

## Thanksgiving: A Way of Life

### Psalm 100

There's this great quote from, **A.A. Milne, the author of Winnie the Pooh**. **"Piglet noticed that even though he had a very small heart, it could hold a rather large amount of gratitude."**

My heart is relatively bigger than Piglet's, and yet I wonder how much gratitude it can hold. So, what a great thing it is to have a day set aside to give thanks. But for the Christian, giving thanks should be a way of life.

It is clear that the writer of Psalm 100 is calling us to look up, and see the blessings of our God. Warren Wiersbe puts it well when he writes:

**"Some people are appreciative by nature, but some are not; and it is these latter people who especially need God's power to express thanksgiving. We should remember that every good gift comes from God and that He is (as the theologians put it) "the Source, Support, and End of all things." The very breath in our mouths is the free gift of God. **Thankfulness is the opposite of selfishness. The selfish person says, "I deserve what comes to me! Other people ought to make me happy." But the mature Christian realizes that life is a gift from God, and that the blessings of life come only from His bountiful hand**".**

Source: **Warren W. Wiersbe in "A Time To Be Renewed"** Christianity Today, Vol. 32, no. 17.

I want to show us from Psalm 100 how we can make thanksgiving a way of life. But since the Psalms are poems, we need to do a little bit of work to understand the structure to see the whole. We have a slide for this.

Here's the structure. Look at it in stanzas - verses 3 and 5 are supporting statements underneath verses 1, 2, and 4. Verses 3 and 5 are like pillars of truth holding up the commands of this psalm.

We can break it down into three points.

- To live with thanksgiving, we need truth to support it (vv. 3, 5).
  - To live with thanksgiving, we need feelings to spur it (v. 4).
  - To live with thanksgiving, we need actions to complete it (vv. 1, 2).
1. **To live with thanksgiving, we need truth to support it (vv. 3, 5).**
    - a. **The Lord is God. (v.3)**
    - b. **The Lord God is our creator. (vs. 3)**

- c. **We are the Lord's people. (vs. 3)**
- d. **The Lord is our Shepherd. (vs. 3; Psalm 23)**
- e. **The Lord is good. (vs. 5)**
- f. **The Lord is eternally merciful. (vs. 5)**
- g. **The Lord's TRUTH endures to every generation for eternity.**

**2. To live with thanksgiving, we need feelings to spur it (v. 4).**

- a. **We come into the Lord's presence (gates) with Thanksgiving. (vs. 4)**

**1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you."**

- b. **We come into the Lord's presence (courts) with Praise. (vs. 4)**
- c. **We come into the Lord's presence to bless His NAME. (vs. 4)**

Feelings matter. They aren't all that matter, but they certainly matter. The Christian life is not emotionless and anyone who says so doesn't understand it. But if the emotions are based on truth and therefore have a foundation to really exist – they can last.

**"The degree to which you see the truth of the gospel is the degree to which feelings of thanksgiving will arise in your heart".**

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." (Hebrews 10:19-22)

**3. To live with thanksgiving, we need actions to complete it (vv. 1, 2).**

- a. **We demonstrate our thanksgiving with service to the Lord. (vs. 2)**

"Giving thanks" means to praise or to give public acknowledgment. It indicates that we are to tell others what God has done. The thanksgiving this Psalm is speaking of is a public thanksgiving.

**b. We declare our thanksgiving with singing in His presence. (vs. 2)**

“Aim for your choices, like the Psalms, to give:

- \* A vast vision of God's character
- \* How we fit into God's redemption story
- \* A broad understanding of human experience”

— Keith Getty, *Sing!: How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church*

**“When... you stand to sing, consciously focus on what is going on... Ask God to help you focus; think about the words you are singing and the images they are painting; respond in prayer to lines that particularly strike you; be mindful of those around you, enjoying being part of something greater than just yourself.”**

— Keith Getty, *Sing!: How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church*

**Conclusion:**

**“I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with...The catechism says that man’s chief end is ‘to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.’ But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him.”**

And so it is with thanksgiving. When we give thanks, we complete the joy.

When we see what God has done, we respond in thanksgiving and praise.

We enter his gates with thanksgiving not because we’ve worked up enough gratitude to do so, but because we’ve seen enough of God that we can’t help but do so.

Thanksgiving is all about responding.

Our hearts may be very small but they can hold a large amount of gratitude.