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Bread of Life Baptist Church
November 28th, 2021

Psalm 100

Thanks Be to God

As we're all well aware, it's the Sunday right after Thanksgiving - and I absolutely *love* Thanksgiving. It's a wonderful holiday, a highlight of my year that I always look forward. It officially marks the beginning of the holiday season. It's a day to eat way too much delicious food and pie. And then desert after the pie. A time to rest, play maybe even watch football. It's a day to spend time with family and friends. And of course, all of this is because it's a time to *give thanks*. It's a time to celebrate all the wonderful things in our lives that we have to be grateful for. A time to reflect on what's important, on what we so often take for granted. A time to treasure what is a truly precious gift and blessing in our lives, and give thanks for them - to give thanks for all of the wonderful blessings in our lives, from good food to our livelihoods and income; from our having a home to live in to getting to enjoy rest and entertainment; from friends, to church family, to our cherished household family and loved ones - and most importantly, to give thanks to God, thanking Him for all of these wonderful gifts and blessings He's given us. Thanksgiving is a wonderful holiday - but only if it helps us to realize that such thankfulness should not be restricted to just one day of the year, or even one season - it should characterize all of our lives.

Thanksgiving is not just an American holiday. Being grateful isn't just an American trait, or even just a nice thing to do - gratitude and giving thanks is a Christian virtue. It is especially fitting for Christians, of all people, to give thanks. As believers in the gospel of Christ, we should be characterized as a *grateful* people.

After all, we know who exactly we are to give thanks *to*. Now, I'm not accusing every non-Christian of being inherently ungrateful. I know that non-believers can enjoy Thanksgiving just as much, and genuinely be grateful for their lives. But the question often unasked is: who exactly are they giving thanks *to*? YOU see, true gratitude comes when we realize that every good thing we have *is a gift*. Truly being thankful means *giving thanks to the giver*. And we, as believers, know exactly who to give thanks to! We know that *every good thing in our lives, even life itself, is a blessing, a gift from above!* As James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no

variation or shadow due to change” (**James 1:17**). We know where every good gift comes from - from God, our Father! We know that every good thing comes from GOD! That every good thing in our lives, even life and existence itself, is a blessing, a gracious gift to us from God our Father! Therefore, we of all people should be a *grateful* people! We should give thanks - not only at Thanksgiving, around the holidays, but *everyday* of our lives, no matter our circumstances! Such gratitude should fill our hearts and lead us to fill our prayers with thanksgiving to GOD. Such gratitude should fill our mouths with praise, and compel us to live our entire lives as an act of worship to the Lord!

In fact, that’s exactly what **Psalm 100** tells us - no, what it *demands of us*. This Psalm is a beautiful Psalm, a rich treasure of a praise hymn that compels our hearts to worship and praise our great GOD with gladness and gratitude! It even *commands us* to do so! It is a short, concise, but beautiful Psalm. And it makes the main meaning of the Psalm very clear and straight-forward; in fact, we see this even in the original, Hebrew title: we’re told it is “a Psalm for giving thanks.” And it starts us off in doing so by giving us a *command* in verses 1 and 2 to worship - and not just us, but all people everywhere! Then, we’re given a reason *why* to worship and give thanks in verse 3. But then the process is repeated: we’re commanded to worship “with thanksgiving” in verse 4, and then given another reason why in the last verse, verse 5. The point is clear. This Psalm emphasizes very clearly that our worship and praise of GOD is to go hand in hand with hearts of gratitude and words, even prayers, of thanksgiving. That’s why we’re given a call to worship the Lord with thanksgiving *twice*.

But we also see here two reasons *why* we are to do so. The first reason we’re given to worship God with gladness and thanksgiving is because *we are His people*. As GOD’s people - those who believe in the gospel of Christ - we have received the greatest gift and blessing of all - salvation from our sins by grace through faith in Christ alone! Therefore, we have *every reason* to be glad; we have *every reason* to give thanks to God and worship Him because of who He is and what He has done for us! And the second reason we’re given is this: that we always have reason, even the *obligation*, to worship and praise God with thanksgiving and gratitude, because of *who God is and what He has done*. That’s what Psalm 100 tells us, grabbing the attention of our hearts and lifting them upwards, directing our thanksgiving and praise to our great GOD, who deserves us all!

So that’s what we need to see first:

I. We're Called to Worship God with Joyful Thanksgiving (1-2, 4)

Verses 1 and 2 begin with a call to worship God: "Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!" These are short, clear verses, very easy to understand. BUt they are also loaded with rich truths for us to look at. So let's look at them a little more slowly.

