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Give Thanks To The Lord

PSALM 103:1-5

Introduction

1. Have you been occupied with God lately?
2. Steven J. Lawson, in his commentary on Psalm 103, tells of a missionary who once visited the Amazon jungle in South America.
3. There, through an interpreter, he spoke with a Brazilian Indian who, unknown to him, had recently been converted.
4. He asked him, "What do you most like to do?"
5. He said that he expected the native Brazilian to give a generic answer such as "hunting with bows and arrows" or "canoeing."
6. Instead, the Indian said that he most enjoyed "being occupied with God."
7. The missionary thought something had been lost in translation, so he had the interpreter ask him again — he gave the same answer.
8. This new Christian's constant preoccupation was God.
9. How many of us have been occupied with the greatness of our God lately?
10. How many of us spend at least a portion of our days adoring God and thanking Him for who He is and all that He is doing in our lives and the lives of those around us?
11. This Thursday, November 25th, has been officially set aside as "Thanksgiving Day" here in our country.
12. Thirty-one of our country's 46 presidents have issued Thanksgiving Proclamations.
13. You and I as God's people do not need a proclamation or a special day in the year in which to express our gratitude to the One who is sovereign over all creation.

14. It is something which we can and should do every day of the year.
15. My goal this morning is to encourage each of us to develop what someone has called an “attitude of gratitude” in which we are constantly thanking God for what David called “His benefits” (*Psalm 103:2*).
16. In order to accomplish this I want us to consider three questions:
 - a. Why should I give thanks?
 - b. How can I give thanks?
 - c. Where do I give thanks?

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I. Why Should I Give Thanks?

A. GOD IS GOOD (**PSALM 106:1; 107:1; 118:1, 29; 136:1**)

“Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good . . .” (*Psalm 106:1, NASB95*)

“Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good . . .” (*Psalm 107:1, NASB95*)

1. If you read the rest of *Psalm 106*, you will find that it is a list of Israel’s sins during their years in the wilderness and later in the Promised Land.
2. However, in spite of God’s punishment of His people because of their sin, the psalmist still declares that God “is good.”
3. He even concludes the psalm with these words, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting. And let all the people say, “Amen.” Praise the Lord” (*Psalm 106:48*).
4. *Psalm 107* speaks of the many troubles from which God delivered His people and then ends with this question and declaration:

“Who is wise? Let him give heed to these things, and consider the lovingkindness of the Lord” (*Psalm 107:43*).

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B. HIS NAME IS NEAR (PSALM 75:1)

“We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks,
For Your name is near . . .”

(Psalm 75:1, NASB95)

1. To say that God’s name is near is the same as saying, “God is near,” because His name represents all that He is.
2. In Psalm 34:18, David declared, “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”
3. In Psalm 145:18, He adds, “The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.”
 - a. Are you a person who at present is broken in heart? Has your spirit been crushed by all that you have experienced?
 - b. Please know that the Lord is near and will respond to you when you call upon Him according to His truth.

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C. HIS LOVINGKINDNESS IS EVERLASTING (PSALM 136:1, 2, 3, 26)

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

(Psalm 136:1, NASB95)

“Give thanks to the God of gods, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

(Psalm 136:2, NASB95)

“Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

(Psalm 136:3, NASB95)

“Give thanks to the God of heaven, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

(Psalm 136:26, NASB95)

1. What is God’s lovingkindness?
2. It comes from a Hebrew word (*chesed*) which is rich in meaning.

3. In our various translations, it is translated as “mercy” (KJV, NKJV), “steadfast love” (ESV, RSV, NRSV), “lovingkindness” (NASB95), “love” (NIV84, HCSB).
4. The psalmist’s point, which he does not want us to miss, is that God’s mercy or love is “everlasting.”
5. That love is seen in all of what David calls “His benefits” in Psalm 103.
 - a. He “forgives all [our] sins” (v. 3a, NIV84).
 - b. He “heals all [our] diseases” (v. 3b, NIV84).
 - c. He “redeems” us (v. 4a).
 - d. He “crowns [us] with love and compassion” (v. 4b, NIV84).
 - e. He “satisfies [our] desires with good things” (v. 5a, NIV84).
6. Why should you and I give thanks to God? We give thanks to Him because His love for us knows no end.

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D. HIS WORKS ARE WONDROUS (PSALM 75:1)

“We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks,
For Your name is near; Men declare Your wondrous works.”

