

Sermon Title: **Enter with Thanksgiving**

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Scripture Reference: **Psalm 100**

Thesis: **Psalm 100 is one of the most beautiful Psalms of thanksgiving;**

Purpose: **The psalmist shows us it is the basis of our thanksgiving with 5 thanksgiving commands.**

Key Word: **"Thanksgiving"**

Key Points: **#1 The Basis of Our Thanksgiving**

#2 Five Thanksgiving Commands

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Psalm 100**

A) The Setting:

1) **Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays.**

(a) It is not associated with wars, or birthdays or costumes;

(b) It is a time for Food, Family, Friends, and Football.

2) **I shared this sermon a number of years ago in my last church and for the most part it is not one that I wrote.**

(a) I read a lot of messages by other people to feed me and help in my growth.

(b) And from time to time I come across one that is so good I just have to share it and this is one of those messages.

(c) It was written by another pastor named Melvin Newland, who is a pastor in Ridge Chapel, Kansas, OK and he is honored to have others share his work if they think it worthwhile.

3) **One of the most beautiful Psalms of thanksgiving is the 100th Psalm.**

(a) I am going to read it from the New International Version today because I like the simple way it states it in today's language.

(b) **I invite you to turn to and follow along as I read Psalm 100.**

B) *Sermon Prayer*

C) (The Hook)

1) **With all my heart, I believe we are a people and a nation that has truly been blessed by God.**

(a) It is not uncommon to compile wish lists at Christmas, & draw up a list of resolutions for New Years.

(b) But there is another list often overlooked - a Thanksgiving list of all for which we are thankful.

2) ILL. Someone wrote this list of things for which he was Thankful.

(a) **"I am thankful for:** The taxes I pay - because it means I'm employed;

(b) The clothes that fit a little too snug - because it means I have enough to eat;

(c) A lawn that needs mowing, windows that need washing, & gutters that need cleaning - because it means I have a home;

(d) My huge heating bill - because it means I am warm;

(e) The piles of laundry - because it means I have loved ones nearby.

3) APPL. **Now our lists might not all be the same, but I'm convinced that if we began to make a list, we would find that we have much more for which to be thankful than just our material possessions.**

4) **Like you, I'm sure, my list would include the major things; life, health, family, friends, & the nation we live in, despite all its flaws.**

(a) But most of all, I'm thankful for my salvation and God's mercy.

(b) It is because of Jesus that we have so much to celebrate on Thanksgiving!

5) **But have you ever considered that no Americans were more underprivileged than that small handful from the Mayflower who started the custom of setting aside a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God?**

- (a) They had no permanent homes or government agency to help them build.
 - (b) They had no means of transportation but their legs.
 - (c) Their only food came from the sea & the forest, & they had to get it for themselves.
 - (d) They had no money & no place to spend it if they'd had any.
 - (e) They had no amusements except what they made for themselves, no means of communication with their relatives in England, no social security or medicare.
 - (f) **But they did have 4 of the greatest human assets which we would be wise to emulate:** initiative, **courage**, a willingness to work, & **a boundless faith in God.**
 - (g) **Our forefathers had "a boundless faith in God."**
 - (i) That almost sounds strange today when powerful forces are at work in our nation to strip us of every reminder.
 - (ii) That the foundation of our nation is the conviction that we are "**one nation, under God.**"
- 6) **ILL. Our "Declaration of Independence" proclaims, "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights . . ."** And it ends with these words, ". . .with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes & our sacred Honor."
- 7) Thanksgiving Day is a distinctive holiday; it is a day set aside to express our nation's thanks to our nation's God.
- 8) **ILL. In 1789, Pres. George Washington made this public proclamation.** (*Now I'll read only a little part of it, but I want you to see the strong & absolute acknowledgment of the fact of God, & of our nation's dependence upon Him.*)

"By the President of the United States of America. A proclamation: Whereas, it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, & humbly to implore His protection & favor, and

"Whereas, Both Houses of Congress" (Did you hear that? - "Both Houses of Congress?") "have by their joint committee requested me 'to recommend to the people of the United States a day of Public Thanksgiving & Prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God. . .'