First, we should note that this call to worship is a *command* given to "all the earth." Everyone, everywhere, in all the earth, is commanded to worship and praise God - the one, true God, Yahweh, the God of the Bible, who made all things. And this is right, because God *deserves* all glory, honor, worship, and praise! Worship isn't just something nice to do, or something that's optional - we are all *commanded* to do so. In fact, we could put it another way - to *not* worship and praise GOD is a sin. We should never feel embarrassed, ashamed, or apologetic about worshipping God, whether publicly or privately - everyone, everywhere, is commanded and expected to do so. Nor should we feel embarrassed or apologetic about inviting other people to worship God with us. In fact, this little verse here is a reminder that this is the scope of missions - that God would be worshipped by all people, everywhere, in all the earth! That is the end goal and purpose of missions.

John Piper wrote an excellent book on missions, titled, "Let the Nations Be Glad." And he began that book with this extraordinary sentence: "Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever."¹

And I think John Piper is absolutely right. In fact, we see that point made over and over again in the Bible, especially in the Psalms - in Psalms like this one. All people everywhere are commanded to worship GOD; GOD deserves the glory and praise of every man, woman, child, and every creature ever made! And all of history is moving toward that end goal: to the day when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Christ as Lord, and all the redeemed shall worship God forever! In fact, as we saw last week, from Psalm 8, this is what mankind was made for - to glorify God! And as we remember this, it reorients our hearts, even our entire lives, so that our purpose and goal in all things is to worship and glorify God.

¹ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, 3rd edition, p.15

Next, we're given further details regarding *how* we're called to worship God. And we're specifically given here four necessary (though not exhaustive) elements of our worship:

For starters, we see that

1. *We worship by singing*

We're explicitly commanded to "make a joyful noise to the LORD." The last part of verse 2 tells us to "Come into his presence with singing!" Where true Christian worship is found, there will be song. The people of God have always been, and are meant to always be, a people who *sing* - who sing praises to God! Now, I'm not saying that we *only* worship God by singing - no, of course not. But what I am saying is that singing should *always* be a part of our regular practices of worshipping GOD, built into the regular routines of our lives! It should even be prioritized! And this is especially so of *corporate, congregational singing and worship*. It is, of course, a wonderful thing to sing songs of praise to God alone and in private, or with our children and families at home (indeed, I encourage you to do so!) But that can't be a *replacement* for congregational singing and worship with our local church family. After all, this Psalm is, first and foremost, a Psalm given for *corporate worship*. That's why it's calling each other to sing and praise God; that's why it uses such corporate language, like "Come into His presence with singing!" And "Enter his gates" and "his courts with praise!" (v.4). This is the language of coming together corporately, of gathering together as GOD's people - for us today, as a local church - and corporately worshipping God *by sing to Him together!* This is one reason why we gather every Sunday and prioritize singing songs of praises to GOD, worshipping Him!

And we should also not that this practice *isn't optional*. I wonder - have we ever thought about the fact that God *commands us* to sing his praises? That we're commanded to worship and praise Him - publicly and privately - and even commanded to come together and worship Him through congregational singing, as a local church? And just in case you think I'm stretching the case here too thin, this same command is repeated in the New Testament. For example, in Col. 3:16, Paul tells the Collosian church, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, *singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*" I don't know for sure, but I think Paul had Psalm 100 in mind when he wrote that. No matter whether you're musically talented or not, *we are all commanded* to all sing GOD's praises together.

And that's not all; we also...

2. *We worship by serving*

We're called to "serve the LORD with gladness!" This word "serve" gets at the idea of "working" or doing acts of service. IN other words, our worship isn't just confined to singing - all that we do is meant to be an act of worship! We're called to worship God with all of our lives, with all that we do, as an act of praise and service to Him!

But our worship - our singing and serving - isn't commanded in the sense that we're supposed to do it begrudgingly, out of some sense of duty and obligation. No, we're called to do it sincerely and freely!

3. *We worship with gladness and joy*

When calling us to sing, we're called to make a "joyful noise!" When calling us to serve, we're to serve "with gladness!" We are to *joyfully and gladly* worship God! Again, John Piper is helpful here. He has famously said, in many place, "God is *most glorified* in us when we are *most satisfied* in Him!" The joy and delight we long for is found in God Himself! And when our hearts are filled with the joy of the Lord, it naturally overflows into worshipping and praising Him with gladness!

And this is also combined with the idea that...