(Psalm 75:1, NASB95)

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1. In Psalm 19:1, David wrote, “The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.”
2. In Psalm 139:14, he said, “I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.”
3. If you look in Psalm 40:5, you find David saying this, “Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders which You have done, and Your thoughts toward us; there is

none to compare with You. If I would declare and speak of them, they would be too numerous to count.”

4. You and I are a part of God’s wondrous works. We should thank Him for all that He has done and continues to do in our lives.
5. There is a hymn which you and I often sing. The words were penned over 120 years ago by Johnson Oatman, Jr., but they are as true today as then:

**When upon life’s billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessing, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.**

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II. How Do I Give Thanks?

A. THROUGH THE PRAISES I SING (PSALM 18:49; 30:4; HEBREWS 13:15)

1. In Psalm 18, David speaks of God having delivered him from the hands of his enemies, which included Saul, the reigning king at the time.
2. As David concludes the psalm, he writes these words in verse 49, “Therefore I will give thanks to You among the nations, O Lord, and I will sing praises to Your name.”
3. In Psalm 30:4, another psalm which David wrote, he instructs us.

“Sing praise to the Lord, you His godly ones, and give thanks to His holy name.”
4. You and I are our Lord’s “godly ones.” It is only fitting that we should sing praise to Him and “give thanks to His holy name.”
5. Listen to what we are told in Hebrews 13:15: “Through Him [Christ] then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.”

6. Consider two hymns which we often sing:
 - a. Thank you Lord for loving me, Thank you Lord for blessing me.
Thank you Lord for making me whole and saving my soul.
 - b. I sing praises to Your Name, Oh Lord,
Praises to Your Name, Oh Lord
For Your Name is great and greatly to be praised.

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B. THROUGH MY PRAYERS (PHILIPPIANS 4:6)

1. We also speak our gratitude to our Father through our prayers.
2. In Philippians 4:6, after telling us to “Be anxious for nothing,” the apostle Paul writes, “but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”
3. Thanksgiving is the attitude of heart which should always accompany our prayers.
4. The next time you pray, whether it is with your family or in our own private devotion, why not start your prayer by thanking God for all that He has done on your behalf.
5. It will change your perspective.

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C. WITH MY ALL MY HEART AND SOUL (PSALM 9:1; 103:1)

“I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders” (Psalm 9:1, NASB95).

“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name” (Psalm 103:1).

1. Thanking God for what He has done in our lives is something which David said we should do “with all [our] heart.”
2. We are to bless God’s “holy name” with everything we have “within” us.
3. Is that the way you and I thank God?

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III. Where Do I Give Thanks?

A. "IN THE GREAT CONGREGATION" (PSALM 35:18)

"I will give You thanks in the great congregation; I will praise You among a mighty throng." (Psalm 35:18, NASB95)

1. Each time you and I gather together as the body of Christ, we have the opportunity to give thanks to the God we serve.
2. We each praise Him through the songs we sing.

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B. IN THE PRIVACY OF MY PRAYERS (PHILIPPIANS 4:6)

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." (Philippians 4:6, NASB95)

1. Not only do we thank God publically, we also do it privately through our individual prayers.
2. We speak to an audience of One our words of thanksgiving when we pray.

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C. "TO ALL GENERATIONS" (PSALM 79:13)

"So we Your people and the sheep of Your pasture will give thanks to You forever; to all generations we will tell of Your praise." (Psalm 79:13, NASB95)

1. Asaph, who is credited with writing this psalm, said "to all generations we will tell of Your praise."
2. How will our children and our grandchildren come to appreciate the need to thank God if we do not teach them?
3. If they do not see and hear us thanking God, will they do so themselves?

Conclusion

1. There is one final question I would like for each of us to consider: "How long should I give thanks?"

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2. David answers that question at the end of Psalm 52.

"But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God;

I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever.

I will give You thanks forever, because You have done it,

And I will wait on Your name, for it is good, in the presence of Your godly ones."

(Psalm 52:8-9, NASB95)

3. Are you someone who is flourishing in God's presence?
4. Is your trust firmly planted in God's lovingkindness?
5. If so, you will want to give thanks to Him forever — to your final breath upon this earth and beyond.
6. You will wait on Him and His eternal promise to you.
7. If this is not true of you, I encourage you to put everything aside that prevents you from wholeheartedly following Jesus Christ.
8. Confess Him as your Savior and Lord.
9. Let Him wash you and make you clean from all your sin.