

Grateful

The Basis for Our Gratitude

“Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture.” -Psalm 100:3

When does gratitude begin? Is it when something good happens to me? When someone shows unexpected kindness? When something I didn't earn or deserve lands in my hands? Left to my own nature, I can easily make gratitude transactional – measuring it based on what I gain or lose. But today's Scripture points us to a different foundation for our gratitude. It shifts our focus away from our circumstances and onto the One who is worthy of all worship.

Let's consider just the first six words of Psalm 100:3, where David provides an anchor, a reason for every human to be grateful: *God's identity*. **“Know that the Lord is God.”** This is more than an acknowledgment – it's a call for us to recognize God's absolute sovereignty, the unshakable truth of who He is. The Scripture and all of creation are filled with the evidence of God's qualities: He is self-sustaining, all-knowing, all-powerful, the maker of the universe and everything that exists (Genesis 1; Romans 1). He's the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13), commands the wind and the waves (Jonah 1:4, Exodus 14:21), prepares the rain and the snow in the heavens (Job 38:22, Psalm 147:8), holds the mountain tops and the depths of the earth in his hand (Psalm 95:4).

Moses reminded the Israelites in the wilderness that this God is the Lord of all, worthy of all love and devotion. *“Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one”* (Deuteronomy 6:4). There is no one else. It's a reminder I also need often, and reading the words again brings a sense of contentment, of confidence, and yes – of gratitude! That somebody else, who is infinitely smarter and more powerful than me, is in charge and knows exactly what's going on.

Yet, really *knowing* that the Lord is God requires more than knowing *about* Him. A.W. Tozer put it well when he said, “Knowledge by acquaintance is always better than knowledge by description.” Jesus came to meet us, to show us who the Father is. And through cultivating that friendship, we open the door to a life of deeper gratitude. *“The Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true”* (1 John 5:20). He showed us the God of the universe, who knows our thoughts and the number of hairs on our heads. He is more loving than any friend we could find. As we commit time and energy to grow closer in relationship with Jesus, there is peace, rest, and thanksgiving available to our souls (Matthew 11:28-30).

Psalm 100:3 goes on to say, **“It is He who made us, and we are His.”** Just think about this – if I and you have any ideas about self-sufficiency or circumstantial gratitude, here is a statement that cuts right through all of that. We are not self-made; we are God-made. And we *belong* somewhere. Our identity is confirmed. We didn't wander into existence or earn our place, but rather we're His creation, His chosen and cherished, bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20). If that doesn't inspire a grateful heart, I guess I really don't know what can.

The passage concludes this way, **“We are His people, the sheep of His pasture.”** Not only do we belong to God, but if we are His sheep, then He is our Shepherd. It's a metaphor repeated

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throughout the Old Testament, and Christ often spoke of Himself in this way as well. However, He's not just any shepherd—He is the *Good Shepherd* (John 10:11), who lays down His life for His sheep. His love and care aren't passive. He defends, protects, and provides. Ezekiel 34:11 says that *"God himself searches for His scattered sheep and cares for them."* No one is forgotten; no one is too far gone. Pastor Allistair Begg poignantly noted "He sees us, hungry and thirsty, straying and lost, and welcomes us in. Even at the cost of His own life. Where else could we find a love so true?"

Here's a final thought: a shepherd doesn't stay in one pasture. He guides his flock through valleys, sometimes over rough and rocky terrain, into new fields of nourishment and rest. Psalm 23:2-4 describes our Shepherd's leading - *"He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters; he restores my soul...And though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff comfort me."* It may be said that life's changing seasons are part of God's design for our maturity and growth. Naturally, none of us would choose the rough terrain. Yet even our most difficult and painful paths can be navigated when we listen for His voice and lean in for comfort.

So today, I hope that you and I will choose to be more grateful than we were yesterday. Not because of favourable situations or good things that happen to us - these are circumstantial and will continue to shift. But we can hold fast to the truth that our guiding Shepherd never changes. And *this*, my friend, is the basis for our gratitude. Because He is in charge – our Creator, our Redeemer, our Sustainer – we can give thanks in *every* season.

- 1. Take some time on your own or in a group, to list attributes of God which make Him the Lord of all. Look for Scripture which describe these qualities. Which ones of these are especially meaningful to you and why?**
- 2. What gets in the way of your gratitude toward God and others?**
- 3. How might you work on knowing Him more?**
- 4. In what specific situation do you need the reassurance of the Good Shepherd's leading in your life today?**
- 5. Who do you see around you who needs to hear that they are created and bought with a price, loved by the Shepherd? What might it look like to see Psalm 100 worked out in your community?**



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