"Now, Therefore I do recommend & assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great & glorious Being who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be. . ."
 --So read the very first Presidential Thanksgiving Proclamation.

- 9) **This week our nation will pause once again to celebrate Thanksgiving Day.**
- (a) And one would assume that because of the example of our forefathers . . .
 - (b) and because today we are so bless with so much . . .
 - (c) that we would be an extremely thankful people.
- 10) **But more often isn't it just the opposite?**
- (a) The more we get, the less thankful we become.
 - (b) The less mindful of God we are, it seems all the more we want.
- 11) **ILL. There is a certain area of Mexico where hot springs and cold springs are found side by side.**
- (a) Because of the convenience of this natural phenomenon the women there often bring their laundry to boil their clothes in the hot springs, & rinse them in the cold springs.
 - (b) A tourist watching this procedure commented to his Mexican guide: "*They must think God is generous to supply such ample & clean hot & cold water.*"
 - (c) The guide replied, "*Ah No senior, there is much grumbling because God supplies no soap.*"

- 12) **I think that the 100th Psalm was written to deal with that attitude**
 - (a) To remind us of our need to be thankful and . . .
 - (b) To maintain an attitude of gratitude.

TS. **It is with this in mind that we look at our first point . . .**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) **THE BASIS OF OUR THANKSGIVING**

- 1) **The 100th Psalm was written for the people of Israel.**
 - (a) Paraphrasing what God said to them, "**When you come into the promised land, & settle down in your homes, & you have plenty to eat, don't forget Me. I led you out of the wilderness & brought you into a land flowing with milk & honey.**"
 - (b) But it doesn't take very long to realize that the people of Israel needed a reminder, and I think it is obvious that we may need a reminder also.
- 2) **Maybe God had us in mind, also, when this Psalm was written.**
 - (a) Did you notice to whom it is addressed?
 - (b) The first verse says that it is addressed to "**all the earth,**"
 - (c) And the last verse says that it includes "**all generations.**"
 - (d) This message of thanksgiving is so deep & wide that it applies to every person in every era in every stage of life.
- 3) **The word "Thanks" or "Thanksgiving" appears in 70 verses in the Bible.**
 - (a) 37 times in the book of psalms alone.
 - (b) Psalms were written to praise and thank God.
- 4) **It's sad, isn't it, that we are the only country in the world, except for Canada & the Philippines, that has a Thanksgiving Day?**
 - (a) I wonder how our world would be changed if suddenly all nations would begin to observe Thanksgiving?
 - (b) I think there is something about giving thanks together to God that breaks down barriers between people, much like that which occurred as the Berlin wall began to crumble at the end of the Cold War.
- 5) **I think also that there is a real danger of determining our thanksgiving on the basis of how much we have.**
 - (a) Do I have enough turkey to gorge myself sufficiently?
 - (b) Is my money in the bank secure?
 - (c) Am I healthy?
 - (d) Sometimes we let these things determine whether we are or aren't thankful . . .
- 6) **The Psalmist says that all of these things may change at any time.**
 - (a) They may drift away, or burn up, or someone may steal them.
 - (b) The only thing we have for sure is our relationship with the Lord.
- 7) **That is what the 100th Psalm emphasizes; just scan the Psalm.**
 - (a) In vs. 1 you'll find the word "**Lord.**"
 - (b) In vs. 2 you'll find the word "**Lord .**"
 - (c) In vs. 3 you'll find the word "**Lord .**"
 - (d) In vs. 4 it says, "**Enter His gates with thanksgiving.**"
 - (e) And in vs. 5 you'll find the word "**Lord .**" The basis of our thanksgiving is the Lord.
- 8) **ILL. Alex Haley, author of "Roots," had an unusual picture hanging on his office wall. It was a picture of a turtle on top of a fence post.**
 - (a) When asked, "*Why is that there?*"
 - (b) He answered, "*Every time I write something significant, every time I read my words & think that they are wonderful, & begin to feel proud of myself, I look at the turtle on top of the fence post & remember that he didn't get there on his own. He had help.*"
- 9) **That is the basis of our thankfulness**

- (a) We need to remember that we got here with the help of God . . .
- (b) And that God is the provider of every blessing we have.

