

Psalm 100:1-5
Cultivating a Spirit of Thankfulness

Main idea: Be thankful, and give thanks to God.

I trust that you all got enough sleep last night since we all got an extra hour of time. This is like the one day of the year that nobody has to hit snooze because we all get an extra hour to either lay in bed or just get a slower, easier start of the day. It's great!

I don't know about you, but I planned to sleep in this morning, but just couldn't. So, starting at 6 am, I was able to get up, fix a computer, schedule a return on Amazon, iron my pants, do a load of laundry, and write all of this into my sermon just the way you're hearing it right now!

Well, being that Thanksgiving is this month and Christmas is next month, I thought it would be a good time to take a break from study of the book of Romans just for a few weeks, so that we can focus on being thankful for a few weeks, and then transition into the seasons of Advent and then Christmas.

Being thankful is one of those things we all know we should do, but don't want to do when we really ought to do it.¹ Like, when you feel like complaining, the last thing you want to be reminded of is that it's important to be thankful. It's like your alarm going off for the fourth time, when you really just want to sleep 5 more minutes without interruption, you know?

So we're going to talk this morning about how to move from having a spirit of complaining to a spirit of thankfulness both in the church and in all of our lives.

¹ Yet, we're to give thanks in ALL circumstances! 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Psalm 100.

A psalm of thankfulness. Let the whole earth shout triumphantly to the Lord! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Acknowledge that the Lord is God. He made us, and we are his—his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and bless his name. For the Lord is good, and his faithful love endures forever; his faithfulness, through all generations. (Psalm 100:1-5)

Father, help us to be thankful. Help us to see how good You are, and how faithful You've been to us, and give You praise. Transform our hearts so that we would not be people who are quick to complain, but quick to give thanks in any and every circumstance, so that the whole world would see how good You are. In Jesus's name, Amen.

My life these last two weeks has just been insanely busy.

[Picture of Raelynn]



Of course, two weeks ago, Raelynn had hip surgery, and that went very well, and she's recovering very well from that. But as a part of that, I've been driving back and forth from the hospital in St. Louis, and back and

forth from the pediatric bridge hospital that she was transitioned to, and then on top of that back and forth for our Illinois Baptist state associational meeting, and then of course back and forth to be here with all of you. So with all this craziness it would be really easy for me to complain about so many little things: like a flat tire that complicates things, or forgetting clothes to sleep in when it was my turn to stay at the hospital, or even just not finding a place to buy Diet Mt. Dew at any of these places!

We really need to have Diet Mt. Dew on tap here at the church. That would help me out a lot.

By the way, it would also be a picture of heaven. Zechariah 8:12.

For there shall be a sowing of peace. The vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its produce, and the heavens shall give their dew. (Zechariah 8:12a)

I'm just saying! Anyway, it's been a crazy couple of weeks.

And I can't say that I had the perfect attitude every moment in these last two weeks, but I can say that God used the preaching of His word and some godly wisdom from others to transform my heart, and that has helped me to actually enjoy much of these last two weeks rather than see it all as a burden. That's why it's so important that we cultivate a spirit of thankfulness. Being thankful allows us to enjoy God's blessings as opportunities rather than grumble about obstacles.

The heading for our psalm this morning is "A psalm of thanksgiving." This is the kind of psalm you should read when you feel like praising God. It's the kind of psalm to read when you're feeling good and you're

just really feeling thankful, because it gives words to your heart's emotion.

But it's also the psalm you should read when you're just not feeling it. When you don't feel like praising God and you don't feel very thankful.² Because in this psalm, God gives us magnificent reasons to be thankful, and how we can practice being thankful, even when all we really want to do is grumble.³

Verse 1.

Let the whole earth shout triumphantly to the Lord! (Psalm 100:1)

You're probably more familiar with how the King James or English Standard versions render this verse, which is something like this:

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! (Psalm 100:1, ESV)

The word translated "shout triumphantly" or "make a joyful noise" really means something like a victorious battle cry.⁴ It's the same word that Joshua used when he told the Israelites to shout outside the walls of Jericho. Joshua 6:16.

After the seventh time, the priests blew the rams' horns, and Joshua said to the troops, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city." (Joshua 6:16)

The idea in Joshua 6:16 wasn't merely to make a joyful noise in terms of singing, but to make a joyful noise because the battle was theirs.

² Of course, laments are also good to read in times of sorrow. The goal of both would be to help us to trust God and turn to Him during those times.