4. *We worship with gratitude and thanksgiving*

This idea is implied in verses 1-2, then made explicit in verse 4: "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!" When we come before the Lord to worship Him, we're not only command to sing joyfully - we're also commanded to *thank Him!* To come before God in our worship and prayers with gratitude in our hearts and thanksgiving on our lips! We worship and glorify God, in part, simply by telling thank you! By giving Him thanks for all of His love, blessings, provision, gifts, and grace in our lives! Again, this should be reflected in our private prayers and our public prayers. We should cultivate a heart of gratitude towards God by simply recognizing every good thing He's given us, not taking it for granted, and thanking Him in prayer for them! I try to teach my kids and lead our family in doing this every time we eat a meal together, by starting off with prayer; we eat three times a day, so it's an easy way to simply pause and give thanks to the God who provided that food - and a reminder to stop and give thanks for His many other precious gifts as well! And this, too, is an act of worship. Worship and thanksgiving go hand-in-hand.

So we are to worship God, in all the earth and in all that we do; we're to worship Him, even sing and give thanks to Him, with gladness and gratitude in our hearts! But does this mean we do so *only when we feel like*? Or only we feel joy and gratitude in our hearts? Or to put it another way, should we *not* come to church or *not* worship, sing, or pray when we don't feel like we're doing it with sincere gladness and gratitude? No, of course not! The goal is always to do so with joy and gratitude - but not feeling the way we should isn't a reason to disobey or not worship at all! In fact, we could even go further: we're called to worship God, with joy and gladness, *no matter what our circumstances are!* Again, we see this point made over and over again in the New Testament:

1 Thess. 5:16-18 - "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Or *Phil. 4:4-6* - "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice. Let your reasonableness be made known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Now, I don't want to discount the suffering, pain, and sorrow that we feel throughout our lives - that many of you may be experiencing this week, maybe even today. There is a place for godly mourning, grieving, and lamenting, of recognizing our sorrow and suffering and bringing it to God. The Bible doesn't tell us to *ignore* our suffering or sorrow; it doesn't dismiss it, tell us to act like it doesn't exist, or to feel guilty about our grief, pain, suffering, or sadness! No, by no means! BUT it *does* tell us that even such moments, we can still know an unspeakable joy in Christ; we can even be *grateful*, no matter our circumstances, and give thanks to God in Christ even as we make our prayers and requests known to Him!

But how do we do this? How do we give thanks and worship God with gladness and gratitude in every circumstance of life - even when things aren't going well, even when we're enduring sufferings and trials of every kind? We can do so by remembering truths that are always true, no matter what our circumstances are. And that's exactly what we see in the two reasons this Psalm gives us.

But let's first look at the *second reason* we're given, in verse 5. That is...

II. We Should Worship God with Joyful Thanksgiving for His Goodness, Love, and Faithfulness (v.5)

The ultimate reason for our joyful worship and thanksgiving is *who God is*. That's the ultimate reality this entire Psalm builds to and ends on! That's the reason our worship, our joy, our gratitude and thanksgiving, are to *always be grounded in*. We lift our hearts worship God with gladness and gratitude by lifting our *eyes* and beholding GOD for who He is. That's what we're told in verse 5, the last verse of the Psalm.

After calling us repeatedly to worship with joy and give thanks, we're told why: "For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness endures to all generations.

GOD is good. He is always good, all of His gifts and purposes are good, and everything He does is good. Every good thing comes from Him! Every good thing that is worth enjoying or being happy about comes from God! goodness itself comes from and is perfectly displayed in GOD - He is the standard, the perfect example, the summation of all that is perfectly and purely *good*. We long for goodness; we long for the good life. The perfect *good* that we long for and crave is found and satisfied in the goodness of God alone. And not only is He good but He is *love*. That's who God is.

And the beautiful thing is, that won't ever change! GOD's "steadfast love endures forever!" God will never stop loving you, because His love for you isn't rooted in who you are or what you've done - it's rooted in the unchanging character of God Himself! God's love abounds and is steadfast! And this is because God is *faithful*! God never changes! GOD never fails! GOD's love never grows cold! God never goes back on His word; He never forgets His promises! His plans and purposes are *always good and loving*, and they *are always accomplished and never fail*! God's goodness and love are *for us today, for you and me*, because GOD's faithfulness endures to all generations! And that never changes! NO matter what the circumstances of our lives may be, *God is always good, He always loves us far more than we realize, and His steadfast love will endure forever because of His unchanging faithfulness!*

Therefore, we always have reasons to worship God because of *who he is*! We can always be filled with joy and gladness, with gratitude and thanksgiving, because we know with certainty that God will keep His covenantal promises of love and salvation towards us because we are *His People*.

