

**Gloria**

*“Glory Be to the Father”*

## **Proclaiming the Word of God**

**Time for all God’s Children**

**Special Music**

*“No Other Name”*

Men’s Quartet

**Scripture**

Psalm 100: 1-5

**Sermon:**

**Thanksgiving Every Day!**

Outline adapted from: Thanksgiving Days, by Daniel Austin @ SermonCentral.Com

The Washington Football Team, formerly known as the Redskins, had just finished their daily practice session, when a large turkey came strutting onto the field and demanded to be given a chance to play at tight end. Everyone watched with wonder as the turkey caught pass after pass and ran right through the defensive line. When the turkey returned to the sidelines, the coach said, *“You’re superb. Sign up for the season, and I’ll see to it that you get a huge bonus.”*

“Forget the bonus,” replied the turkey, “What I want to know is, does your season go past Thanksgiving Day?”

What do you think of when you think of Thanksgiving Day?

For some, Thanksgiving Day is a time for family with everyone GATHERING -- mom and dad, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts and cousins -- all together around a table laden with food: Turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie, mmm good!

For others, Thanksgiving Day means FOOTBALL!!! They stay glued to the tube as games follow one after the other while the kids watch either parades, or the Puppy Bowl in another room.

For others, Thanksgiving used to mean a LONG WEEKEND to use for the busiest shopping days of the year, hitting those one-day-only sales; getting those Christmas presents bought during what the media used to call “Black Friday,”

Wow! The Covid Pandemic has sure messed up Thanksgiving, as it has every other holiday this year. Families have been urged stay home, stay alone, not to travel or gather in groups larger than 10. Or if you must gather, get a Covid test, wear a mask, bring your own utensils, sit 6’ apart with the windows open, or better still eat outside ... an option only available in the most southern states. There still might be some football games, but there will certainly be no parades. The only bright side of this year being that Black Friday has become a whole month, so that you can leisurely do all your shopping while remaining socially distanced.

However you look at it, the Pandemic – probably with additional help from western fires, eastern hurricanes and the national election – has killed both the day and the spirit of Thanksgiving this year.

I suspect that this Thanksgiving will be remembered as one of the most depressing times of 2020; with people unrealistically hoping that Christmas might be better. I noticed that Bedford already has the town tree in place and is getting the street decorations up; they are even helping the Elks Home put up their drive-through festival of lights (an old tradition that has suddenly become very appropriate).

So what can we do about Thanksgiving this year? For those of us who profess to worship God, Thanksgiving Day should never have been just a time for food, football, fellowship and family; not just a holiday every fourth Thursday in November; **not even limited to just one day at all. According to Psalm 100, for God's people every day should be Thanksgiving Day!**

While "giving thanks" is certainly mentioned in other psalms, only Psalm 100 is specifically titled "**A Psalm of Thanksgiving.**" This short joyous psalm is an invitation for those people who recognize God and His goodness to publicly acknowledge Him. Not only does it call upon us to be thankful, but it also describes both why and how we should be thankful.

Today, let's think of how the qualities of thanksgiving, as presented in this psalm can help us give thanks not only this coming weekend, but every day.

**First, notice that the demonstration of our thankfulness should be very PUBLIC.**

**Make a joyful noise to the Lord,** all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Psalm 100:1-2

Our translation of the Bible says "make a joyful noise," other translations say "shout to the Lord," however you translate the word, the meaning is **volume!** We are to vocally proclaim our joyful thanks to God!

Also, while we have the English word, "thank," meaning to "express gratitude or appreciation," there is no Hebrew word with this meaning. Rather, the Hebrew word *yadah* means literally "to make public acknowledgment." Thus, according to the Hebrew mindset, it was never enough to thank God quietly or privately, but one must do so publicly and with volume!

Knowing that we Presbyterians are known for our quiet, shy demeanor, especially when it comes to a public witness to our faith, publicly shouting our thanksgivings is just not within our comfort zone. Certainly there are appropriate times for us to meditate upon the goodness of our God in quiet wonder, but when God's people get together, should we not somehow also publicly "make a joyful noise to the Lord?"

Of course the real question is not about how much noise we can make, but whether or not we are "joyful." When we have true joy, it should somehow publicly show.

**Second, our WORSHIP should be done with gladness.**

Other translations render this verse as "SERVE the Lord with gladness," which is equally good, because the primary way we worship is through our service, either way we must do so gladly.

God has done so much for us! We have so much for which to be thankful. We should be willing servants. We serve Him because we are thankful.

### Third we should SING to the Lord.

We are to "come into His presence with singing." Knowing that God is omnipresent, in one sense we are always in "His presence." However, the writer of this Psalm has in mind the special sense of "His presence," when God's people gather to worship.

