

## KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GOD

Psalm 100:1–5

Key Verse: 100:3

“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.”

Here’s a Bible quiz. “How many lepers among ten returned to Jesus and gave thanks in Luke 17:11-19?” Yes, only one out of ten returned to give thanks, and we wonder if the percentage is any higher today. The truth is that we are eager to ask but slow to appreciate. Here’s another quiz. “How then did Jesus respond to the leper?” Yes, Jesus said to him, “Your faith has made you well,” and we wonder if we knew that thanks comes from faith. The truth is, we’re eager to have faith, but slow to appreciate.

As Thanksgiving approaches, many of us will ponder what we’re grateful for and possibly share what we’re thankful for during our holiday. Giving thanks and expressing gratitude is an old and trusted concept. What is gratitude? It’s the ability to recognize goodness in both your life and in the actions of others. We each have our own perspective on gratitude. Although the past year has been challenging, stressful, and at times, overwhelming, there is still much to be grateful for.

This psalm is a psalm of thanks to God. We can learn from the psalmist, what to give thanks to God for and why. Here, we’re called upon to praise God and rejoice in him (1,2). We’re also given enough reasons for praise: We praise him because the Lord is God and we are His people (3). We praise him because his love is steadfast, and his faithfulness is to the generations (5). These are plain and common, but they inspire us to give thanks this Thanksgiving holiday.

### 1. THE LORD IS GOD (1-3)

We’re sad sometimes when our life seems to leave us feeling rejected, ignored, uncared for, or just broken altogether. Sometimes our spirit may feel defeated, and we may be wondering when the pain will ever end. But the psalmist refuses any of these elements of sorrow or sadness. This psalm jumps to the simple and direct exhortation to praise God with a joyful shout. Verses 1–2 read, “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!” The elements of our lives on earth need to be joy, gladness, and singing, not sadness, sorrow, or grumbling.

The psalmist tells us how to praise God in three ways. **First**, “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!” (1) Here, “all the earth” means “all the inhabitants of the earth.” He calls “all the earth” to make a joyful noise to the Lord. The word “joyful noise” originally signifies a glad shout, as loyal subjects do when their king appears among them. It also says, “shout for joy.” Many of us may have watched the last game of the 2022 World Series. When the Houston Astros became the World Series champions, the news writer wrote, “The orange-clad spectators beneath the roof of Minute Maid Park were blaring, and the train above the Crawford Boxes was whistling. Around the infield, a small horde of jubilant players turned into a writhing pile of celebration.” What a happy moment for all Astros fans! Imagine all the inhabitants of the earth making such joyful noise, melting the sorrow of war, sickness, poverty, and death. God wants all the earth to be that happy to live. Our happy God should be worshipped by a happy people. A cheerful spirit is the gratitude that we should cherish for his mercies.

**Second**, “Serve the Lord with gladness!” (2a) The whole earth is invited to serve the LORD with gladness. Why? Because it’s our privilege and duty to be happy in worshipping God. Our God really wants to remove human misery and make all mankind happy. As for the true believer in Jesus, he serves his God because he loves to serve him; he assembles with the great congregation because it’s his delight to worship the Most High. Serving the Lord is working for the food that endures to eternal life, but working for physical food perishes (Jn6:27). That’s why Paul also encouraged us to render service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man (Eph6:7).

Then verse 2b reads, “Come into his presence with singing!” As in many places in the psalms, praise is expressed in song. Singing is not the only way to praise God, but it is a main way. In the presence of God, there is such praise and singing. In Revelation 22:5, in God’s very presence, “The Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever.” David sang in his Psalm, “In your presence there is fullness of joy” (Ps16:11). There’s a song with the lyrics, “When I come into His presence, all my questions become clear, In the presence of Jehovah, troubles vanish, hearts are mended.” Yes, this is joy in the presence of God.

The psalmist is so bold as to say that our lives are joyful, glad, and full of singing regardless of our situation. On what basis can he say that so boldly? Verse 3 is the key: “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.” The verb “know” means “to know by experience.” It also means to “acknowledge.” The point is to know who God is in himself, and who he is to me. Someone said, “Knowledge is the mother of devotion and of all obedience: blind sacrifices will never please a seeing God.” So, “Know it; consider and apply it.”

**First**, the Lord, he is God. He is God and not a man as we are. He is an eternal Spirit, the first cause and last end. He is God, and all other pretended deities are vanity and a lie.

**Second**, he is our Creator. "It is he who made us, and we are his." We know that we exist, but nobody can say, "I am that I am." Then who am I? Who made me? God is my Maker. And he is the Lord God. He gave us our being; he is both the former of our bodies and the Father of our spirits. Because God made us, and not we ourselves, therefore we are not our own, but His. His we are, to be acted on by his power, die of by his will, and devoted to his honor and glory.

**Third**, we are his people, and he is our prince, our governor, who gives his law to us, and will call us to account for what we do. The Lord is our judge, our lawgiver. We are not at freedom to do what we will but must always be conscious of doing as we are ordered.