And that brings us our second reason and final point:

III. We Should Worship God with Joyful Thanksgiving Because We Are His People (v.3)

After the command to worship in vv.1-2, we're given the first reason why in verse 3: "Know that the Lord, He is GOD! It is He who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." In other words, we always have reason to give thanks to Him, even to worship Him with joyful gratitude, because *we know God as His people!*

Now, in one sense, this is true for all people, everywhere. The second line of this verse says, "It is He who made us, and we are His." God made all people - therefore, because He made us, we must acknowledge His *authority and ownership of us*. All people are God's creation; therefore, we all rightly belong to God, and He has authority and ownership over us. This is why He deserves all of our worship, glory, honor, and praise! This is why "all the earth" is commanded to worship! It's also why God deserves our sincere, joyful *gratitude and thanks*. He *made* us. We owe our very existence to Him. We should be grateful, and give Him thanks for every single good thing about life and existence that we enjoy! Indeed, the fact that He owns us and has authority over us, as our Maker, isn't some depressing or oppressive reality - it should fill our hearts with gladness and gratitude, because *He is good, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness*.

But most people don't acknowledge this reality, or give thanks to God. And this is because most people *do not know God*. Our sin separates us from God, and breaks our relationship of worship; it even breaks our hearts, so that we don't experience the joy and gratitude in God that we should. But thankfully, those who have faith in God *do know Him!* We have faith in the gospel of Christ know God in a *special* way, that isn't true of unbelievers - we know God *as His covenant people!*

That's what we see in the last part of verse 3L "we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." We are God's people, the "sheep of His pasture." We are *God's covenant people*, those who specially know Him *through faith in His covenant promises* - that is, through faith in the promise of God's New Covenant - the promise of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to *reconcile* us sinners to God by living a perfect life in our place, dying on the cross for our sins, and being raised to life on the third day; and the promise of the gospel is that *anyone who believes this and trusts in Christ alone* will be saved by God's grace! When we believe in Christ, we are united to Him and join God's covenant people - the Church. The Bible talks about this in many ways, but one way it does so is to call GOD's people His "sheep." And Christ makes it very

clear, in John 10 (and elsewhere) that He is the true shepherd, and anyone who trusts in Him belongs to God as His people, as His sheep.

If you're trusting in Christ today, then you are part of GOD's people. We are Christ's sheep, those who believe in Christ's gospel and trust in Him alone for salvation. And this is incredible good news! The gospel of Christ means we are *reconciled to GOD*, as part of His people! It means we will be saved from our sins and will dwell with God and His people forever! It means we are reconciled to God as His children, and are free to joyfully worship Him! And this truth gives us reason to *always* give thanks to God! We are reconciled to GOD as His people by grace through faith in Christ alone! This means that no matter what our circumstances are, we *always* have reason to be glad and give thanks to God, even to worship Him with gladness, because we are His people, saved from our sins and reconciled to God in Christ Jesus!

If you're trusting in alone for salvation this morning, that means you're no longer a child of wrath, no longer a slave to sin, no longer under the power and dominion of this world or Satan - you are a child of GOD, part of God's people reconciled to God in Christ Jesus! YOU're no longer going to Hell, no longer going to face God's judgment and wrath against your sin! And this isn't based on anything you've done - it's purely by God's grace in Christ! That's true of us this morning; we are GOD's people! We know Him! No matter what's going on in our lives, we can always rest in that glorious truth - we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone!

Therefore, let us worship God for who He is and what He's done! LET us worship Him with gladness and gratitude - let us give thanks to Him always! And in a moment, we're going to worship Him in song, as we're commanded, but also in celebrating the Lord's Supper - a visible way for us to remember the goodness of God displayed in the gospel of Christ; and an opportunity for us to corporately profess our faith in this gospel and our belief in Christ and that we are His people! It's a way to joyfully give thanks for the gospel of Christ, as His people!

If you're a baptized believer and a member of a gospel preaching church in good standing, we invite you to join us at the table. I'll call the outside sections first, and then the middle two sections, and you can come row by row, starting from the front, working our way to the back (so that we can social distance); we have two cups stacked - one with bread, the other with juice.

But if you're not a baptized believer and member of a gospel church in good standing, then this Supper isn't for you, because there's a *different* way for you to respond this morning. Simply believe that Christ lived, died, and was raised to save you from your sins, and trust in Him alone for salvation believe in who God is and give thanks to Him for what He's done in Christ, through faith! Then, make your faith public through baptism, and joining the church to begin your life of worshipping the Lord. If you have any questions about any of this, I'd love to speak with you.

Let us have a moment of silence.