³ Grumbling just really isn't the answer. Philippians 2:14-16

⁴ שָׁחַ (Strong's 7321): to raise a shout, give a blast. BDB: to shout a war-cry, or shout in triumph over enemies

God had already given them the city of Jericho. And you see, when we're to make a joyful noise to God, it's not really about the music or our voices at all. It's all about recognizing that we have victory in Jesus.⁵

Do you know that you have victory in Jesus? The whole point of Jesus dying on the cross was so that all our failures would be erased, but that Jesus's victory would be applied to us.⁶ His righteousness would be our righteousness.⁷ You see, no matter how much you try to be thankful, we generally can't just muster it up in ourselves for very long until we realize just how much Jesus has done for us. The same eternal, omnipotent, omnibenevolent God who created all things became a man and died on a cross, giving you His life, so that you can have true, abundant, eternal life in Him.⁸ It doesn't matter what obstacles you face. It doesn't matter how much you feel like you have working against you. Jesus is for you, so who can be against you?⁹

So be thankful. How do we do that? Verse 2.

Serve the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.
(Psalm 100:2)

So our thankfulness isn't supposed to just be an internal emotion, but an external action. Our inner thankfulness ought to have outward expressions. Verse 2 names two of them. First, serve the Lord with gladness. This is also what it says in verse 4.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and bless his name. (Psalm 100:4)

⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:57 makes it clear this is a reason to give thanks to God.

⁶ Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 12:9

⁷ 1 Peter 3:18

⁸ John 10:10

⁹ Jesus is God, after all. John 1:1-3, John 1:14, Romans 8:31

So, serve the Lord with gladness. When you come to church, when you enter His gates and His courts, be excited about serving God.

I know how it is. I've been there. It's super nice to know that you can come to church and not have any obligations sometimes. I get that, and that's a good thing. It's good sometimes to just be able to come and rest and listen and be filled with God's word. That's awesome, Amen. But please, don't make that your normal, because God doesn't want that to be your normal. God has called us to serve with gladness. That means being excited about how God has called you to serve. God has equipped each of us to serve in some way.¹⁰ So rejoice about that, and serve the Lord with gladness.

Maybe you don't feel very equipped. That's okay. God doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called. Maybe God has placed on your heart an area of service that you feel like you need to step into, but you've been hesitant if you just don't feel like you do a good job. That's okay. God doesn't call us to make perfect noises, He calls us to make joyful noises. He calls us knowing that we're going to make some mistakes, so that He can be glorified in our weakness.¹¹ He wants us to serve with glad hearts, willing hearts, hearts that are willing to serve Him, and through that, He will show Himself to be glorious.

The other expression of thankfulness named in verse 2 is to come before God with joyful songs, but we actually have a lot of flexibility with what to sing. Paul's letter to the Ephesians tells them to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.¹² There was a lot of diversity in the worship of the early church!

¹⁰ 1 Peter 4:10-11

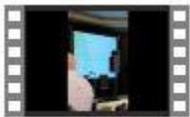
¹¹ Isaiah 40:29-31

¹² Actually, "speak to one another" with these songs. Worship isn't just for talking to God, but instructing one another. Ephesians 5:19

I was blessed this last week to be led in worship by an amazing worship team at the Illinois Baptist state associational meeting. The worship leader had one of those long beards like ZZ top or David Crowder, you know? And they led a whole bunch of songs that I have never heard before in my life! And at first I just had to stand there like, “I have no idea how to sing this song! I don’t know this song and I don’t care to learn it! And it’s kind of a weird song, anyway, so I don’t know how I feel about this!” You know the feeling?

But by the end of each song, I’m shouting and praising God, and I came to love each and every one of them so much that I took out my phone and recorded a couple seconds of them so that I can look them up later and sing them again.

[Video from worship]



New Songs.mp4

Now why did I do that? A couple reasons. One, because the songs were biblically accurate. We don’t want to sing anything that’s untrue. But two, because God commands us to sing a new song, and to sing joyfully to the Lord.

Have you ever been in a church where they didn't come before the Lord with joyful singing, like when the singing starts people just kind of stand there? Kind of weird, isn't it? I think we're incredibly blessed here to have an awesome team of people who are directing us not merely to be in awe of their musical ability, but to lead us to worship the Lord together. The church isn't a concert. The church isn't a show. The

church is God's people gathered together to grow in our faith and give Him praise.¹³

It's easy to get into the pattern of complaining about church. It's easy to get into the pattern of just barely dragging yourself to church at all. But one of the marks of God's people is not only to be here, but to be thankful to be here. Jesus has paid for all of our sins, and we simply get to rejoice.

Jesus paid it all
All to Him I owe
Sin had left a crimson stain
He washed white as snow

You don't come to earn anything from God, you come rejoicing in what God has done for you.

So, make a joyful noise. That's encouraging to me, because when I sing, I don't know if you've noticed, but I'm not exactly going to win American Idol. I'll be like that guy who was laughed off because he thought he was so good, but in reality was so very very bad.

But the thing is, God doesn't care how we sound. He cares about our heart.¹⁴ So make a joyful noise! Shout triumphantly, knowing that Jesus is victorious! God doesn't choose the things that are great in the eyes of the world, but the things that are weak. He doesn't choose the things that are impressive, but the things that are plain and ordinary so that He can get all the glory.¹⁵

¹³ Ephesians 2:21, Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 10:24-25

¹⁴ 1 Samuel 16:7

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

But why should we do all this? Why should we be thankful to God and rejoice in Him? Verses 3 and 5.

