Reasons We Should Be Thankful Every Day

Psalm 100

 This morning we will be discussing a topic that serves as the basis for this upcoming holiday, Thanksgiving. This is the part of the year that I know my family looks forward to and I know that many of you in this room today feel the same way. Looking back at how this became a holiday in American History shows us the importance of being thankful for all of the blessings that God has showered us with. From the early days when the Pilgrims came from England all the way up to today, Thanksgiving has been a time for the people of this nation to come together and share gratitude for all of the blessings that we have received. There is so much that we can be thankful for. We do not have to look very far to see all of the reasons why we need to be grateful. With our time together today we will be looking carefully at the 100th Psalm. The purpose of this Psalm is to praise God for all of the good things He has done for us and to help us remember that it is because of God’s grace that He shares those things with us. As we consider what the Psalmist is sharing, we will discuss five reasons why God deserves our praise, the attitude we need to have when we approach God and finally how we can show our thanksgiving to God. Let’s read together the 100th Psalm: **“Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. 2 Serve the Lord with jubilation; Come before Him with rejoicing. 3 Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. 4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving, And His courtyards with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. 5 For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting And His faithfulness is to all generations.”**

In this Psalm we find five reasons why God deserves our thanksgiving and praise. The first reason why God deserves our praise is because He alone is God and is the only One deserving of such praise. Verse 3 begins with these words “Know that the Lord Himself is God…” Before we proceed, we need to know without any confusion that God is the only God who exists and it is He who has given us everything that we have. No other gods exist or have the power of the Lord our God. We see that many times in Scripture man is deceived into thinking there are many gods and that he can worship those false gods in addition to the true God. This was usually done to establish peace with other people or to satisfy them. One such example is provided for us in the first book of Kings. In chapter 18 the prophet Elijah is having a competition with the prophets of Baal. Now Baal was the god that the Canaanites worshiped. The King of Israel at the time, Ahab, had married Jezebel who was a worshiper of Baal. In order to please her the king not only worshiped Baal but allowed the people of Israel to worship this false god as well. The prophet Elijah proposed a competition with the prophets of Baal. Both he and the prophets of Baal would build alters on Mount Carmel. The God who responded first by sending fire from the sky to burn the offering would be the winner. In verse 21 Elijah makes this bold statement **“How long are you going to struggle with the two choices? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.”** Elijah wanted the people to stop trying to figure out who the one true God is. It is clear that the God of Israel is the only God, but since the people had been deceived into worshiping Baal, they had lost sight of this truth. When God sent the fire from heaven it burned up all of the alter and the sacrifice. Then Elijah had all of the prophets of Baal killed. God showed His power over the false gods. So, the psalmist wants his reader to know for certain that there is only one God who has the world in His hands, and that is the Lord God of Israel. Therefore, the reason why God deserves worship is because He is the only true God. Having this fact straight makes everything else in our life fall into place.

 The second reason God deserves our praise is because He made us, we did not make ourselves. When God spoke the words of creation, He said that He was making man in His image. We have been created for a purpose and that purpose is to glorify God and make Him known to all of creation. One of the prevailing theories of the day, evolution, teaches that man is just a cosmic accident and that everything we see around us is the result of random processes that were not guided by any designer. When we look around us and see the complexity and beauty of creation, we can clearly see that this is the handiwork of God. If we deter from this truth and begin to accept the empty theories of man then we begin to think that our lives have no meaning, which results in a very shallow and worthless existence. We can be thankful because we have a God to show our thankfulness to. He is to be worshiped and praised for His creation.

 The third reason is that “We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” We can be grateful because God in His infinite grace has called us to be His own. This speaks of the love of God. Not only is God our creator and the One who has created us for a purpose, we can also say that we are His because He has made us His own through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He loved us so much that He was willing to take on human flesh and live a physical life like we do. Then He showed us His love by giving up that life for us so that we can be made right with Him again. As Jesus tells Nicodemus in **John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.”** God has made us His own by laying down His life and paying the penalty for sin that we ourselves cannot pay. We can live with thanksgiving every day because God has shown us such grace and did this for us even before we could ever ask for it. This is how the shepherd treats his sheep. He does whatever is necessary to care for them, to protect them from the predators and finally to seek them out if they are lost. Our God does all of these things for us, therefore He deserves praise.

 In verse 5 the psalmist continues providing reasons why God deserves our praises. He first says that “The Lord is Good.” This statement is very broad, but it is so important in our understanding of God. What does it mean for God to be good? This means that God does only what it right in all ways He is holy. When Jesus was called good master by the rich young man Jesus responds this way **“Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone” (Luke 18:19).** Why is this so important for us to remember? We need to know this truth because we worship a God who is pure, holy and good in all of His ways. When we worship Him, we know that we are worshiping a God who deserves it and has shown all of His goodness in the ways that He has been faithful to His people.

