

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



A Happy Thanksgiving

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 105:1-5 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Genesis 1
Psalm 66:1-2; 81:1-3; 95:1-2; 98:4-6; 100:1-5 | Matthew 11:28 | 1 John 1:9

► SUMMARY

When Thanksgiving comes around, we are reminded of the Pilgrims who crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1620 to settle in the New World.

They were an adventurous group who came to an unknown land in search of religious freedom. Despite all the hardships and losses they experienced in that difficult first year, they gathered to celebrate a Thanksgiving feast to God for all His goodness toward them. And we continue that tradition each year.

► SERMON POINTS

Psalm 100 is all about thanksgiving. There is nothing negative in it because each line is about the Lord. That should be our focus for thanksgiving as well, even in difficult circumstances. Like the Pilgrims, we need a spirit of gratitude that recognizes God's provision, goodness, and guidance in our lives.

Although we aren't making a fresh start in a new land, if we've trusted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we have been given new life in Him. Just as the Pilgrims' new beginning was not free from problems, heartaches, and burdens, neither is the Christian life. But when we focus on the Lord, we have many reasons to be thankful.

Psalm 100

- [1] Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.
- [2] Serve the LORD with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing.
- [3] Know that the LORD Himself is God; it is He who has

made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

- [4] Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name.
- [5] For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.

The action words in this psalm show us various ways we could express our gratitude to God. We can shout joyfully, serve Him, come with joyful singing, know Him, enter His presence with praise, give thanks, and bless His name. The psalm also describes the Lord as our God, Creator, and Shepherd, who is good, loving, kind, and faithful.

These are all reasons to be grateful, but we should also consider the many ways God has been good to us personally. Each breath we take is a gift from Him. He keeps us alive and wakes us up each morning to a new day. He provides air to breathe, clothes to wear, and everything we need for life. And beyond these are our spiritual blessings that come with our life in Christ. He works in our hearts to transform our attitudes and empower us to love others. We can confidently talk to the Lord in prayer and know that He hears us, protectively watches over us, and guides our path. Every event in our lives and in this world is under His control, and He works everything according to His good and perfect will.

Yet often we forget all this and moan and groan about the situations in our lives or in the world. No matter what goes on around us or how bad everything seems, we need not fear because we live in God's grace. Even if we go through times of sickness, heartache, or disappointment, the Lord never changes. He is always protecting, providing, and caring for us.

Expressions of Thanksgiving

Psalm 100 describes reverent, joyful, and exuberant praise and thanksgiving to God as do other psalms.

- **Psalm 66:1-2** “Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; sing the glory of His name; make His praise glorious.”
- **Psalm 81:1** “Sing for joy to God our strength: shout joyfully to the God of Jacob.”
- **Psalm 95:1-2** “O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving.”
- **Psalm 98:4** “Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth; break forth and sing for joy and sing praises.”

Reverence for God can be expressed in quiet contemplation of His character and works, but it can also be seen in exuberant praise and joyful singing. What’s important is our attitude of reverence as we acknowledge God’s attributes and deeds. There should be joy and gratitude in our hearts as we come together to be taught truths from God’s Word. Then what we have learned about the Lord should come out in praise, adoration, and worship, whether we express it in reverent silence or loud, joyful singing.

Reasons for Joyful Thanksgiving

- **The Lord is our God.** “Know that the LORD Himself is God” (Ps. 100:3). Although there is an abundance of false gods, the Lord is the only true God who is the sovereign Ruler of His creation. Genesis 1 was written not only to describe all that He created but to emphasize that He is the source of everything that exists. He is also the One who has created new life in everyone who receives His Son as Savior and Lord.
- **He made us.** “It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves” (v. 3). The Lord has given us life and designed each person with unique personalities, talents, abilities, and gifts. He made no mistakes so we should never compare ourselves to others.

- **“We are His people”** (v. 3). Through faith in Jesus Christ we have become children of God and members of His household. We now belong to Him and are not our own.
- **We are “the sheep of His pasture”** (v. 3). Our relationship with God is like that of sheep to their shepherd. As our Shepherd, the Lord protects, guides, and cares for us. We know His voice and follow Him, and if we stray, He pulls us back to Himself.
- **God is good. “For the LORD is good”** (v. 5). The evidence of His goodness toward us is seen in our eternal salvation, but sometimes in the midst of our temporary trials and suffering, we forget this truth. Yet even in our trials, God is working for our good.
- **“His lovingkindness is everlasting”** (v. 5). As His children and the sheep of His pasture, we live under the covering of His love and kindness. Although we may not recognize it at the time, even His discipline is an act of love as He brings us back into the fold.
- **His faithfulness continues to all generations** (v. 5). Since God cannot change, His faithfulness will never cease. Therefore, we can trust Him because He is always true to His nature and does exactly what He says.

The Lord is worthy of our praise and gratitude because of His sacrificial love demonstrated at the cross, His continual goodness toward us, and His eternal faithfulness.

► RESPONSE

- What are the typical things for which you thank God? How often are His character and His works the focus of your gratitude?
- What can you thank the Lord for in your times of difficulty or pain?

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