Acknowledge that the Lord is God. He made us, and we are his—his people, the sheep of his pasture. (Psalm 100:3)

So of course we should want to be thankful to God! He's our shepherd! He guides us, protects us, and takes us to where we need to go! Then verse 5.

For the Lord is good, and his faithful love endures forever; his faithfulness, through all generations. (Psalm 100:5)

God's loving kindness never comes to an end. It never ceases.¹⁶ He's not just going to love you for now, and then cast you away forever. He loves you forever. He loves your neighbor forever. He loves your kids forever.¹⁷

Because notice that it says that God's faithfulness is to all generations. That means God is going to be faithful to your kids and to their kids and to their kids and so on forever throughout all generations. God will always be faithful! Now that's a reason to give God thanks! We can get so worried about our kids and whether they're going to be alright. Psalm 100 is telling us that God's going to look after them. God is faithful.

So how do you go from having a complaining heart to a thankful heart? Number one, acknowledge that the Lord is God. Number two, remember that He's good and that His faithful love endures forever. And number three, remember that God's faithfulness is to all generations.

¹⁶ Lamentations 3:22-23

¹⁷ This shouldn't be controversial to say, but many would object to this way of saying it. We affirm that God is love (1 John 4:8), and we affirm that God loves the whole world (John 3:16), but many confessing Christians are hesitant to say that God loves them forever. But how can it be otherwise if God is unchanging? (Malachi 3:16)

And check this out: this is all in the Old Testament. They didn't understand all of the implications of the Messiah. They didn't yet see the fullness of God's grace.¹⁸ But we come from her perspective of having seen what Jesus did for us. He died for us on the cross so that we could be with God forever. Today, we have even more reason to give thanks to God! We've been giving the fullness of God's revelation, which is Jesus Himself. The Son of God, and God in the flesh lived among us and then died for our sins to bring us to Himself. And He said that He's coming back again to establish His kingdom over the whole world and reign forever with us, His people, who He makes perfect by the shedding of His own blood. That's love guys, and that gives us even more reason to rejoice and to come into His presence with singing, making a joyful, triumphant, victorious noise.

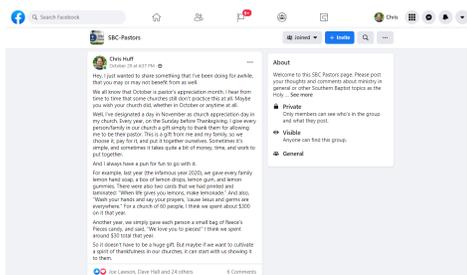
Man, it's true. Life is hard. But don't let the hardness of life keep you from being thankful to God.

In a way, you just did this. Throughout the month of October, you thanked me for being your pastor since it was pastor's appreciation month. I'm sure that the whole month of October wasn't smooth sailing for all of you, yet you took time and energy to thank God for your pastor. So I greatly appreciate that you appreciated me, and I praise God for you.

I shared kind of a long post with other Southern Baptist pastors recently on Facebook.

[Picture of Facebook post]

¹⁸ Matthew 13:17



I won't read the whole thing, but basically I encouraged pastors to continue to cultivate a spirit of thankfulness in their churches by giving back to their churches in the month of November. I shared how every year before Thanksgiving, my family gives you some sort of gift, thanking you for allowing us to minister to you. Over the years, we've given you Reece's Pieces because we love you to pieces, a coffee mug because you warm our hearts, and lemon soap, because last year was kind of a lemon, Amen?

We actually have a few leftovers from gifts we've given you over the years, so if you didn't get one of these, I invite you to come and grab one after the service. But also be sure to be here in the weeks to come, because we'll have another gift for you the week of Thanksgiving this year.

We do this not just because we're thankful for you, which we are, but because we're thankful to God for allowing us to minister here for over a decade. God's called us to make a joyful noise, and that includes being thankful for all of you.

But I want you to notice just one more thing from verse 1. This call to make a joyful noise wasn't just for the Jews in the Old Testament, and it wasn't just for us today, but it's for all the earth. Look at verse 1 one last time.

Let the whole earth shout triumphantly to the Lord! (Psalm 100:1)

We see throughout the Bible that God is calling all the earth to sing his praises. Psalm 66:4.

The whole earth will worship you and sing praise to you. (Psalm 66:4)

Philippians 2:10-11.

at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:10-11)

And Jesus pointed out in Luke 19:40 that if the people were silent about His praise:

the stones would cry out. (Luke 19:40b)

The book of Isaiah says that:

the mountains and the hills will break into singing before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. (Isaiah 55:12b)

And I don't think this is just the Bible being silly. I think it's saying that in the end, everyone and everything will give glory to God.

So, what will you do today? Will you fight against God's purpose for you and all the earth, preferring to hold onto your grumbling and complaining? Or, will you thank the Lord, who saves you by grace and gives you a spirit of thankfulness?