

## “Enter his Gates with Thanksgiving”

### Psalm 100

Some times the simplest phrases have the deepest meanings. That is the case with Psalm 100. It is only five stanzas long but it is so powerful in its message to us as people of faith. It reminds that we are called to praise and thank God always. It reminds us that we are called to make a joyful noise to God always. It reminds us that we are God’s very own.

What better message is there in a world that is need of some good news and what better message is there to begin our thanksgiving celebrations. We are God’s own and nothing can separate e us from God!

As a child, I knew we were getting close to Thanksgiving when during class, we all did our thankful for turkeys. All of you know, what I am talking about. When we would trace our hands on brown construction paper and then on each one of the feathers, we would write what we were thankful for this year. We would say things like, “I’m thankful for my family. I’m thankful for my pets. I’m thankful for my friends. I’m thankful for food. I’m thankful for...you get the picture.”

So this is the part where we are going to be interactive: What are you thankful for this year? Let’s make a joyful noise to our God and worship the Lord

with gladness. Let's enter his gates with thanksgiving: What are we thankful for this year?

As we take time to reflect on what we are thankful for as people of faith, we need to realize that these "thanks turkey" that we created as children are just another way to write a psalm of praise to God, thanking and praising God for all that God had done in our lives, very similar to Psalm 100. God has provided us with loving and caring families, including our church family. God has provided us with wonderful friends. God has provided food for our families. God had blessed us in many ways. And so we enter church today with thanksgiving. We center our worship on praising God for all that God has done. We celebrate by making a joyful noise to the Lord. We create and sing a hymn of praise.

Simple right? Five fingers on the turkey to the five stanzas of Psalm 100. All praising God. All feathers and all stanzas of the hymns that we sing remember how God has acted in the past and reminds us of who God is, reminds us of the God that we have experienced in our lives: God is good. God's steadfast love endures forever. And God's faithfulness is to all generations: past, present and future. God is good all the time. All the time, God is good.

And we simply don't just praise God today because God acted this year. We praise and give thanksgiving to God because we remember. We remember all that

God has done for us. We remember all the blessings that God has given to us. We remember all the ways that God has been there for us. We remember all that God has done for us. The thanksgivings that we bring today and all days are filled with memories. We know that God has acted in the past. We know that God has blessed us in the past. We know that God has given us grace in the past. But our thanksgiving and praise doesn't stop there.

As we reflect on our blessings, as we remember how God has touched our lives, and as we renew our covenant with God, we celebrate in thanksgiving because we know that God's steadfast love endures, because we know that God's faithfulness is to all generations: past present and future, because we know that God is and will always be there for us. Because we know that the Lord is God, that he made us and that we are his own.

we bring our thanksgivings today and all days because we are God's very own, fashioned and formed in the very image of God. We bring our thanksgiving and praise today and all days because when God formed us and shaped us, God give us a precious gift: Life, a gift that we did not earn nor can we achieve on our own, a gift given by God our creator, a gift to show us that we are treasured as God's own beloved.

We bring our thanksgiving and praise today and all days because through this gift of life, we know that we are cared for by God, like a shepherd cares for his sheep. We have been given a gift, freely given to us by our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sustainer, who was, who is, and who will be forever and ever.

From the very first line, the psalmist is calling all people to remember and worship the Lord, to bring thanksgiving to God because of this gift of life. The psalmist is calling all generations, all people from around the world, all people on earth, to know that the Lord is God and we are God's very own. The psalmist is reminding all of God's people, past, present and future, that God "fashioned every single person and therefore every human being enjoys an inherent worth that can never be earned or lost and therefore we [as God's very own beloved children] enjoy God's bountiful care. The psalmist is calling all of God's people to re-orient their lives, to center their lives in thanksgiving, to experience the joy of being God's very own. The psalmist is reminding all of God's people that a " life without praise is a more likely a life turned in on one's self", disconnect, burdened, empty and alone.

The psalmist is reminding all of us that the very basic element of our faith is joy, praise, and thanksgiving because we are God's very own, formed and fashioned in God's very image, cared for and loved, redeemed and sustained by

our Creator. At the very heart of our faith is a hymn of praise for all time. A thankful song to remember that we are God's very own. A doxology to remind us that life is a gift. A way to give thanksgiving to God from whom all blessings flow.

And the Good news this morning is that when we embrace our gifts and our blessings given to us by God, we cannot help but to celebrate and rejoice because we have experienced the love, the grace, and the blessings of the Lord Most High, we have experienced the care and provision of the Good Shepherd. We have experienced the knowledge that is too wonderful for us to really comprehend that tells us that we are God's own, that God loves us more than we will ever know, that God is good all the time and all the time, God is good.

Nothing can stop the feelings of joy and thanksgiving from coming forth. Nothing will stop our songs of praise and thanksgiving to a God who is merciful, who is just, who cares for God's own children. Psalm 100 reminds us and helps us understand that the one and only proper response in receiving the grace of God is to sing of God's praises and to share the Good News with all. Psalm 100 helps us understand that the King of Kings, the Lord our God, the God Most High is merciful, and we sing of God's praises in our psalm of thanksgiving.

And It is this God Most High who sent God's only Son into the world to show us how to love each other and to love God. It is this Lord our God who gave

us Jesus Christ so that we could truly understand how to be in relationship with our God. And it is this mighty God whose praises that we sing about today in our psalms of praise and thanksgiving.

As we celebrate this Thanksgiving Sunday, we know that the one true God is worthy of praise. We know that our God is a God of justice and peace. We know that our God sent us Christ to save us and teach us how to live. We know that nothing can or will ever separate us from the love, from the care, from faithfulness of God. And we lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving. We give thanks to God. We worship the Lord with gladness. We center our worship in thanksgiving.

Hear the Good News: The Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his. The Lord is good, his steadfast love endures forever and his faithfulness to all generations.

Thanks be to God! Amen.