

**Enter with Thanksgiving  
Psalm 100**

**Big Idea – I need to be thankful 365 days a year.**

One of the most beautiful Psalms of thanksgiving is the 100th Psalm. Please turn to it and follow along as I read: "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs. 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.

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations."

We are a people and a nation that has truly been blessed by God.

Some make wish lists at Christmas, and draw up a list of resolutions for New Years. But there is another list we often overlook on Thanksgiving Day - list of all we are thankful for.

ILL. Let me read a part of the list that several housewives compiled. They wrote that they were especially thankful:

"For automatic dishwashers because they make it possible for us to get out of the kitchen before the family comes back in for their after dinner snacks.

"For husbands who attack small repair jobs around the house because they usually make them big enough to call in the professionals.

"For children who put away their things and clean up after themselves. They're such a joy you hate to see them go home to their own parents

"For teenagers because they give parents an opportunity to learn a second language.

"For Smoke alarms because they let you know when the turkey's done.

Now hopefully if we began to make a list, we would find that we have much more for which to be thankful than just our material possessions.

Like you my list includes the major things life, health, family, friends, and the nation we live in, despite all its flaws.

But even more than that, I'm thankful for my salvation, our church family, and the mercy that God showers upon us each day. With Jesus we have so much for which to celebrate on Thanksgiving!

But has it ever occurred to you that no Americans were more underprivileged than that small handful from the Mayflower who started the custom of setting aside a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God?

They had no homes and no government agency to help them build homes. They had no means of transportation but their legs. Their only food came from the sea and the forest, and they had to get it for themselves.

They had no money and no place to spend it if they'd had any. They had no amusements except what they made for themselves, no means of communication with their relatives in England, no social security or medicare.

But anyone who dared to call them underprivileged would probably have ended up in the stocks, for they did have four of the greatest human assets: initiative, courage, a willingness to work, and a boundless faith in God.

Our forefathers had "a boundless faith in God." That almost sounds strange today in a time when powerful forces are at work in our nation to strip us of every reminder that the very foundation of our nation was built upon the conviction that we are "one nation, under God."

ILLUS. Our hallowed "Declaration of Independence" proclaims, "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights . . ." And it ends with these words, ". . .with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

Thanksgiving Day is a distinctive holiday. It doesn't commemorate a battle or anyone's birthday or anniversary. It is simply a day set aside to express our nation's thanks to our nation's God.

ILLUS. 1789, George Washington made the very first presidential public Thanksgiving proclamation. Here is a small part of it:

"By the President of the United States of America. A proclamation: Whereas, it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor, and

"Whereas, Both Houses of Congress have by their joint committee requested me to recommend to the people of the United States a day of Public Thanksgiving and Prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God. . .'

"Now, Therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be. . ."

This week our nation will pause once again to celebrate Thanksgiving Day. And one would assume that because of the example of our forefathers, and because today we have so much, that we would be an extremely thankful people.

But it is often just the opposite, isn't it? The more we get, the less thankful we become, the less mindful of God we are, and the more we want.

PROP. I think that the 100th Psalm was written to deal with that attitude, to remind us of our need to be thankful, and to maintain an attitude of gratitude.

## **1. The Basis of Our Thanksgiving**

The 100th Psalm was written for the people of Israel. God said to them, "When you come into the promised land, and settle down in your warm homes, and you have plenty to eat, **don't forget Me**. I led you out of the wilderness and I brought you into a land flowing with milk and honey."

But it doesn't take very long to realize that the **people of Israel needed a reminder, and I am afraid that we need it, too.**

(Deuteronomy 4 & 6; Psalm 77:6 – 12; Psalm 78:11, 42) turn to these.

The "name" of "the Lord" is in every verse – He is the basis for thanksgiving. Maybe God had us in mind, also, when this Psalm was written. Did you notice to whom it is addressed? The first verse says that it is addressed to "all the earth," and the last verse says that it includes "all generations."

This message of thanksgiving is so deep and wide that it applies to every person in every era in every stage of life.

It's sad, isn't it, that we are the only country in the world, except for Canada and the Philippines, that has a Thanksgiving Day? I wonder how our world would be changed if suddenly all nations would begin to observe Thanksgiving?

I think there is something about giving thanks together to God that breaks down barriers between people and brings about a unity, much like that which occurred as the Berlin wall began to crumble.

I think also that there is a real danger in this season of determining our thanksgiving on the basis of how much we have. Not about how much stuff we have

"Do I have enough turkey to gorge myself sufficiently? Is my money in the bank secure? Am I healthy?" And we let these things determine whether we are or aren't thankful.

The Psalmist says that all of these things may change at any time. They may drift away, or burn up, or someone may steal them. The only thing we have for sure is our relationship with the Lord.

And that is what the 100th Psalm emphasizes. Just scan the Psalm. In vs. 1 you'll find the name of the Lord. In vs. 2 you'll find the name of the Lord. In vs. 3 you'll find the name of the Lord. In vs. 4 it says, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving." And in vs. 5 you'll find the name of the Lord. The basis of our thanksgiving is the Lord.

ILLUS. Alex Haley, the author of "Roots," had an unusual picture hanging on his office wall. It was a picture of a turtle on top of a fence post. When asked, "Why is that there?" Alex Haley answered, "Every time I write something significant, every time I read my words and think that they are wonderful, and begin to feel proud of myself, I look at the turtle on top of the fence post and remember that he didn't get there on his own. He had help."