 Finally in verse 5 the psalmist writes that “His mercy is everlasting and His faithfulness is to all generations.” This is such an awesome attribute of God because He remains faithful to us even when we are unfaithful to Him (2 Tim. 2:13). God shows His mercy to all generations and it has no end. As we try to understand these attributes of God let us look closer at each of them. Let’s first discuss the mercy of God. In what ways is God merciful? God shows mercy when He forgives a sinner of their sins and allows them to inherit eternal life. This is considered merciful because God is allowing that person to have something they have not earned on their own merits. We can live in thanksgiving because our God allows us to be His people and welcomes us into His presence. The Apostle Paul, in his epistle to Titus, writes these words **“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we did in righteousness, but in accordance with His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing” (3:5).** This mercy and grace that has been shown to us by God the Father is new every morning and freely available to all who honor Him as the one and only God and those who walk in His statutes.

 The faithfulness of God is shown in the ways that He is always faithful. He always keeps His promises and does exactly what He says He will do. When Moses was giving his final instructions to the children of Israel, he reminded them **“Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His faithfulness to a thousand generations for those who love Him and keep His commandments” (Deuteronomy 7:9).** Not only did Moses remind the people of this fact, but as we read the entirety of Scripture, we see that whenever God makes a covenant with His people, He always sees to it that the covenant is withheld. All of the times when the nation of Israel faced judgment or calamity it was because they had violated the covenant by refusing to worship Him alone as God or when they stopped following His laws. As long as the people remained faithful to Him, He would also remain faithful to them.

 In Psalm 100 the writer also shares with us the attitude we should have when we approach the God who deserves our thanksgiving and praise. In verse 4 we are provided with three ways that we can approach the Lord. The first way we should approach the Lord is to “enter His gates with thanksgiving.” When the nation of Israel worshiped God at the Tabernacle, they first entered the gate which opened up to the courtyard. When the people enter though the gate, they are being instructed to enter with thanksgiving giving God all of the honor and praise that He rightly deserves. What this instructs us to do is when we enter this house of worship, we are to approach His throne with a thankful attitude knowing that all we have and our being are because of Him.

 Secondly, we are told to enter His courts with praise. God is the eternal king and when we enter into His presence, we need to do so praising His name. This is why we sing praises to our God every time we gather for worship. When we lift our voices together this raises praises to heaven and the Lord hears His people. Now this brings up the question of how we can appropriately praise God. God’s people can praise His name in many ways. One of the best ways to praise God is by living in a way where others come to know Him through the example of His people. Jesus talked about this when He said that we should let our lights shine before others so that they will see our good works and then because of those works glorify God in heaven (Matthew 5:16). Praising God in the way we live is a praise because we use the life, we have to bring Him honor. The Apostle Paul taught his readers that their lives are to be lived in a way that brings honor to God. **“Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Romans 12:1).** When someone uses their life to honor God, He accepts that as a way or worshiping Him. We must remember that our lives are not our own, that we were bought for a price and that we owe everything to our Creator. This is how we enter his courts with praise.

 Now that we know the reasons why God is worthy of our praise and the way that we need to approach Him, let us conclude out time together by discussing how we can show our thanksgiving and praise to Him. In verses 1 and 2 we are told to “shout joyfully to the Lord, serve the Lord with jubilation and come before Him with rejoicing.” The three actions we are told to take are to shout, serve and come before Him. In our daily lives we are given opportunities to do all three of these things. Shouting joyfully is done in the way we sing our praises to Him in our music as well as in the way we proclaim thew good things He has done in our lives to others. This reminds me of the contemporary song titled “Shout to the North.” The chorus of the song includes these words “Shout to the north and the south Sing to the east and the west Jesus is Savior to all Lord of heaven and earth.” We are told to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to everyone and not hesitate to share it. This is the first way we can praise and show our gratitude to the Lord.

 We also show others we love the Lord by how we serve Him. What are some ways that we can serve Him? One such example is by the way we show love, compassion and care for others when they are struggling. When the church of Jesus Christ performs actions of love in the community that shows others that we do those things because we love God, therefore we love them as well. Another way that we serve the Lord is by telling others the truth regarding Him and sharing with them that the truth, only found in God, is what will bring them happiness and contentment in this world. We serve God faithfully when we serve others and this is the attitude we should take in our interactions with them.

 Finally, as we prepare our hearts for thanksgiving, the Psalmist tells us to come before Him with rejoicing. We should rejoice in all things because it is the Lord God who gives to everyone and allows them to enjoy His creation. When we were going through the Epistle of James together, we learned that in all situations we should have a joyful attitude (1:2). When we approach life with a joyful attitude rather than focus on the things that frustrate or cause us stress, we will find that being grateful is much easier to do. As followers of Christ, we have all the blessings available to us because of His sacrifice and His grace. We have reason to be happy, so let us be known as people who have joy because of the awesome God we serve.

 I would like to wish all of you a very Happy Thanksgiving and urge you to take to heart what Psalm 100 has taught us today. Each of us need to take the time to show our gratitude to God who has been so generous with us and every day continues to bless us with His goodness. When someone sees how happy of a person you are they will want to know why. Tell them that you are happy because God has blessed you with this life, He has purchased your salvation with His own blood even though you do not deserve it, and He promises an eternal home with Him in His presence. These reasons should make us the happiest people on earth. Let us live every day with that joy in our hearts. Prayer.