

The Heart of Thanksgiving

Psalm 103: 1-5

This week we will celebrate one of the most beloved of American holidays. Thanksgiving is a time set aside to ponder our blessings and offer gratitude for them. I am thankful for such a holiday in America, but in reality, everyday ought to be Thanksgiving. Webster defines thanksgiving as “1. *The act of giving thanks; grateful acknowledgment of benefits or favors, especially to God.* 2. *A public celebration in acknowledgment of divine favor or kindness.*” Surely we all have much to be thankful for; God has blessed us with His divine favor and gracious benefits. If we were to begin to count them, they are more than can be numbered. I will have to publicly admit that I am blessed beyond measure.

Our text today is a psalm of David and considered by many to be his Hallelujah Chorus. Most agree David was overwhelmed with appreciation for God’s abundant mercy and grace in his life. Although he was known as a man after God’s own heart – David had sinned, causing much grief and reproach. As David considered the judgment he deserved, and the pardon he had received, he was compelled to offer praise.

While I can’t identify with some of the particulars of David’s sin, I too realize the mercy and grace I have received. I deserved to suffer the righteous judgment of God for my sin, and yet pardon was extended in grace. Of all that I have received from my Lord, I am most grateful for His mercy and grace. Many of the benefits that we ponder most are temporal, but the gift and blessing of salvation by grace is eternal. If you are saved by grace today, you have more than enough to offer thanksgiving unto the Lord.

As we discuss the opening verses of this great psalm, I want to consider the [aspects of praise](#) revealed as we think on: [The Heart of Thanksgiving](#). Genuine thanksgiving is offered unto the Lord. Our praise to Him lies at the heart of thanksgiving. We find that David offered:

I. Consuming Praise (1) – [Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.](#) As David pondered the grace and pardon of God, he was moved in the depths of his soul. Such recognition of favor and grace generated consuming praise. David offered praise with every fiber of his being. He was literally overcome with gratitude and praise toward the mercy and grace of God. His praise was not fabricated or insensitive; David praised the Lord with all his being!

- There have been a few times in my Christian journey when I was completely overcome with an awareness of God’s mercy and grace in my life. In those precious moments, praise came naturally. It wasn’t done in an effort to appease or impress anyone else; it was directed toward my gracious Lord. He alone was the object of my attention at that moment.

- I fear that we fail to offer our Lord the praise He is worthy to receive. There are times when we offer a sincere word of gratitude, but how often do we praise Him with all our being? Has the Lord not blessed each of us more than we deserve? Is He not worthy of our praise? I am convinced that we spend too little time contemplating the grace of our Lord. I can assure you, if you contemplate His goodness and grace for very long, you will be overcome with a desire for praise and worship!

II. Continual Praise (2) – [Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits](#). At this moment in life, David was keenly aware of the Lord's blessings and extremely grateful for them. He also knew his tendency to become complacent and forget God's goodness and grace. He never wanted to be guilty of forgetting the gracious provision of God in his life. He challenged himself and all who read these words to offer continual praise unto the Lord. God is always good, and He is always worthy of our praise!

- We tend to be forgetful at times too. It seems when life is going great, and we have all we need, we tend to be somewhat forgetful and complacent. The old adage, "you never know what you have until it's gone" is something we need to consider. Rather than trying to be grateful in the difficult times, we must be willing to offer gratitude at all times. Even when we are unaware, God is good and He is keeping us secure in His hand. There is never a moment when our Lord is not worthy of our praise. I never want to be guilty of taking my blessings for granted or failing to offer praise for all that I have received in Christ!

III. Confident Praise (3) – [Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases](#). David was confident in the Lord's ability to meet his needs and he offered praise regarding specific areas of healing. David was mindful of:

➤ **Spiritual Healing (3a)** – [Who forgiveth all thine iniquities](#). No doubt he likely pondered the sin of his past, possibly regarding Bathsheba and the death of Uriah, her husband. That was a dark period in David's life, but he found forgiveness and spiritual restoration in the Lord. Although he was undeserving, God had offered pardon according to His mercy and grace.

