Thanksgiving Psalm 100
November 25, 2021 615-260-612-609-610

Give Thanks to the LORD!
I. With joy.
II. With humble gratitude.
III. Publicly and daily.

Dear Christian friends,

As I worked on this sermon I toyed with the idea of **including blank pieces** of paper in each bulletin. Then now at the start of the sermon we would take 4 or 5 minutes and **each one** of us would start making a list of what we're thankful for. There were **obviously** NO BLANK pieces of paper in your bulletins so you don't have to worry about ACTUALLY DOING that today.

It would be interesting to COMPARE our lists. **To compare** what we put first on our lists. **To compare** how many of our blessings are THINGS – or **people**. **To compare** WHERE GOD and God's spiritual blessings fit on our lists. To see how many of our items are EVERYDAY BLESSINGS WE so often just take for granted. Were you planning to thank God today for the WARM BLANKETS on your bed – the carpeting on the floor – the clean water and **indoor plumbing** in your house? There are MANY PEOPLE in the world who would love to have those blessings that WE **hardly even notice**.

Thanksgiving Day is both a national and a PERSONAL holiday. As Americans we **have so much** to be thankful for. But today is also very personal. We don't share **all the same** blessings. **Some** may be thankful today for SUCCESSFUL SURGERIES while **others are thankful** for not needing any surgery this year.

Psalm 100 is an ANONYMOUS psalm. We don't know who wrote it. It's simply titled, ***"A psalm for giving thanks."*** That's an invitation for **each one** of us to make Psalm 100 OUR OWN **personal psalm** of thanksgiving. Guided by Psalm 100 "GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD" 1)with joy and 2)with humble gratitude. **Give thanks** to the Lord 3)publicly and daily.

I. With joy.

Give thanks to the Lord WITH JOY. That sounds SO OBVIOUS. To bellyache and **complain** – to mope around **like sourpusses** – ALL WHILE COUNTING our blessings – that makes no sense! Yet Psalm 100 emphasizes giving thanks WITH JOY. ***"Shout to the LORD with JOY - serve the LORD with GLADNESS - come before Him with JOYFUL songs."***

Why that emphasis on **giving thanks** WITH JOY? **In all honesty** as we make our LONG LIST of **blessings** we can also come up with a PRETTY LONG list of problems and **things** that need fixing. "Yes, Lord, I'm thankful FOR this – BUT You know, Lord, **there is** this…" We have so much to **be thankful** for but since we're not in heaven yet LIFE ISN'T PERFECT. We have our share – SOME MORE than others – of our pains and problems – hardships and hassles – disappointments and frustrations. THE DEVIL would love for us to so focus on **the bad** that we LOSE SIGHT of **all the many** blessings. **The devil** would love to stifle BOTH our **gratitude** and **joy** with a "BUT THIS IS WRONG – and then there's… - and that's JUST NOT FAIR!"

Give thanks to the Lord WITH JOY for all the blessings God **has showered** on you. ALSO give thanks to God – WITH JOY! – for all THOSE OTHER things we don't normally consider to **be blessings**. Give thanks **with joy** because we have God's promise to ***"work all things for (our) good."*** Give thanks **with joy** that God is IN CONTROL at all times and that God ALSO USES those **hardships** and **sorrows** to bless us – to teach us some **important lessons** – to purify and strengthen our faith – to get us to re-evaluate our priorities in life – to keep us humble and CLOSE to Him. Paul urged the Thessalonian Christians to ***"IN EVERYTHING give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'***

Psalm 100 continues with this thought – ***"give thanks to the LORD…"***

I. With humble gratitude.

Again that sounds SO OBVIOUS – **give thanks** WITH GRATITUDE. How else **can you** give thanks? Look how much we GRUMBLE and **complain**. **Grumbling** is the exact opposite of GRATITUDE – complaining is the **exact opposite** of giving thanks. **Grumbling** and complaining express DISSATISFACTION – "I deserve better than this – **God**, You're not doing a **very good job** taking care of me." That's JUST NOT TRUE! Give thanks to the Lord NOT JUST **with gratitude** but with humble gratitude. As we count our many blessings there isn't a single one we **can point to** and say, "God OWED ME that one."

"Know that the LORD is God. He made us." We confessed before **with Luther** that "GOD MADE ME and all that exists, and He gave me my body and soul, eyes, ears and all my members, my mind and all my abilities." But God didn't stop there. God "RICHLY and DAILY provides" all that we need. God graciously "DEFENDS us against all danger, GUARDS and **protects** us from all evil." God does all this "ONLY BECAUSE He is our good and merciful Father in heaven, and not because we have **earned** or **deserved** it."

