

A Call For Thanksgiving

(Psalm 100)

Scripture: **Psalm 100:1-5**

- 1 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.
- 2 Serve the LORD with gladness;
Come before Him with joyful singing.
- 3 Know that the LORD Himself is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.
- 4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving
And His courts with praise.
Give thanks to Him, bless His name.
- 5 For the LORD is good;
His lovingkindness is everlasting
And His faithfulness to all generations.

Intro: This morning we want to devote our service to Thanksgiving. This is after all the annual holiday set aside to give thanks. Thanksgiving is one of the busiest holidays of the year, with more people traveling to be together with family than at any other time of the year. This is the one day out of the year that all of us should reflect upon our God, and give Him thanks for all the good things He has done for us this year. I would encourage each of you to make a list of the many things God has done for you this year, and give Him praise and thanksgiving. For me personally, I praise God for healing me of a debilitating back injury. I thank Him daily for providing me with good health. I thank God for granting me the privilege of serving as your pastor-teacher. I thank God for each and every one of you. I thank God for the outcome of the presidential election. It is my prayer that Donald Trump and Mike Pence will seek God's help in making America great again. For as we know, God alone can make America great again!

Before turning to an exposition of Psalm 100, I would like to share Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation with you. It was in 1863 that President Abraham Lincoln designated the last Thursday in November as a day of national Thanksgiving, and called on all Americans to give thanks to God for the blessings they, as a people, had received during the previous year. *Lincoln's proclamation:*

The year that is drawing towards its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins (referring to the Civil War), hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union.”

Abraham Lincoln

President of the United States

I. Background: Psalm 100 is the only Psalm in the Psalter that has the title *A Psalm of Thanksgiving* attached to it. There are many *Psalms of Thanksgiving* but this is the only one with an inspired title. This brief but beloved psalm of only 5 verses calls on **all men** (v. 1a) **of all generations** (v. 5b) to give thanks and praise to the LORD. This dynamic and beautiful thanksgiving psalm has become one of the favorite psalms of countless Christians throughout the ages.

Psalm 100 is the last of a collection of *Enthronement Psalms* (93; 95-99), and many feel that it served as a fitting *Doxology* to this collection. As the name implies, the *Enthronement Psalms* anticipate the coming enthronement of Israel’s Messiah during His Millennial reign on earth as King of Kings

and LORD of Lords. In the *Enthronement Psalms* the psalmist exhorts all the people of the earth to acknowledge that the LORD (Yahweh) alone is the Great King, and the only One worthy of thanksgiving and praise. What is more, these *Enthronement Psalms* also warn against the folly of unbelief, a condition that had prevented the Israelites from entering into the promised rest in the land of Canaan (95:7b-11). A refusal to obey God's exhortations to obedience would lead to a hardened heart and forfeiture of one's promised temporal and spiritual rest now, and in the life to come (Hebrews 3:7-12).

II. Structure Nearly every Psalm has a structure. Psalms are poems, and as such, they are arranged in stanzas. The structure of psalm 100, as short as it is, is quite simple. *There are only two stanzas in this poem: verses 1-3, and verses 4-5.* Each stanza contains **three commands**, followed by *a reason why men should obey those commands.*

Stanza I—(Verses 1-3). Note the three commands in verse 1-2—**What?**

- v. 1 **Shout** joyfully to the LORD (Yahweh), all the earth.
- v. 2 **Serve** the LORD (Yahweh) with gladness;
Come before Him with joyful singing.

The reason follows in verse 3—Why?

- v. 3 **Know** that the LORD (Yahweh) He is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Stanza II—(Verses 4-5). Note the three commands in verse 4—**What?**

- v. 4 **Enter** His gates with thanksgiving, And His courts with praise.
Give thanks to Him;
Bless His name.

The reason follows in verse 5—Why?

- v. 5 **For** the LORD (Yahweh) is good;
His lovingkindness is everlasting,
And His faithfulness to all generations.

The psalm contains 7 imperatives—commands calling for action: **shout, serve, come, know, enter, give and bless.**

III. Exposition

Let's take a closer look at this marvelous little psalm together.

Did you notice to whom this Psalm is addressed? Verse 1 informs us that it is addressed to "all the earth," and the last verse (5) extends the psalm to "all generations." The importance of ascribing praise and thanksgiving to our God is applied to every person of every generation that has ever lived!

Webster's New World Dictionary defines the word thanksgiving as "**a formal public expression of thanks to God.**" There is something about giving corporate thanks to God that breaks down barriers between people, and brings about unity.