- Every believer should be willing to offer praise and thanksgiving for our salvation and the privilege of restoration. While we were yet in sin, Christ died for us. In salvation we were forgiven of our sin and reconciled to God. Even when we fail and come short following salvation, our Lord remains willing to forgive and restore. I am thankful for spiritual healing in Christ!

➤ **Physical Healing (3b)** – [who healeth all thy diseases](#). No doubt David had faced sickness and various infirmities while walking with the Lord. In his time of illness, God had been faithful to provide the healing he desperately needed. David rejoiced for the healing touch of God.

▪ We can rejoice that we serve the God of all comfort and healing. There is nothing we face in life that our Lord can't handle. He is able to provide healing for those who stand in need of His touch. While it isn't always within His will to bring about physical healing, He is always more than able to do so if He desires. We should rejoice for the blessings and provision of God in our lives. If you enjoy a measure of good health today, you have much to praise Him for!

IV. Considerate Praise (4) – [Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies](#). David rejoiced for the providential hand of God in his life. As he considered God's goodness, he was compelled to offer praise. Let's look a bit closer at this.

➤ [Who redeemeth thy life from destruction](#). David's life had been redeemed from destruction. Again he likely had thought back over his life, remembering the provision of God. There were times when the enemy was close at hand, and yet God miraculously provided deliverance. He had spared David time and again, providing an escape from death and a place to rest within His care. No doubt David was also aware that God had redeemed him from destruction spiritually as well. Although he was undeserving, God had provided for his redemption and a fulfilling relationship with Him.

▪ Aren't you glad for the redemptive hand of God? Physically speaking, we have no way of knowing how many times the Lord has spared us from suffering and death. As the enemy came against us, God provided a means of escape and safety. Spiritually we were all separated in sin and on our way to hell. Through His mercy and grace, God provided His Son as the atonement for sin. Through salvation in Christ our lives were redeemed from eternal death and destruction. What a gracious Lord we serve.

➤ [Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies](#). David rejoiced in the abundant blessings he had received from the Lord. God had crowned him with lovingkindness and tender mercies. His life had been flooded with the goodness and grace of God.

▪ Isn't that amazing to consider? As believers we too have received God's lovingkindness and tender mercies. Just His love is more than we deserve. His mercy withheld the wrath we earned through sin, and yet He provides more grace. We enjoy God's lovingkindness. That speaks of "*His abundant grace toward us.*" Grace is unmerited favor, and He offers it abundantly.

We also enjoy His tender mercies. Plain mercy is much more than we deserve, and yet He provides tender mercies. We enjoy His compassion and marvelous love. You see, God doesn't withhold the best of His blessing from His children; He provides blessing in abundance, wanting us to have life more abundantly in Him!

V. Compassionate Praise (5) – *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.* Finally David acknowledges God's good hand of blessing in every area of life. We know that David was king and had access to resources most never will, but he praised the Lord for the abundant blessings he had received. God allowed David to enjoy life, providing sweet satisfaction as he walked with Him. God had not only met David's needs; He had also provided many of his wants. David is essence declared that God is good.

- Can we not identify with that as well? God has blessed me more than I ever imagined and so much more than I deserve. Like David, God has not only met my needs; He has also given many of my wants. He has satisfied my life with good things! In every way imaginable, God has been very good to me. I like to think of this as God allowing us to have ice cream for dessert, following a gracious, healthy meal. Many view God as one who is opposed to joy and distant from our lives. These verses prove that line of thought untrue. He is very active in our lives and wants to bless us with His abundance. Surely you will agree that God is good and worthy of our praise!

Conclusion: We will all likely celebrate Thanksgiving this week with friends and family. As we do, may we be mindful of the source of our blessings? Let us offer the praise He is due, with every fiber of our being!

If you are saved, you have much to be thankful for. Even if you are unsaved, you can be thankful for the provision that was made for you. If you realize your need for salvation, I urge you to respond to the Lord's provision of grace and come to Him for salvation.