TS. This leads us to our next key point; the . . .

B) FIVE THANKSGIVING COMMANDS

- 1) Now, as we look more carefully at this Psalm, we find there are 5 commands.
- 2) **The first command is in vs. 1, "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth."**
 - (a) That word "**shout**" means to "*Proclaim with the force of a trumpet blast,*"
 - (b) It is a shout of joy to the Lord that comes from the very depths of your being.
 - (c) **Maybe God has solved your problem.**
 - (i) Maybe He has given you the direction to go.
 - (ii) Maybe He has provided a blessing you realized came from God.
 - (iii) So from the depths of your being you should proclaim your praise.
 - (d) ILL. A missionary once told this story; "*I was a medical missionary for many years in India. And I served in a region where there was progressive blindness. People were born with healthy vision, but there was something in that area that caused people to lose their sight as they grew older.*"
 - (e) **But this missionary had developed a treatment which would stop progressive blindness.**
 - (i) So the people came to him and he performed his treatment . . .
 - (ii) As they would leave realizing that they would have become completely blind, had it not been for the doctor who saved their sight . . .
 - (iii) The missionary said that they never said, "Thank you," *because that phrase was not in their dialect.*
 - (iv) **Instead, they spoke a word that meant, "I will tell your name."**
 - Wherever they went, they would tell the name of the missionary who had cured their blindness.
 - They had received something so wonderful that they eagerly proclaimed it.
 - (f) **And this is what the Psalmist is saying.**
 - (i) Suddenly you realize that God has been so good to you that you can't keep it inside any more.
 - (ii) So, from the depths of your being you have to express your joy unto the Lord.
- 3) **The second command is, "Worship the Lord with gladness."**
 - (a) The King James says "**Serve the Lord with gladness.**"
 - (i) It is not talking about "serving the church" or "the preacher, or "the organization."
 - (ii) It says, "serve the Lord"; this is an act of Worship.
 - (b) The Bible teaches that if we feed the hungry, if we clothe the naked, if we do the work of the Lord, whatever it might be, we are serving the Lord.
 - (c) In **Matthew 25:40** Jesus said, "**Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.**"
 - (i) Isn't that what Psalm 100 is saying? "
 - (ii) In whatever you do, serve the Lord with gladness."
- 4) **The third command is, "Come before Him with joyful songs."**
 - (a) **Psalm 98:4** says, "**Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.**"
 - (b) And that is something we all can do; God didn't say we had to be good at it.
 - (c) God is more interested in our HEART and ATTITUDE than our SKILL.
- 5) **Have you noticed?**
 - (a) In these first 3 commands, God has said, "**I want you to be happy. Shout with joy, serve with gladness, & come with joyful songs.**"
 - (b) The Psalmist is saying, "**Come before Him to serve Him by singing His praise with joy in your heart.**"

