

Text: Ps. 100

Title: "The Daily Duty to be Thankful"

Time: 11/27/2022 am.

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Cooking shows have a great time with the Thanksgiving meal. On one show, however, the host who cooked the meal suggested that the meal she was cooking would be great for inviting friends over and saying thanks to them. That is not what Thanksgiving is all about, is it? It is amazing that a network could spend so much time on a holiday and yet mention so rarely what the holiday is all about.

George Washington did not share a sense of embarrassment about what Thanksgiving Day is all about. He issued the first Presidential Thanksgiving Proclamation commanding our nation to celebrate the holiday on the fourth Thursday of November in 1789. Here is what he said:

"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 especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.

"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-- That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks--for his kind care and protection of the People of this Country previous to their becoming a Nation--for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his Providence which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war--for the great degree of tranquility, union,

and plenty, which we have since enjoyed--for the peaceable and rational manner, in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted--for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed; and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.

“And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions -- to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually--to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed--to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shown kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord--To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us--and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

“Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.

“Go: Washington.”

Washington speaks of duty when he recommends this day of Thanksgiving: “Whereas it is the duty.” He does so because he knew his Bible. Giving God thanks is our duty. Giving thanks to God is a command that we are supposed to obey.

Here in Psalm 100 we have 7 imperatives or commands in 5 verses. The Psalm has a unique heading: “A Psalm for Thanksgiving” or “A Psalm for the Thanksgiving Offering.” The Thanksgiving offering was one of the peace offerings God designed for the nation of Israel, and we read about it in Lev. 7:11-15. That last verse tells us something about God’s command to celebrate Thanksgiving that is different than Washington’s proclamation. Yesterday’s

sacrifice of thanksgiving was not good enough for today. Each day needs its own sacrifice of thanksgiving. The commands of Psalm 100 to give thanks are our daily duty. I want us to see three things about this duty this morning.

I. The daily duty to give thanks is a universal responsibility (v. 1, "all the earth"; Ps. 47:1-2, "all peoples" = "all the earth"; 66:1-4, includes "enemies"; 98:1-4, comprised of both the nations and the house of Israel).

Illustration: When we who live in the post-modern pluralistic pagan America of today blow the dust off the documents of our founding fathers, they sound strange to us. Our leaders today do not often speak the way Washington did, and when they do they are ridiculed and attacked for violating the separation of church and state or some other such evil.

Application: Well, what has made America the greatest nation in the history of mankind has been God's providential and sovereign blessing upon her. And what has brought God's blessing upon her has been the insights of the leaders of our past, who recognized the importance of that blessing and the duty that secular governments bare before the God of heaven. Again, Washington's proclamation begins: "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. . . ." We need leaders who recognize this today.

But we also need lives and homes that recognize the universal importance of the daily duty of giving thanks. Have we taken the time to give God thanks today? The reason our nation no longer has many leaders who give God daily thanks is that we are a nation of people who fail to give God daily thanks.

You may say, "Pastor, I have nothing to be thankful for!" Well, the command to give thanks is universal in two ways: (1) as I have said already, everyone must do it; and (2) we must do it in regard to everything ("In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you," 1 Thess. 5:18; see Jam. 1:2-3). We have plenty for which to give thanks this morn-

ing, and to the degree we have trouble seeing that, we are outside of the will of God for our lives.

II. The daily duty to give thanks is a specific responsibility (vv. 1-4).

Illustration: There are many kinds of harvest festivals around the globe today. In China they celebrate a moon festival with mooncakes and duck eggs. In India, the four days of Pongal include honoring the god of the rain, the god of the clouds, the god of the sun, and their cows with a special dish called sarkkarai pongal and sugar cane sticks. In Ghana spirits, twins, and triplets are honored with mashed yams and hard-boiled eggs. None of that would do for our celebration this week. We have some specific expectations, especially when it comes to the food part of the day.

Well, Psalm 100 teaches us that God has some specific expectations when it comes to the Thanksgiving part of each of our days. Note four of these with me.

A. Thanksgiving should involve the confidence of victory (v. 1).

Illustration: Shouts of triumph are a normal part of the Thanksgiving celebration in our family because of the football games that are on TV. You cannot celebrate Thanksgiving with my brother-in-law without also enjoying some football. When the Patriots are involved, the shouts are especially enthusiastic.

Application: The word translated *make a joyful noise* refers especially to a shout of triumph, but it is not a carnal football shout. Rather, it is a holy spiritual expression of confidence in Christ in the face of spiritual battle. The word is used in Ps. 41:11, "By this I know that You are pleased with me, because my enemy does not shout in triumph over me." God has called us to a life that recognizes that in the end, we face a defeated foe. Our shout of triumph is what Paul cries out in the resurrection chapter of the Bible, 1 Cor. 15:55-57, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We are not making a joyful noise or a triumphant noise to the

Lord when we choose in spite of this victory to live in defeat to our sin and Satan. God is pleased with us in Christ. He has given us the freedom of His redemption, the power of His Spirit, the comfort of His word, the right of prayer before His throne of grace, rich fellowship with His people, and life eternal with Him so that none of this ever ends, and for these reasons we can experience the joy that shouts with triumph over our enemy. Be victorious in that power over sin in your life. Our enemies do not stand a chance. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.