**Fourth**, he is our shepherd, and we are the sheep of his pasture. God takes care of the flock of his feeding. He who made us maintains us and gives us all good things to enjoy.

"He made us" means "we are his." It's fitting that the same verse calls us "the sheep of his pasture." Sheep tend to wander off, so Isaiah says, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa53:6). The Good Shepherd laid down his life for the sheep (Jn10:15) to buy us back for the one who made us. So, as the psalm says twice, "We are his." This is the reason we should give thanks to him always. Isaac Watts, the hymn writer, says, "Let those refuse to sing, who never knew our God, but children of the heavenly King, may speak their joys abroad." Of course, if we don't need God as our Creator, then we don't need to be thankful. Why should we? We have no one but ourselves to thank. Under the New Covenant, a believer has a greater reason for praise: we are a new creation in Jesus Christ, and no more the old (2 Co5:17).

## 2. THE LORD IS GOOD (4–5)

In verse 3 we learned that the Lord is God; it means He is unapproachably high. But we also read that we are His, and this tells us that He is intimately nearby. Because He's so near to us, the Psalmist inspires us with gladness and singing instead of dread and fear. If He's our God whom we serve, verse 4 tells us how to serve him practically. The psalmist says, "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!"

It's as though the gates of the City, the courts of his Sanctuary, were suddenly thrown open, and the people of God entered and burst into songs of praise and thanksgiving. "Enter into his gates" and "His courts" means to publicly worship God. When we come to God's house, we become so full of thanksgiving because we have such a privilege to worship our God. When we enter his courts, we praise him for the permission. The psalmist exhorts: "Give thanks to him; bless his name!" "Thanks" and "praise" merge together, and God's people are thankful and bless His name. A special aspect of thanksgiving involves all the people of God together and not just the private prayers of individuals. Now the psalmist pictures the people of God from all the earth (Ps100:1) entering through the gates and into the courts of God's temple. As God's people approach, we should do so with thanksgiving, recognizing how much God has done for us. Joy is meant to be shared with others. In fact, our joy becomes more complete when it's shared with others. So, the early Christians are described as follows: "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts" (Ac2:45).

Why do we thank God? Verse 5 reads: "For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations." The psalmist mentions God's attributes as the reasons to thank God: The Lord's goodness, His steadfast love, and His faithfulness. In Psalm 34:8, Psalmist proclaims, "Taste and see that the Lord is good," and in Psalm 85:12 he says, "Yes, the Lord will give what is good." Thanks and praise are right in recognition of God's goodness. He's good in His plans, good in His grace, good in His forgiveness, good in His covenant, and good in every aspect of His being. On the other hand, the gods of the Gentiles were not good. They were selfish and fickle. People could never know when they might turn against them and do them harm. Not so our God. The Lord is good and has always been good to us.

"His steadfast love endures forever." His love is like a fountain that can never be dried. We, who are now sanctified by his love, are a glorified monument of His mercy forever. "His faithfulness to all generations" means that he's the God of absolute truth and faithfulness. No word of His shall fall to the ground as old-fashioned or void. This promise is sure to all, from age to age. These are the everlasting reasons to give thanks and praise God. From generation to generation the Lord can be trusted, and from generation to generation the Lord can be thanked and be praised. It's significant that we, fathers and mothers, worship today will have an important influence on our children tomorrow.

In this short Psalm, there are eight commands related to the thanksgiving and praise. Because He's our Lord (1), God (3a), Creator (3b), Owner (3c), and Shepherd (3c), we should thank Him. We also should thank Him because of His attributes: He's good (5a), His steadfast love (5b) and His faithfulness endure to all generations(5c). In this psalm we're called twice to give thanks, and we're told

twice why we must give thanks. In the Bible, when some instruction or detail is important, it's repeatedly said or given. The psalmist wants to tell us that thanksgiving and praise are natural responses of all the earth to God. Thanksgiving and praise to God are not optional, but unavoidable for us as His creatures.

When I thought about thanking God this thanksgiving season, I was surprised by how lukewarm my heart was. My daily life has been just common, nothing exciting, nothing to fall down about. My heart has been constantly pressed by our sick coworkers, by the high price of groceries, by worrying about catching the corona virus, and by the Ukraine war. But through this psalm I realized that thanksgiving can help me overcome my bored daily life, my worries, and my useless sympathies. Right! The spirit of thanksgiving helps us also to overcome some of the sins that too often invade our lives. If we don't make a joyful noise, it's so easy to complain (1). If we don't serve the Lord, then we serve idols (2). Our pride hinders us from coming to God (3). No thanksgiving leaves us with ingratitude (4). We need to remember why humans began our terrible fall into sin and judgement. It was when our first parents became "unthankful," even in the middle of the garden of Eden. A thankful spirit is a triumphant spirit. On the contrary, unthankful heart leads us to all kinds of sins (Ro1:21). Let's be thankful always and be victorious always! Let's read verse 3 together: "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."