

“Thanksgiving in Biblical Perspective”

Psalm 100

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God’s people need to remain faithful. The persecuted church is the persevering church and so we want to be a praying church and a ministering church alongside of them as well. This is a study where the pastor gives an introduction to the study and then allows others to give the rest of it. This means that after I give you a couple of thoughts then you will get the opportunity to give thanks to the Lord for what He has done in your life and encouragements in a couple of sentences as the Lord lays it on your heart. I want to start by reading Psalms 100.

Psalms 100:1–5 says *[1] Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!*

*[2] Serve the LORD with gladness!*

*Come into his presence with singing!*

*[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.*

*[4] Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise!*

*Give thanks to him; bless his name!*

*[5] For the LORD is good;  
his steadfast love endures forever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.*

This preeminent Psalms that you hear on thanksgiving that many enjoy reading with their families at Thanksgiving, I highly recommend giving thanks at that meal with those you share it with as well. This Psalms gives you five directives and I want you to see them.

The first directive is the first verse which says; *[1] Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!* Notice the anticipation of the Psalmist. Hundreds of years before Christ this Psalmist will direct us to the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham where God says to him, ‘in you all the families/nations of the earth shall be blessed.’ Here the Psalmist is anticipating a day in which the will be those who will sing praises to God. I’m so glad it says make a joyful noise and not a perfect melody. My noise unto the Lord is so joyful and noisy that some of you will try to sing louder to try and cover me up. The anticipation is that this just won’t happen from the down payment of God called the Promised Land but it will happen from all the earth for this is my Father’s World.

The second directive is that we’re to serve the Lord with gladness. His gladness of His salvation fills our heart so we serve Him not begrudgingly but with gladness for we are the redeemed of the Lord.

A third command is for us to come into His presence with singing. Now we find out how to make that joyful noise. We are to lift up psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to the praise of our God that singing is to mark the people of our God. I love to walk into a congregation and hear each other speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs and all that they are speaking to one another is coming from a heart that is making melody to the Lord.

The fourth thing is that after we come into His presence with singing we are to know that the Lord, He is God. It is He who made us and we are His people the sheep of His pastures. There are three great works of God that He has done – creation, redemption and providence.

There is a fourth work coming called the consummation where He will deliver His people into a new heavens and a new earth but He has done three works and we are headed to the fourth work. In those three works they all feed our singing, our praise, our service.

We serve Him because it is He who made us. We are not a mutated accident coming through a series of accidents called atheistic Darwinian evolution. On the contrary, God has made you and fashioned you in His image. The God of glory has not only made us but saved us, we who sing with gladness and we who worship Him with all of our hearts. Psalms 100:3b says *It is he who made us, and we are his*; here we see He created (made) us and He has bought us and brought us to Himself. We belong to Him. Then we see His providence as it says ‘we are His people and the sheep of His pasture’ for He cares for us. We see all three works of God feed our glad serving, our joyful noise, our singing of praise to Him. We know our God who has made us, saved us and sustains us.

This leads us to what we are about to do in all of life, hopefully, and that is ‘enter His gates with thanksgiving’ the fifth directive. Psalms 100:4 says *[4] Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!* It is absolutely appropriate to thank others whom the Lord has used in our life but ultimately our thanksgiving arises to the Lord. We bless Him and His Name for it is by His Name that we must be saved. It is in the name of Jesus and under the Triune God that we were baptized into the body of Christ – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is our great Triune God who created us, saved us and sustains us.

So we give thanks and we will not be silent. We will not only make a joyful noise and sing but we will give thanks to Him and bless His holy Name. Why? Here is the benediction; for the Lord is good, His steadfast love endures forever, His faithfulness to all generations. My love for the Lord, I confess, waxes and wanes but His love for me is steadfast. That’s why my love when it wanes, waxes back because He loves me and brings me back. So I will sing, make a joyful noise, serve Him with a heart being filled with gladness, know that He is my Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer and in moments like this I will give thanks.

Think on those things that you are thankful for and let it fill your heart. Cliff Barrows died this last week. I was struck by the fact that George Beverly Shea lived to be 104 years old. Cliff lived to be 93 years old and Billy Graham is 98 and counting. My grandfather actually served on the original Billy Graham Crusade team from 1948 to 1952 and so that family being from the same church, Calvary Independent Presbyterian so many things flooded my mind when I heard of Cliff’s passing.

There is one that Ravi Zacharias informed me of that I thought was absolutely astounding. That was a man who had to flee the persecution in another place and this was years ago from Romania. Ravi met him with Jim Kennedy at Coral Ridge Presbyterian in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Jim said to Ravi, “I want to introduce you to a Romanian Christian.” Ravi said “What is your name?” expecting a wonderful, colorful Romanian name. The man said “My name is Dwight Barrows.” “How did you get a name like Dwight Barrows as a Romanian refugee Christian?” “There was a man ambassador who worked it out for me to flee and when I left he gave me the biography of D.L. Moody but I never read it. I came here and descended into alcoholism. One day I was walking by the Pontiac Dome in Detroit and there were thousands of people flooding out of it but there was no game being played and didn’t understand why so many were there so I went in. I found out there had been a Billy Graham Crusade. I went over to a man who was stacking up chairs and cleaning up things and asked what they were doing. I sat down with this man who told me about their crusade and what it was about. I received Christ that night as that man prayed with me.”

That was Cliff Barrows. He left and went and read his D.L. Moody book and he had been following Jesus ever since. He had heard that you get a new name when you become a Christian so he took the name Dwight Barrows from then on. Isn't the tapestry of God's grace enormous? Give thanks for His steadfast love endures forever.