- 6) **Command #4 is, "Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, & we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture."**
- (a) God took every bone, every joint, & He welded them together with sinews & muscles & covered them with skin & gave us eyes that see, brains that think, & fingers that can pick things up.
 - (b) God made us, inside & out; making you the way He wanted you to be.
 - (c) And God made me the way He wanted me to be.
 - (d) **I don't understand why, but somehow God decided that He wanted a medium sized man, not too good looking . . . not really outstanding in anything . . .**
 - (i) and yet just a faithful father and husband who would keep plodding along. . . so He made me.
 - (ii) Someplace along the way He had you in mind, & He made you.
 - (e) **And He is still making us.**
 - (i) That is important to realize, too. He's not satisfied with the unfinished product.
 - (ii) God is still working on the weaker areas of your life where you are still giving in to temptation.
 - (iii) So God's still making us and working in our lives to help us to grow more like Jesus.
 - (f) **The apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 1:3 & 6, "I thank my God every time I remember you. . . being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."**
 - (i) God is your maker and you are created in His image.
 - (ii) Therefore give Him thanks for who you are.
 - (g) God says, **"We are His people, the sheep of His pasture."**
 - (i) Well, frankly, most of us want to be shepherds, not sheep.
 - (ii) We seem to say to God . . . "It's not any fun being sheep,"
 - (h) **But the problem is, we don't know where the still waters & green pastures are.**
 - (i) And every time we go out searching for them, we find ourselves in the far country.
 - (ii) But God is saying, **"You be the sheep; let me be the shepherd, & I will lead you beside the still waters & the green pastures . . . Just let me lead."**
- 7) **Command #5 is this, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving, & His courts with praise; give thanks to Him & praise His name. For the Lord is good & His love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations."**
- (a) In the O.T., the temple symbolized the presence of God.
 - (b) So whenever the people came to the temple and entered the courtyards they knew that they had come into the presence of God.
 - (c) **However, now that the temple building no longer exists we are confused of where to find God.**
 - (i) God no longer inhabits a building as God is everywhere. You know that.
 - (ii) Because Jesus paid the price for our sins; God inhabits his people.
 - (d) **God is with you as you drive on the highway.**
 - (i) God is with you when you work.
 - (ii) God is with you as you care for your children and in every moment of your life.
 - (e) **That is the source of our thanksgiving.**
 - (i) You see that for us to experience God we must be born again, born spiritually.
 - (ii) In the Old Testament God was separated from HIS people because of SIN.
 - (iii) A HOLY GOD cannot be with sinful people.
 - (f) **God gave us rules to live by; but mankind proved that we could not keep them.**
 - (i) SO, God sent HIS one and only SON, Jesus to be the God-Man who could atone for our sins by his death on the cross.

- (ii) And Jesus defeated the sentence of DEATH for SIN by raising from the dead.
 - (g) **Paul teaches us that Jesus was the FIRST born of Many.**
 - (i) But if we want to defeat DEATH we must put control of our life in the hands of Jesus.
 - (ii) This is God's Mercy, not punishing us as we deserve when we trust in Christ.
 - (iii) And in God's Grace we get the reward of living with GOD.
 - (h) **But if we choose not to trust Christ and let HIM be the LORD of our lives; then DEATH is still waiting for us.**
 - (i) The time is running out and we all must make a decision if we want to live with Jesus for all eternity.
 - (ii) We must make that decision to be born again in this life before it is too late.
 - (i) **When we do, God will send us HIS HOLY SPIRIT to take up residence in the sanctuary of our hearts.**
 - (i) Then the HOLY SPIRIT will guide us and help transform us into a new creation.
 - (ii) Is it any wonder that we should be so thankful to a loving GOD?
- C) Conclusion
- 1) **I pray that this will be a meaningful Thanksgiving season for you AND all your family.**
 - (a) I would suggest that you take time to read the 100th Psalm again.
 - (b) And if you'll follow the commands listed here, your heart will overflow with thanksgiving to the Lord.
 - 2) **I hope you all have made that decision to let Jesus be the LORD of your life.**
 - (a) If you feel the Holy Spirit tugging on your heart don't leave here today without making that decision.
 - (b) It is God's desire that all be save and enter the kingdom of God; but Jesus is the way, the only way.
 - (c) Come to Jesus this morning if you haven't made your decision and experience real joy, peace, and true thanksgiving for the greatest gift of all . . .
 - (d) The gift of God's SON and His Holy Spirit.