

A Day of Thanksgiving

Call to worship:

A Psalm for Thanksgiving.

*Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth.
Serve the Lord with gladness;
Come before Him with joyful singing.
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.
Enter His gates with thanksgiving,
And His courts with praise.
Give thanks to Him; bless His name.
For the Lord is good;
His lovingkindness is everlasting,
And His faithfulness to all generations. (Psalm 100:1-5)*

A prayer of thanks

Introduction to our sermon of songs:

Our national Thanksgiving holiday reminds us of how blessed we are in our land. It was appropriate that Americans should be encouraged to set aside a day each year with a special purpose to give thanks. But how much more should those who are Christians be thankful and that every day. Again and again God's word reminds us of the need to be thankful to God.

in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Thanksgiving is an integral part of our worship when we come together.

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

**And so today we will be devoting our time to thanksgiving in a sermon in song.
(Mark will lead...)**

God has given us so many things to be thankful for. Paul began the book of Ephesians with a word of praise or thanksgiving to God for our many blessings:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, (Ephesians 1:3)

Let sing with thanksgiving about the many blessings we have in Jesus Christ.

#781 thank you, Lord

or, #55 I will bless thee o Lord
or #68 Give thanks

We have been adopted into the family of God.

In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (Eph. 1:4-6)

Our own story is much like the story of the prodigal son who left home and lost everything. But seeing his great mistake he purposed to return to His Father. Jesus describes the Father's reaction:

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' (Lk. 15:20-24)

The Father's love is beautifully captured in our next song:

#136 Love for all (v. 1,2,3,4)

We have been forgiven of our sins through the blood of His Son.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us. (Ephesians 1:7-8)

#361 Nailed to the cross (v. 1,2,3)

We have received the revelation of His purpose.

In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is the, summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. (Eph. 1:8-10)

#5 Give thanks to the Lord (a congregational reading)

#4 To God be the glory (v. 1,2)

We have an inheritance with God in the future.

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. (Eph. 1:10-12)

#874 Walking alone at Eve (v. 1,3)

And while we look for eternal things, we enjoy the blessings of our life of faith now:

We have a spiritual family to love and support us.

But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, that there should be no division in the body, but that

the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. (1 Cor. 12:22-24)

#744 We're part of the family (v. 1,2,3)

We have the privilege of prayer.

And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

#827 Sweet hour of prayer (v. 1,2,3)

We have the blessed assurance and peace of His love and forgiveness.

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:1-5)

#480 Blessed Assurance (v. 1,2,3)

The Lord's Supper

Of course all of these wonderful things are the result of what Jesus did for us in giving His life upon the cross. Today we gather to remember with gratitude what He did.

Very often in connection with the Lord's Supper we read the words of 1 Cor. 11:

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." (1 Corinthians 11:23-24)

When Paul describes the Lord giving thanks, he uses the Greek word "eucharistesas." And most of you would recognize that word as a term that some continue to use for the Lord's Supper--the Eucharist. It was a term used by the second-century church for the Lord's Supper. And what it says, as Everett Ferguson pointed out, is that the Lord's Supper is the church's great act of thanksgiving.

Of course, we give thanks for the elements as did Jesus. But we surely also are giving thanks as we today remember what Jesus did for us when he gave his body and shed his blood and the great blessings it brought to us. Let the Lord's Supper be a time of thanksgiving to the Lord.

Invitation

The psalmist in contemplating the blessings of God once asked:

What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? (Psalm 116:12)

Here's one way he answered that question:

*To Thee I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the Lord.
(Psalm 116:17)*

But how else do we show the Lord our gratitude for all that He has done for us?

Is it not also to express our gratitude through worshipping God in His prescribed way? And to receive the blessings of salvation that He offers us?

I shall lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. (Psalm 116:13)

Earlier in our lesson we read from Luke 15 about the prodigal who came back home and was restored to his father. Isn't it about time you came back home?

#936 Lord I'm coming home (v. 1,2,3,4)