

# A Call to Thanksgiving

## *Psalm 100:1-5*

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Introduction: I call your attention to "A Day of Public Thanksgiving." Follow along as I read this first ever Thanksgiving proclamation, declared by President George Washington on October 3, 1789. Our text of Psalm 100 provides us with another Thanksgiving Proclamation, a Psalm of praise. Rightly understood, this psalm not only records a call to praise the Lord, but it reveals the cause for praise to God, a heart of worship. Our worship of God will be evidenced in our joyfulness, our submissiveness, & our thankfulness. In other words, this thanksgiving proclamation depicts true worshippers as joyful servants, useful (obedient) sheep, & thankful saints. Does this psalm of praise & thanksgiving reflect the attitude of your heart tonight?

### I. We are to be **joyful** servants (:1-2)

#### A. Evidenced by our **singing**

##### 1. What? - *"Make a joyful noise"* >

- a. This *"joyful noise"* is a "glad shout" - such as a king's subjects would render to him when he appears (cf. "God save the King" with "Hosanna to the Son of David").
- b. "Our happy God should be worshipped by a happy people; a cheerful spirit is in keeping with His nature, His acts, & the gratitude which we should cherish for His mercies" (Sp.).
- c. "Singing, as it is joyful, & at the same time a devout exercise, should be a constant form of approach to God" (Spurgeon). See Proverbs 17:22.

##### 2. Whom? (to whom?) - *"unto the Lord"* >

- a. Our song of praise is first & foremost to the Lord - Psalm 40:3.
- b. Our songs of praise are united in our worship service - Ephesians 5:19.
- c. Our songs of praise should reflect the attitude of our heart - "Practice what you sing."

##### 3. Who? - *"all ye lands"* >

- a. "In every land Jehovah's goodness is seen, therefore in every land should He be praised. Never will the world be in its proper condition till with one unanimous shout it adores the only God" (Spurgeon).
- b. "In the worship of Jehovah mankind is to regain its lost unity" (Kirkpatrick). Rev. 5:9-10.
- c. Isaac Watts wrote in "Come We That Love the Lord" - "Let those refuse to sing, Who never knew our God; But favourites of the heavenly King, Must speak His praise abroad."

#### B. Evidenced by our **servicing**

##### 1. *Determined* by our attitude (our worship of the Lord) >

- a. The presentation of one's life - Romans 12:1-2 (living sacrifice).
- b. The prioritization of one's life - Luke 10:38-42 (worship before service).

##### 2. *Demonstrated* by our actions (our work for the Lord) >

- a. We are to serve the Lord with gladness - "...a rule of worship: Let God be served with gladness. By holy joy we do really serve God; it is an honour to Him to rejoice in Him; & we ought to serve Him with holy joy" (Henry). - See Psalm 122:1.
- b. We are to serve the Lord with genuineness - See Colossians 3:22-24.

### II. We are to be **useful** (obedient) sheep (:3)

#### A. Requires us to be **knowledgeable** (note the progression of knowing God):

1. Know God as Sovereign - *"Know ye that the Lord He is God"* - "Jehovah is God in the fullest most absolute, & most exclusive sense, He is God alone. To know Him & prove our knowledge by obedience, trust, submission, zeal, & love is an attainment which only grace can bestow" (Spurgeon).

2. Know God as Creator - "*It is He that hath made us*" - We are not "self-made" men or women who adore their "supposed" creators. See Spurgeon quote, which concludes: "For our part, we find it far more easy to believe that the Lord made us than that we were developed by a long chain of natural selections from floating atoms which fashioned themselves."
  3. Know God as Redeemer - "We are His people, & the sheep of His pasture" - Ps. 23:1-6
- B. Requires us to be **identifiable**:
1. Known by the Shepherd - John 10:3, 14, & 27 (each called by name) - "It is our honor to have been chosen from all the world besides to be His own people, & our privilege to be therefore guided by His wisdom, tended by His care, & fed by His bounty" (Spurgeon).
  2. Known as sheep (not goats) - not conformed to this world (Rom. 12:1-2), but transformed; identified as being like Christ - Acts 4:13, 11:26 & cf. II Corinthians 3:18. - "We have been twice born, as all His people. We love the society of His people. We are looking unto Jesus like His people. We are separated from the world as His people. We experience the trials of His people... We enjoy the privileges of His people" (W. J. quoted by Spurgeon).

### III. We are to be **thankful** saints (:4-5)

#### A. We see here a **grateful** people

1. "Expiatory sacrifices are ended, but those of gratitude will never be out of date. So long as we are receivers of mercy we must be givers of thanks" (Spurgeon). See Heb. 13:15-16.
2. Entering the gates, surrounding the temple & proceeding into the courts (the inner rooms of the temple area). Those in the psalmist's day could not enter into the Holy Place (or Holy of Holies), but we have access to the very presence of God today - Heb. 4:14-16, & 10:19-25
3. Expected to "*bless His name*" - "He blessed you, bless Him in return; bless His name, His character, His person. Whatever He does, be sure you bless Him for it: bless Him when He takes away as well as when He gives; bless Him as long as you live, under all circumstances; bless Him in all His attributes, from whatever point of view you consider Him" (Spurgeon).

#### B. We see here a **gracious** (praiseworthy) **Lord**

1. The essence of His person - "*For the Lord is good.*"
2. The expression of His pardon - "*His mercy is everlasting.*"
3. The extension of His purpose - "*His truth endureth to all generations.*"
  - a. His Word is truth (John 17:17).
  - b. His Word is truthful & faithful.

**Conclusion:** The psalmist has given us an exhortation to offer words of praise & thanksgiving to our gracious God & our Savior Jesus Christ. Are you counted among those identified as joyful servants, useful sheep, & thankful saints? Are you truly thankful here this evening? Consider the story of Nat Spencer, who saved the lives of 23 people, & yet never received a word of thanks from any of them. What was true of those in that story could be repeated again & again throughout the history of our country & the world. In Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation (1863), notice particularly the line, "May we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people?" Is there not a parallel to the events in our country today, in light of Sept. 11, 2001?

Again I ask, how thankful are you here tonight? As a believer, the extent of your heart's worship of God will be expressed by your life's demonstration as a joyful servant, a useful sheep, & a thankful saint. As an unbeliever, though you may appreciate Washington's & Lincoln's proclamations, you cannot appropriate the psalmist's call to thanksgiving without first acknowledging God as your Sovereign, your Creator, & your Redeemer. Why not come to the Good Shepherd today, & respond to His gracious invitation, "*I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, & shall go in & out, & find pasture*"? With Christ as your Savior, you can both fully appreciate & faithfully appropriate this Psalm of praise to God. Spurgeon said, "Nothing can be more sublime this side of heaven than the singing of this model Psalm by a vast congregation." Though we do not know the original melody in order to sing it, we can all say it. Will you read aloud together with me in closing this evening this Psalm of Thanksgiving?