Before the pandemic, you could tell a lot about the life of a church by listening to the singing. Now, not being allowed to joyously, loudly sing is perhaps one of the greatest restrictions that church quarantine guidelines have forced upon us. But I have good news, recent research has found that there is no distinction in virus spread between speaking or singing... it is volume level that determines how much virus is spread. So the good news is that we can joyfully sing to our hearts' content, we just have to do so quietly. I agree, that "quietly, joyously singing" almost sounds like an oxymoron, but I think we can accomplish this by allowing our hearts, hands and facial expressions to join the chorus. Super model **Tyra Banks** advised that even behind a covid mask we can show our smile by "smEYEzing," smiling with our eyes. I think this can also apply to our singing, volume low, but our whole person involved.

There is a classic Isaac Watts hymn, "We're Marching to Zion," which we will next SING QUIETLY together; a couple of the verses say:

*Come we that love the Lord and let our joys be known,  
Join in a song with sweet accord, and thus surround the throne.*

*Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God;  
But children of the heavenly King may speak their joys abroad.*

Every believer should be a singer! You don't have to sing well (KJV - "make a joyful NOISE") but sing you must! The Apostle Paul wrote to Colossian Christians,

*"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God." Colossians 3:16*

So every chance we get to sing – together or alone – let's put everything we have into joyously doing so .... for the near future, everything but volume.

Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Vs. 3

### Fourth, our Thanksgiving should be **Purposeful**; we should intentionally set aside times for giving thanks.

Sadly, some are not thankful because they do not know God. Have you noticed how ungrateful the world has become? No one seems to appreciate anything. Instead of giving thanks for the abundance we have, we just want more.

Sir John Templeton, the billionaire investor, was once asked what is the secret of wealth. Without hesitation Templeton said, "*Gratitude. If you're not grateful, you're not rich, no matter how much you have.*"

Look closely at v.3, "***Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us and we are His...***" These are two simple but profound statements. When we know who God is and know who we are, We Will Give Him Thanks.

There is an intriguing account in Luke17:11-19 that illustrates this principle.

*On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"*

Because of the infectious nature of leprosy, the law required them to keep at least 100 paces away from others. So they had to raise their voices and call out to him from a distance, "*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!*"

Jesus never touched them, or spoke any normal word of healing. He simply said, "*Go, show yourselves to the priests.*" Priests had no power to heal. Their role was to pronounce a victim cleansed of leprosy. It was faith that caused the 10 to walk away from Jesus and hurry to the synagogue. However as they stepped away in faith – "as they were going" – they were healed. Imagine their overflowing joy!

In the midst of jubilation, nine of them ran to find the nearest priest. They wanted to be declared clean so they could return to their families. Yet one first returned to Jesus. "***Praising God, with a loud voice,***" he fell on his face at Jesus feet, giving thanks to Him.

Do you notice a tinge of sadness in Jesus response: *Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?*" (vs. 17-18). All had been in need of mercy. All were relentless in their quest to be healed. All received from the Lord, but only one turned back to express his gratitude directly to Jesus. The other nine were Jews, this man was a Samaritan. Commentators point out that as a Samaritan, he probably would not even have been acknowledged by a Jewish priest, so he could not go with the rest. But the point is that the other nine upon discovering their healing, could also have taken the time to turn around and give thanks before going on to the priest.

Certainly all 10 were thankful to be healed, but only one took time to express thanksgiving. Like so many people today. We ask God for so much. He blesses and blesses us, yet like the nine, we rarely take time to thank Him. Yet we all have great reasons to thank God. If you are saved, He has given you eternal life, an abundant life! Psalm 100 says, "***We are His people, the sheep of His pasture.***" As the Great Shepherd, He cares for our every need. We have a purpose, a reason to be truly thankful.

Let us not neglect as the song suggests, to count our many blessings, see what God has done and then make a point, intentionally set aside a time to express our thanks; not just one day a year, or one day a week, but every chance we get.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. Vs.4

**Fifth, our thanksgiving should be passionate: demonstrated by our actions.** Look closely at v.4. We are to “*enter His gates*” giving thanks and praise and blessing to His name. Notice how many passionate action words are in this psalm: making noise, singing, praising, giving thanks.

Have you seen any of the many game shows being televised these days? Have you seen how the contestants react when they’ve won? Do they say, “*Oh, well thank you, I guess*” or would you say they shout with jubilation? Friends, we have much more to be thankful for than some monetary prize. We have eternal riches beyond our wildest imaginations! So our thanksgiving needs to be both an **Attitude** and an **Action**.

The Apostle John wrote,

*How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.* 1 John 3:17-18

When we have the right attitude, we express our thanksgiving with very public actions; just like the collections we made this Sunday. Not only did we gather money to help our missionary Gracie Murphree in a time of crisis, but we also gathered food for those in need and we also pledged our support for this church’s ministry in 2021. All of these actions are part of our passionate – heartfelt – worship.

**Lastly, like the God we serve, our thanksgiving should be continual and lasting.**

For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. Vs. 5

Because God’s Blessings are Perpetual, our Gratitude should never cease. Lamentations (3:22-24) declares,

*“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.*”

We have so much for which we can be thankful. God has blessed us all immeasurably. Let’s not let Thanksgiving be limited to food, football, family, shopping, any one day or any one thing. But let our Thanksgiving Days be every day and may they also be public, purposeful, passionate and perpetual in remembering the One from whom all blessings flow.

Let’s pray about this.