



Give Thanks

Give Thanks because the Lord is Good
Psalms 100, 73
November 24, 2019

We are to give thanks always (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18), but it is also good to have annual “continuing education” about it. This year’s training in worship and thanksgiving comes from Psalm 100, a great Psalm of praise. It teaches us that:

1. God wants us to worship him. It matters who we worship, and it is clear we are to worship “the Lord” (vv. 1-2). Thanksgiving is a key avenue for ascribing worth to him. Other avenues include coming before him, entering his gates, shouting, worship/serving, songs, and praise.
2. God wants us to worship him with emotion. Joy, gladness, and joyful singing are all mentioned. Jesus underscored a similar lesson when quoted Isaiah’s words, “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Matthew 15:8).
3. We have good reasons to worship, primarily having to do with God himself.
 - a. One primary reason for worshiping the Lord in the Bible is that he is good (v. 5). (If you struggle with this, see the notes on Psalm 73 on the back).
 - b. The Lord is God (v. 3)
 - c. God made us (v. 3)
 - d. We get to be a part of the people of God (v. 3)
 - e. We are sheep and God is our Shepherd (v.3)
 - f. God’s love endures forever (v. 5)
 - g. His faithfulness continues for all generations (v. 5)
 - h. Our spiritual blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14)

Psalm 73 tells the story of someone (Asaph?) who struggled with the goodness of God on his faith journey. It appears that v. 1 is his final conclusion, not his beginning point. A careful reading of the Psalm suggests this approximate chronology:

1. The writer was a faithful Israelite (vv. 1, 13)
2. He suffered some sort of afflictions and punishments (v. 13).
3. He perceived that wicked people were rich, didn’t have problems, sinned a lot and got away with it (vv. 3-12).
4. Because of these things, he concluded “Surely” his efforts to live a righteous life were in vain (v. 13), although he didn’t say so out loud (v. 15).
5. He tried to understand all this, but it was difficult and troubling (v. 16). His heart was grieved and his spirit embittered, and his thinking was more like an animal than a person (vv. 21-22).
6. Finally, he went to the sanctuary of God and gained some helpful perspective (v. 17). Specifically, he saw that “Surely” the wicked were not getting away with anything and were in fact accountable to God (vv. 17b-20).
7. He also came to realize that all he really needed or wanted in life was God, and that he was close to God. He also made God his refuge (vv. 23-28).
8. This led to his conclusion that “Surely” God is good (v. 1).

Questions for meditation and prayer:

1. Are there things in your life that have made you wonder whether God is truly good? If so, what?
2. What are some avenues through which you could receive a spiritual perspective, such as the sanctuary was for him?
3. What are some of those healthy perspectives that might help you view your life situation in a more balanced way?
4. What other good reasons can you think of for worshiping the Lord, in addition to those mentioned in Psalm 100?
5. Does anything hinder you from expressing emotion to God in worship? Why is it important to do so?

