house of the Lord.

-3) When we were talking about thanking God for who He is, we mentioned thanking Him that he hears us. That alone is amazing, but **Psalm 118:21** says "I shall **give thanks** to You, for You have answered me, And You have become my salvation." This is a reminder that, not only is God listening to us and wanting to hear from us, He is going to take action on our behalf.

-In the Beattitudes, Jesus describes our Father as providing all of our needs- food, clothing, shelter and that He, better than any father, knows what is good for us.

-4) We should praise Him for His law that keeps us out of trouble and on the right path.

Psalm 119:62 At midnight I shall rise to **give thanks** to You Because of Your *righteous ordinances*.

-When was the last time you got up at midnight to thank God for giving you His commandments?!

Psalm 138:1,2,4 I will **give You thanks** with all my heart; I will **sing praises** to You before the gods. I will bow down toward Your holy temple And give **thanks** to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; *For You have magnified Your word* according to all Your name.

All the kings of the earth will give **thanks** to You, O LORD, When they have heard *the words of Your mouth*.

-In the end, at the final judgment of God, all of the so-called rulers of the earth will give thanks to God when they hear the righteous decrees from His mouth. "From His mouth comes a sharp sword..."

-5) Lastly, we are to thank Him for who He has made us to be. We should not have an inferiority complex of any type if we think about and thank God that He designed each one of us in a specific way and with a special purpose. That should make you sing!

Psalm 139:14 I will **give thanks** to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.

Psalm 145:10 All Your works shall give **thanks** to You, O LORD, And Your godly ones shall bless You.

Psalm 9:1 I will **give thanks to the LORD with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders.**

Psalm 26:7 That I may proclaim with the **voice of thanksgiving** And declare all Your wonders.

-Let's conclude by looking at the benefits of thankful singing.

Benefits to God's exaltation, your soul's revival, others' encouragement/strengthening to trust God

-Isn't it so typical of God to give us something to do or obey that brings a benefit to us. He is always trying to do good for us; bless His name!

-1) Singing praises and thanksgiving to Him work to heal our soul. God ministers to our emotional needs as He makes us aware of how He is holding us up in the midst of our trials and the result is thankful singing.

Psalm 30:12 That *my soul may sing praise* to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will **give thanks** to You forever.

Psalm 42:4 These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go along with the throng *and* lead them in procession to the house of God, With the voice of joy and **thanksgiving**, a multitude keeping festival.

Psalm 142:7 "Bring my soul out of prison, So that I may give **thanks** to Your name; The righteous will surround me, For You will deal bountifully with me."

-It is so refreshing that you will feel like you have been released from a prison of your own making.

-2) The following is something that I never thought about before. **Psalm 44:8** says "In God we have boasted all day long, And we will **give thanks to Your name** forever. Selah."

-He fulfills our innate, almost uncontrollable, desire to boast or take pride in something. But rather than boasting in our own accomplishments or about some special trait we think that have, He does things for us that make it obvious that it could only be Him who brought it about.

-How many times have you heard people say that God must have spared them in the aftermath of a hurricane, flood or tornado? Or automobile collision? Or how often do you take time to think about the fact that every breath you take and every heartbeat you feel is granted to you by God?

-If not for His merciful nature, we would all of us be on the fast track to eternal punishment. Make your boast in God; our only hope of salvation from ourselves!

-3) Psalm 92:1 says "It is good to **give thanks** to the LORD And **to sing praises** to Your name, O Most High;"

-Not only is God Himself good, He wants us to experience goodness in ourselves.

-This type of goodness is experienced when we are generous toward others. God gives us money or goods or talents that we can use to bless others with. And as Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

-Because we are acting consistent with God's character the way that He made us in His image, we feel fulfilled and complete. One of the reasons that God places us in the fellowship of a church family is so that we can experience goodness as we serve one another. So sing praises of thanks to Him!

-4) Singing thanks to God gives you confidence and proof that you have been made righteous in Christ.

Psalm 119:7 I shall give **thanks** to You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments.

Psalm 140:13 Surely the righteous will **give thanks** to Your name; The upright will dwell in Your presence.

-It is only the righteous who will give thanks to God. He is a holy and righteous God. If you are not righteous or have not been given righteousness in your heart, you will not see any reason to bless the righteous God for any reason. In fact you will despise and spurn Him.

-So, when you catch yourself bursting out in thankful song to God Almighty, let it be an assurance of your salvation in our Lord Savior Jesus Christ.

-As we finish up, I want to share just a couple more observations I made during my preparation.

-An interesting general observation that I made is that giving thanks is often joined with singing praises to God. It is as though praising God in song is a form of thanksgiving to Him.

Psalm 30:4 Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, And **give thanks** to His holy name.

Psalm 100:4 Enter His gates **with thanksgiving** And His courts with praise. **Give thanks** to Him, bless His name.

-My hope and my prayer is that as a result of hearing this message, I will at some point in the future “catch” you bursting forth in a song of thanksgiving to God!

-I will post a copy on my notes on Sermon Audio in case you would like to read all of the verses for yourself.

-I'll finish by reading **Ephesians 5:18-20**:

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing [*ado to sing praise to God*] and making melody [*psallo to sing to stringed/instrumental music, to sing praises*] with your heart to the Lord;

always **giving thanks [to give thanks with the character and example of Christ]**

for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.