

OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD!

Psalm 107

INTRODUCTION

- The last few days have seen some substantial rain in our region, bringing a degree of relief to many
- God's provision of rain to parts of Australia does not in any way mean that he is pleased with the nation, for he "sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" Matthew 5:45), and "he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35)
- Very few have given glory to God for blessing us with rain
- Some deny the hand of God, while others glorify "Mother Nature"
- In Psalm 107:8 there is a desire expressed that God would be honoured for all he is, and all he has done for man
- But unregenerate man is unthankful to God (Romans 1:21)
- The last days are characterised by ingratitude (2 Timothy 3:1-2)
- All of us can become infected with an ungrateful heart and must guard against it
- This psalm is a call for men to praise and thank the Lord
- It is a lesson in God's operations in the lives of his creatures, guiding them, providing for them and delivering them
- After a familiar introduction (cf. Psalm 106:1; 118:1; 136:1), the psalmist describes five groups of distressed people, for whom God mercifully interposes and delivers:
 - ✓ He redeems the captives from their enemy (2-3)
 - ✓ He rescues the lost travellers (4-9)
 - ✓ He liberates the prisoners (10-16)
 - ✓ He heals the sick (17-22)
 - ✓ He delivers the mariners from the tempest (23-32)

- In vv.33-43 we are shown God's governance over both man and nature, to either curse or bless
- There are two refrains that recur throughout the psalm, the first pertains to God's deliverance of the needy who cry unto him (6,13,19,28), and the second is a corresponding exhortation to praise God (8,15,21,31)
- Here we will consider the vital importance of thanksgiving to God

I. THANKSGIVING IS A RECOGNITION OF GOD'S MERCIES

A. The meaning of thanksgiving and praise

1. The Hebrew word *yadah*, translated as both "thanks" (v.1) and "praise" (vv.8,15,21,31), is from the root for "hand" (*yad*), and literally means to "stretch out the hand" in a public acknowledgement of God, giving testimony for what he has done
 - a. We are to lift up "holy hands" to God in praise (1 Timothy 2:8)
2. Thanksgiving is saying, "God is the gracious Giver, I am the unworthy recipient", exalting God and humbling man
 - a. Though man is the pinnacle of God's creation, this psalm repeats the phrase "the children of men", reminding us that we are all the sons of *adam*, formed from the dust of the earth
3. In English, "think" and "thank" are etymologically related, and have as a common ancestor the ancient Indo-European root *tong*, meaning to feel or think
 - a. To "thank" originally had the connotation of good thoughts and loving memory toward the giver
4. In other languages thanksgiving is associated with indebtedness to the giver
 - a. Portuguese *obrigado* is similar to how we might say, "much obliged"
 - b. The French *merci* is as if the recipient is asking the giver for mercy—the idea is that by receiving something, a person is under the benefactor's power

B. We have infinite reasons to praise him

1. His ever-enduring mercy (v.1)
2. His goodness and wonderful works to the children of men (v.8)
3. His redemption (v.2)

II. THANKSGIVING IS AN OBLIGATION

- A. There are many exhortations in Scripture to give thanks to God (1 Chronicles 16:8; Psalm 50:14; Ephesians 5:20; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; 1 Timothy 4:4)
- B. There are many instances of those who failed to give thanks to God
 1. Mankind in general (Romans 1:21)
 2. The children of Israel (Nehemiah 9:26)
 3. The nine lepers (Luke 17:17-18)
- C. Ingratitude robs God of his glory
 1. God is jealous (Exodus 34:14), and will not give his glory to another (Isaiah 42:8)
 2. Those who attribute God's blessings to "luck", "fortune" or "their lucky stars" instead of to God are an offence to him
 3. There are many who advocate the idea of being thankful "in general" for blessings without being thankful to anybody specifically
 4. Such people enjoy God's blessings without crediting him for bestowing them
 5. They deny the reality that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17)

III. THANKSGIVING IS A DELIGHT

- A. Praise is comely for the upright (Psalm 33:1; 147:1)
- B. It pleases God
 1. God is pleased when believers offer "the sacrifice of praise" (Hebrews 13:15-16)

2. Giving of thanks is “good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour” (1 Timothy 2:1-3)
- C. Thanksgiving blesses those who render it
1. It brings victory to the believer (2 Chronicles 20:21-22; Acts 16:25-27)
 2. It is an antidote to sin
 - a. It keeps the heart soft towards God
 - b. Ingratitude leads to forgetting the Lord, which leads to sinning against him (Psalm 106:13-14)
 - c. Thankfulness promotes love to God which promotes obedience to him (1 John 5:2-3)
 4. A thankful heart makes even the bitter circumstances of life sweet (cf. Proverbs 27:7)
- D. Thanksgiving encourages others to likewise praise God (Psalm 40:3; Acts 16:25)

CONCLUSION

1. While the world must be condemned for its ingratitude to God, we must first look to ourselves, for “judgment must begin at the house of God” (1 Peter 4:17)
2. None of us can say, “I have rendered unto the Lord all that he is worthy of”
3. The normal Christian experience is to one of “abounding thanksgiving” (Colossians 2:6-7)
4. Our every moment, every word and deed, should be seasoned with a spirit of thanksgiving to God (Colossians 3:17)
5. The wise are those who observe and consider God’s works and ways, and render praise for his goodness (v.43)
6. *O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free;
A heart that’s sprinkled with the blood
So freely shed for me.*