

THE DISCIPLINE OF GRATITUDE: GIVE THANKS ALWAYS!

(Psalm 100/ 1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Series: The Disciplines of a Godly Life (Part 7)

...If you have come to know Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord then as breathing is to your body, so the giving of thanks ought to be to your soul as you express thanks. We who know Jesus are the most blessed of all people on the earth, for we know the One who not only made and redeemed us, but has prepared a home for us in heaven. ...Yet, many believers allow themselves to be swallowed up by all the issues of life, and forget to enjoy expressing gratitude to God and to others. We need to practice the discipline of gratitude by remembering that we belong to Him and that we exist only for His purpose "We are His, the sheep of His pasture."
...Psalm 100, an old friend, is the only Psalm titled, "For Giving Thanks." This great Psalm of gratitude has 7 commands and 2 explanations telling why we should give thanks. "The Ole 100."

TWO OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THIS THANKSGIVING HYMN CALLING US TO FILL OUR SPEECH WITH WORDS OF GRATITUDE.

..."Our happy God should be worshiped by a happy people, a cheerful spirit is in keeping with His nature" (Spurgeon)

I. We Are Instructed In How To Express Our Thanks To The Lord. (vv.1-3)

A. To help us, God tells 3 ways to show our appreciation for Him. (All three are commands)

1. We can "make a joyful noise," or "Shout" to the Lord. (v.1)

...God loves it loud, with great intensity, for that is the way He does all things. We can shout because we are happy with Him! This is the shout of loyal subjects when their king arrives. Joy and gladness is the emphasis!

2. We can serve the Lord. To serve means that by doing so we express thanks to Him.

...Using our abilities both in the assembly and out in the community to bless others.

3. We can "come." This is the gathering together of God's people to worship Him. (v.2)

...Formal worship is what is in view here. Don't ever minimize corporate worship, for if whenever "2 or 3 are gathered in His name, there He is in the midst." Jesus visits Grace Church every Sunday morning. This should change worship for all of us!

...When God's people sing the great truths of the faith, God is praised and thanked!

..."Nothing more sublime this side of heaven than the singing of a vast congregation."

B. To help us, God tells WHY we are to give Him thanks. (v.3) The 4th command tells us to "know."

...Our thanksgiving to God must be intelligent. We must know some things about Him.

...So we ask, "What is it about God that we need to know?" 2 specific things:

1. He is our Creator. God has made you.

...John Calvin wrote, "The natural result of knowing God is to know ourselves, and that the only way we know ourselves is by knowing God." Knowing ourselves and knowing God go together. Note what happens when we do not know God as our Creator:

...We imagine that we are our own creators. The appeal of evolution is that it attempts to explain origins without any God. Results: God is not thanked.

...We imagine that we are our own creators admiring our abilities and achievements.

2. He is our Redeemer. This is what "We are His people...the sheep," means. (v.3)
 ...This is even more important than knowing God as Creator. (Psalm 23, John 10:11-12)
 ...If there is no other reason to be thankful to God, we should be because He has both made and redeemed us. No one should be more thankful to God than "His sheep," who are cared for by the Good Shepherd.
 ...Since He made and redeemed us, we belong to Him to do as He pleases.
 ...Remember, no matter what happens we are always "His people." We are still "His..."

II. We Are Invited To Worship In Order To Express Our Gratitude To Him. (vv4-5)

- A. The "invitation" is offered again to assemble together and to sound forth His praises.
 1. "Enter" is a command and reminds us that worship of God is not optional for us.
 2. The focus of our worship is the Lord our God. He is glorious. "Bless Him..."
- B. God provides us again with the reasons for our thankful worship of Him.
 ...He is good, He is love, and He is faithful. God is like this and will always be so!

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN MY LIFE?

1. Don't ever be half-hearted in your praise to the Lord. Sing out your words of thanksgiving with intensity from the depth of your heart. Never forget, God loves to listen to you do so. Such a thing is pleasing to Him. He is our King...and we love to express our happy gratitude for Him and all He has done.
2. The very fact that this Psalm has 7 commands directing us, ought to suggest to you that the giving of thanksgiving is a discipline. This discipline ought to find its way into your everyday speech as you express your thanks for His care of you...He is your Creator, He is your Redeemer.
3. As a Christian, you ought to be known by others as a humble person who "flows forth with thanks." We are thankful to God and to all those near us, and we find ways to express our gratitude. Paul told us, "Give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thess. 5:18)
4. Perhaps you have never bowed your knee and heart before the Lord as your Creator and Redeemer. This morning Jesus is calling you to be saved from your sins. The Bible tells, "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."