"Know that the LORD is God. He made us, and we are His. We are His people, the sheep of His pasture." Those sure are words to SAVOR – words that lead us to give thanks with BOTH JOY and HUMBLE GRATITUDE. ***"HE made us, and we are HIS. We are HIS people, the sheep of HIS pasture."*** Recall Peter writing, ***"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, the people who are God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. At one time you were not a people, but now you are the people of God. At one time you were not shown mercy, but now you have been shown mercy."***

That blessing should be AT THE TOP of all our blessings. Lose all those **other** blessings – lose our health – **job** – **families** – homes, etc. – but to still be able to say, "I am a CHILD OF GOD – a ***'sheep of His pasture'***" – that is to still be SO RICHLY BLESSED by God.

Humble gratitude comes from SIMPLE HONESTY. Thank God that He ***"doesn't treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities."*** WHY do we have such problems being GRATEFUL – CONTENT – **satisfied** and **happy**? That's really only SYMPTOMS of our **real problem**. We all have a **totally** CORRUPT – **very** STUBBORN and SELF-CENTERED sinful nature. **Today** let's especially see our **grumbling** and complaining – our resenting others having it **better** than we do – let's see that for what it really is – SIN. Indeed, the sin of idolatry – PUTTING OURSELVES **front** and self – making life ALL ABOUT ME instead of all about God. Humble honesty is that we can sure act like UNGRATEFUL **spoiled brats**. That our lives **right now** are not a LIVING HELL – that our lives aren't heading for the **eternal banishment** of that VERY REAL hell – what grace and **mercy** on God's part!

Give thanks to the Lord with HUMBLE GRATITUDE that we can honestly say, ***"We are His people, the sheep of His pasture."*** That is ALL GOD'S DOING. Hear **again** – THANK GOD again – for those simple, familiar facts of the gospel. We have God's own **eternal, beloved Son** as our PERSONAL SAVIOR. Jesus took our place under God's law and has made things right between God and us. Jesus lived for us that life of **perfect love** and obedience that we owed God. Jesus suffered and died on the cross – Jesus shed His blood – sacrificed His own life – to FULLY PAY for **every single one** of our sins. Jesus rose triumphant from the dead on Easter morning and now lives **nevermore** to die. SAVOR – thank God with HUMBLE GRATITUDE for – the joy and peace of **having Jesus** as your ***"Good Shepherd who laid down His life for you"*** – your Good Shepherd who promises us, ***"I give them (My sheep) eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand."***

PRAISE God – THANK God with **humble gratitude** for the joy of knowing, ***"we are HIS people; the sheep of HIS pasture."***

With good reasons our psalm then encourages us to ***"give thanks to the LORD…"***

III. Publicly and daily.

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving, His courtyards with praise. Give thanks to Him and bless His name. For the LORD is good. His mercy endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations."

What a privilege and **blessing** to come into **God's house**. I pray that we never LOSE THE AWE and **wonder** of that. "God invites us to come into His presence!" **Today** we have come to PUBLICLY THANK our God for His **countless** blessings. We want all to know that today is **not really** all about ALL THOSE BLESSINGS that we count but all about our God – THE GIVER of all those blessings. MORE THAN the turkey and **pumpkin pie** – than the football games and **family get-togethers** – more than the black Friday sales – **today** is ALL ABOUT our good – gracious – generous God. We have this service to PUBLICLY PROCLAIM that and to help us keep **that focus** ourselves.

But the JOYFUL, HUMBLE thanksgiving dare not end with the FINAL HYMN of this service and the church doors shutting behind us. PUBLICLY – and DAILY! – give thanks to the Lord. Yes, ***"enter His gates with thanksgiving, His courtyards with praise"*** AND ***"serve the LORD with gladness."*** The Hebrew word for ***"serve"*** is INTERESTING. It means both to SERVE and to WORSHIP. We serve God BY WORSHIPING Him in church. We also worship God BY SERVING Him with our **daily lives**. In a SPECIAL WAY we worship God here at church gathered around His Word and sacraments. But our worship doesn't end there. We ALSO WORSHIP God – we **also** THANK God – as we live our daily lives FOR Him – WITH Him – UNDER Him. At school and at work – playing **sports** or watching TV – doing the **dishes** or our **homework** – surfing the internet – are ALL OPPORTUNITIES to DAILY **worship** and **thank** our gracious God. I don't know who coined the phrase but our THANKSGIVING is to also be thanksLIVING.

Now back quickly to those BLANK PIECES of paper. Sometime today or **over the next** few days take a piece of paper and actually start listing your blessings. You'll never finish your list but **in the meantime** stick it in your Bible at **Psalm 100**. Then you can both CHECK your list **from time** to time and reread and SAVOR this psalm with its call to ***"give thanks to the LORD."*** Amen.

Hymn #609