That is the basis of thankfulness to remember that we got here with the help of God, and that He is the provider of every blessing we have.

## **2. Five Thanksgiving Commands**

Now, as we look more carefully at this Psalm, we find that there is a series of 5 commands given.

## **1. "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth." – vs. 1**

It means to "shout with the force of a trumpet blast," a shout of joy to the Lord that comes from the very depths of your being.

Maybe He solved your problem. Maybe He has given you the direction to go. Maybe He has provided a blessing, and you realize that it has come from God. So from the depths of your being you proclaim your praise.

ILLUS. Roland Allen tells about a veteran missionary who came up to him one day after he had delivered his sermon. The missionary introduced himself and said, "I was a medical missionary for many years in India. And I served in a region where there was progressive blindness. People were born with healthy vision, but there was something in that area that caused people to lose their sight as they grew older."

But this missionary had developed a treatment which would stop progressive blindness. So people came to him and he performed his treatment, and they would leave realizing that they would have become completely blind, but because of him their sight had been saved.

He said that they never said, "Thank you," because that phrase was not in their dialect. Instead, they spoke a word that meant, "I will tell your name." Wherever they went, they would tell the name of the missionary who had cured their blindness. They had received something so wonderful that they eagerly proclaimed it.

And that is what the Psalmist is saying. "Suddenly you realize that God has been so good to you that you can't keep it inside any more. From the depths of your being you shout your joy unto the Lord."

Why you should get in the habit of saying, "Praise the Lord!"

## **2. "Serve the Lord with gladness."**

It doesn't say "serve the church." It doesn't say "serve the preacher, or serve the leaders, or serve the organization." It says, "serve the Lord."

The Bible teaches that if we witness on behalf of the Lord, if we feed the hungry, if we clothe the naked, if we do the work of the Lord, whatever it might be, we are serving the Lord.

In Matthew 25:40 Jesus said, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."

I'm not sure that we grasp that. Maybe we serve at times out of a feeling of obligation or a fear of guilt if we don't serve, or maybe even because we want to draw attention to ourselves.

John 12:26 Jesus said "...If anyone serve me him with My Father honor."

It's natural for us to desire appreciation when we do something that is worthwhile. But the Psalmist says, "In whatever you do, serve the Lord with gladness."

**3. "Come before Him with joyful songs."** Psalm 98:4 says, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord."

Job 35:10 says that God gives "songs in the night"

Psalm 40:3 "He has put a new song in my mouth – praise to our God. Many will see it and fear and trust in the Lord."

Have you noticed? In these first 3 commands, God has said, "I want you to be happy. Shout with joy, serve with gladness, and come with joyful songs."

Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 146 - 150

Now just take a moment and look at the people around you. Do they look happy? Or are they just sitting there with scowls on their faces?

The Psalmist says, "Come before Him and serve Him and sing His praise with joy in your heart."

**4. "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."**

God took every bone, every joint, and He welded them together with sinews and muscles and covered them with skin and gave us eyes that see, brains that think, and fingers that can pick things up. God made us, inside and out. He made you the way He wanted you to be. And He made me the way He wanted me to be.

And He is still making us. That is important to realize, too. He's not satisfied with the unfinished product. He's not satisfied with your temper. He's not satisfied with

the weak areas of your life where you are giving in to temptation. So He's still making us. He's still working on our lives.

God is your maker, and you are created in His image. Therefore, give Him thanks for who you are.

Then He says, "We are His people, the sheep of His pasture." Most of us want to be shepherds, not sheep. "It's not any fun being sheep," we say.

But the problem is, we don't know where the still waters and green pastures are. And every time we go out searching for them, we invariably end up in the far country.

He is saying, "You be the sheep. Let me be the shepherd, and I will lead you beside the still waters and the green pastures. Just let me lead."

**5. "Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good and His love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations."**

In the O.T. the temple symbolized the presence of God. So whenever the people came to the temple and entered the courtyards they knew that they had come into the presence of God.

Now that temple no longer exists. But oftentimes the place where we meet to worship God is called a "sanctuary," indicating that God is there. But God is also everywhere. You know that. He is with you as you drive on the highway. He is with you when you work. He is with you as you care for your children. He is with you every moment of your life. He is inside of every one of His children

1 Corinthians 3:16, 17 says that "...you are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you. For the temple of God is holy which temple you are!

That is the source of our thanksgiving, isn't it? But here's a troubling thought -

What if God began to treat us like we so often treat Him? What if God met our needs to the same extent that we give Him our lives?

What if we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when God sent the rain? What if God stopped loving and caring for us because we failed to love and care for others? What if God took away His message because we wouldn't listen to His messenger?

What if He wouldn't bless us today because we didn't thank Him yesterday?  
What if God answered our prayers the way we answer His call for service? What  
if God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we did not follow Him  
today?

Lord, help us to be thankful that you do "not treat us as our sins deserve or  
repay us according to our iniquities" [Psalm 103:10].

CONCL. I pray that this will be a meaningful Thanksgiving season for you and all  
your family. Take time to read the 100th Psalm again. And if you'll heed those  
commands, your heart will overflow with thanksgiving to the Lord.