Theme: The Psalmist calls on all men to come before the LORD with praise and thanksgiving because He is God (vv. 1-3) and because He is good (vv. 4-5).

A. The LORD is deserving of praise and thanksgiving; **First, because He is God (vv. 1-3)**

People everywhere (**all the earth**; cf. 96:1; 97:1; 98:4) are commanded to **shout (cry out) . . . to the LORD**; they are not to be subdued in their praise of Him. Men are exhorted to **serve the LORD with gladness**. We are to come before Him **with joyful singing**, *in an attitude of exuberant worship and praise*.

The reason the LORD should be praised and worshiped joyfully is recorded in verse 3. Believers **know** that the LORD (Yahweh) is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.

Believers joyfully acknowledge that God is the sovereign LORD and Creator. He is the One who has made us, and not we ourselves. He is deserving of our praise and thanksgiving. As His people, we come before Him with joyful singing, thanksgiving, and worship because we are the sheep of His pasture.

We can never really be happy until we know that we are the sheep of His pasture. Not just that we are His people, but that we are the sheep of His pasture. In other words, we are the objects of His continual and constant care and concern. We are the recipients of His perpetual provision and protection. While this is a truth that we emphasize over and over again,

I'm afraid that many Christians develop a head-knowledge of this great truth from the Scripture, but they never experience it in their hearts. The sad fact is that many Christians fall apart when a crisis comes their way. They know God loves and cares for them in their heads, but not in their hearts! When we really know that the LORD, He is God, and it is He that has made us and not we ourselves, that we are His people, and we are the sheep of His pasture, then we won't be able to remain unresponsive and unenthusiastic any longer.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, a Russian dissident, was imprisoned in Siberia. He writes about the benefit he derived from his horrible experience: "It was only when I lay there on rotting prison straw that I sensed within myself the first stirrings of good. Gradually, it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes, not through states, nor classes, nor political parties, but right through all human hearts. So, bless you, prison, for having been in my life." What are the "prisons" in your life, presently, for which you need to praise the LORD?

B. The LORD is deserving of praise and thanksgiving; Secondly, because He is Good (vv. 4-5)

This second part of the psalm is a call for the saints to enter the gates of God's city, Jerusalem, and to enter His **courts** to offer up their **thanksgiving** sacrifices before Him.

The people are admonished to praise the LORD for His goodness, love, and faithfulness. These benefits endure from generation to generation. So every generation that experiences God's goodness, love, and faithfulness can join in praising Him as instructed in this **One-Hundredth Psalm**.

The two dominating notes in this psalm are *gladness* and *universality*. We cannot always sing in gladness, but we should not always sigh either. In the music of life there are minor notes, but there should also be swelling notes of triumph. **Six times** in three verses is this note of gladness struck (1, 2, 4). And with good reason, showing reverence for the God who claims our praise.

Universality. The Psalm begins and ends on this note: *all the earth* (v. 1a); *all generations* (v. 5b). We should take time to be impressed by this fact, because it was not until more than five hundred years later that the

door of the gospel was actually opened to the Gentiles. Clearly, then, the Psalm is prophetic, and as such, it reaches beyond even our time to the day when the prayer for Jesus' kingdom to come" will be fulfilled (Matt 5:1-7). We seem to be closer to His coming than ever before, and events are accelerating at an unprecedented pace. The spiritual values of the Psalm are for all believers now, but its primary interpretation is of Israel, (3) and its final interpretation, of all nations (v. 1a).

Charles Spurgeon said: "Nothing can be more sublime this side of heaven than the singing of this noble Psalm by a vast congregation."

You can pull yourself out of the shadows of life into the sunlight of His love by entering His gates with praise and thanksgiving. **Let us thank God this morning with a fresh proclamation of thanksgiving.** Sing Psalm 100 to Him! Thank God for your forgiveness of sin, for Christ's sacrifice in your place, for eternal life, for good health, for being born in America, etc.

Closing appeal to accept Christ as Savior

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father we ask You to work in our midst right now with Your grace and power. Please do a supernatural work in our hearts this morning. May Your Holy Spirit provide loving conviction and draw sinners so they can come to know Christ as Savior. Holy Spirit I pray that You would lead Christians to surrender their lives fully to the Lord Jesus Christ. May you provide each of us with meaningful and lasting joy. Take just a moment to settle any unresolved issues with the LORD. Thank God for your salvation, and liberation from sin and death.

Closing Song: *How Could I Ask For More*