B. Thanksgiving should involve enthusiastic worship (v. 2).

Illustration: I learned many things from Pastor Dave Reinhardt while serving as the assistant pastor of The Baptist Church of Danbury. One of the things I remember about Brother Dave's teaching there was his emphasis on the etymology of this word *enthusiasm*. It comes from the Greek word for God (*theos*). To be *enthused* means to be *in-God*. It is being in God's presence that makes someone enthusiastic in the worship of the Lord.

Application: It should be the presence of God within us and in the midst of our assembly that makes our service, including our singing, a joyful and lighthearted thing. We all know that large crowds create a kind of enthusiasm. Certain kinds of music have been known to create a certain kind of enthusiasm. What makes us glad and enthusiastic when we worship? We are worshipping in the presence of the Lord. What causes us to want to sing? We are singing in His presence.

Application: Clearly, singing for the purposes of worship is singing for the benefit of the presence of the Lord. We do not choose the style of our singing based on the presence of worldly young people or on the presence of anyone else. We sing because we are in the presence of the Lord. Christian music is never a performance for the presence of an audience, but an act of worship in view of the presence of the Lord. For this reason, we want to steer clear from music that puts the focus on the performer and what he is doing for the audience. The old hymns and our psalter serve us well in this regard. The Psalms can be difficult to sing, because we are unfamiliar with them, but they are the one songbook the Lord has written. We sing them because their Author is

here.

C. Thanksgiving should involve a love for theological truth (v. 3).

Application: God wants us to know Him better by knowing more about Him. Yahweh is God. God is not the spirits of the harvest, the moon, the rain, the clouds, the sun, the cows, nor twins and triplets. Though it comes as a great shock to postmodern man, our self is not God. We must worship Yahweh, the God of the Bible, not some God of our own invention. We must give Him thanks, or we have not given thanks. He is our maker, we are His creatures; He is our sovereign, we are His people; He is our shepherd, we are His sheep; He is the ascended Christ, and we are His disciples. Men today do not like to confess that they have a Maker, and a King, a Shepherd, and an ascended Christ who graciously gives them all good things to enjoy.

Illustration: C. H. Spurgeon ministered as a pastor in days that were just beginning to see the rise of evolution's denial of biblical creation. He finished his *Treasury of David* in 1885, a commentary on the Psalms. Here is what Spurgeon wrote about evolution in his comments on this verse: "Of late philosophy has labored hard to prove that all things have been developed from atoms, or have, in other words, made themselves; if this theory shall ever find believers, there will certainly remain no reason for accusing the superstitious of credulity, for the amount of credence necessary to accept this dogma of skepticism is a thousandfold greater than that which is required by an absurd belief in winking Madonnas, and smiling Bambinos. For our part, we find it far more easy to believe that the Lord made us than that we were developed by a long chain of natural selections from floating atoms which fashioned themselves."

A lot of scientific research has been done since 1885, and now Spurgeon's thousandfold has become a millionfold. The sudden appearance of forms in the fossil record, the irreducible complexity of the human cell, the information inherent in DNA, and much, much more have made it a far greater sin to be a macro-evolutionary denier of biblical creation than it was in Spurgeon's day.

To thank the Lord we must know the Lord, and to know the Lord we must know truths about him. For this reason the duty of giving thanks daily always includes the command, “Know ye.”

D. Thanksgiving should involve corporate assembly (v. 4).

Application: In the days of this psalm, “His gates” were the gates of the tabernacle, and “His courts” were the courts of the tabernacle. God had designed the temple to be the place where His people could be thankful unto Him and bless His name. Today, God has given us the assembly of the local church for that. The local church must be an assembly of people who are thankful unto Him and who bless His name. The Psalm does not say find your own place to give thanks and do it on your own. We can do that too, of course. It says do it by entering the corporate assembly. Missing church is a thankless thing to do.

III. The daily duty to give thanks is a reasonable responsibility (v. 5).

Application: *For* indicates that here we find the reason to give thanks. Why give thanks? The Lord is good, not evil; His covenantal love is everlasting, not temporary and unstable; and His faithfulness endures; it does not fail. God’s people understand that it is a reasonable thing to give daily thanks to the Lord, and they marvel at how unreasonably the world in which we live maintains a thankless distance from Him. We live in a world that has convinced itself that God is not good, that the need for His covenant of love is optional at best and outdated at worst, and that His truth became obsolete generations ago. The Psalm reminds us that this is not the case.

Conclusion: William Bradford wrote in his *History of Plymouth Plantation* some good advice for how we ought to remember the experiences of the pilgrims who gave us our Thanksgiving Day tradition. Speaking of that small band that exited the Mayflower under truly dire circumstances, he said: “What could now sustain them but the Spirit of God and His grace? May not and ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: ‘Our fathers were Englishmen who came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness; but they cried unto the Lord,

and He heard their voice, and looked on their adversity. Let them therefore praise the Lord, because He is good and His mercies endure forever. Yea, let them who have been redeemed of the Lord show how He hath delivered them from the hand of the oppressor. When they wandered in the desert wilderness out of the way, and found no city to dwell in, both hungry and thirsty, their soul was overwhelmed in them. Let them confess before the Lord His loving kindness, and His wonderful works before the sons of men."

It is our duty too to be thankful every day. Are you thankful to the Lord today? Have you given Him your thanks? Or are you still confused over what Thanksgiving Day is really all about?

"A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, 'Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.' That is the distinction—the sermon, and the 'lightning and the thunder.' To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters."

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*