

Come With Thanksgiving *Psalm 95*

Good Morning

There are many forces at work within the universe. Gravity is a potent force in the universe, much more powerful than we stop to realize at times.

In 1971, after a year and a half of training, James Irwin walked on the moon during the U.S. Apollo 15 space mission.

While on the moon, James Irwin had a heart attack but because of the difference in gravity between the moon and the earth, there was a lot less stress on his heart.

And because of the difference in gravity, the heart attack didn't have the adverse effects it could have had if Irwin been on Earth

James Irwin said he felt God's love and presence in a powerful way while on the moon, and he also sensed a nearness and presence of God that he never anticipated.

James Irwin said he came to know the LORD personally, as he developed an attitude of thankfulness for all that the LORD had done for him.

There are forces stronger than gravity at work all around us, some **push us away** from Jesus, while others **pull us closer** towards Him.

Thankfulness is an attitude we should express **every day**.

Please open your Bibles to *Psalm 95*

Today, we will talk about being thankful to the LORD, not only in moments of worship, but also by training our minds and attitudes to always give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!

Some people say they do not know who wrote *Psalm 95*, but the best commentary on scripture is other scripture. *Hebrews 4:7* tells us that King David was the author of *Psalm 95*.

I. Worship displayed with thanksgiving.

Read *Psalm 95:1-2*

Psalm 95 begins with David calling God's people to give thanks and come to the LORD in worship, through **singing**.

Some people don't like to sing to the LORD; however, singing is an important way to honor and worship the LORD.

The first truth about coming to the LORD is it requires someone to believe in Him to have the desire to *come* to Him.

Hebrews 11:6 Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. NKJV

Having faith in the LORD requires two things:

1. Faith means we believe the LORD (revealed in **scripture**), exists, not just the fact there is a god somewhere out there.

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble! NKJV

So, faith involves believing in Elohim, the triune God revealed to us through God the Son, Jesus Christ.

John 14:8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

John 14:9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. NKJV

2. Faith requires a person to believe that ***God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***

We must believe that the LORD is real and that He will reveal Himself to the seeking heart. ***Diligently*** means to investigate, scrutinize, or to seek out for one's self, to beg, or to crave.

Shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Jesus is the Rock!

Christ-followers should honor and worship the LORD with a happy, enthusiastic heart.

Of course, there is a time for somber and reflective worship, but as the children of the Most High God, we have a lot to be happy and thankful for.

We are to give the LORD worship, praise, and glory for who He is and all that He has done.

Once filled by the Holy Spirit, believers automatically have a desire to worship God and to encourage others to worship Him.

We are told to “*Come before His presence with thanksgiving*”.

Thankfulness is a discipline. Like any spiritual discipline, it takes a work of the Holy Spirit, but it also takes practice and hard work on our part, as we die to ourselves.

We should also meditate on the blessings we already have...

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things. NKJV

Chuck Swindoll gave a list of God’s gifts in his book, *Living Above the Level of Mediocrity*:

- Eyesight
- Dexterity in your fingers
- Skills that allow you to work
- Leadership abilities
- Education
- Family
- Clothes, A place to sleep, and Food to eat.

I would add, the Love of a good God towards us, the Word of God, Eternal Salvation, and so much more.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. NKJV

When we realize who Jesus is, we can't help but worship and be thankful to Him who provides for us so, praise the LORD!

As we contemplate all that the LORD has done and praise Him for all of it; it will cause us to fall further in love with Him.

1 John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us. NKJV

Chuck Swindoll asked the question, "*How do we love our God?*

We love Him by counting the many ways He has been good to us and, as the psalmist did, by sharing His goodness with others.

What does God desire?

Our humble thanks. Our heartfelt gratitude. He wants us to be hungry for life, to treasure every day He entrusts to us.

We should pause and express your own heart of gratitude to our loving Lord."

II. Worship the Great God.

Read ***Psalm 95:3-5***

When we come to know the greatness of the LORD, it should cause us to not only admire Him and thank Him, but it should cause us to worship Him as the only One worthy to be praised.

Adam Clarke said, "*The Supreme Being has three names here:*

*“EL, JEHOVAH, ELOHIM, and we should apply none of them to false gods. The first implies His strength; the second His being and essence; the third, His covenant **relation** to mankind.”*

- God made a covenant with Abraham regarding a land, a nation, and a particular messianic blessing.
- God made a covenant with Israel as a nation, regarding a law, sacrifice, and choice of blessing or cursing.
- God made a covenant with David regarding the specific lineage of the Messiah.

The covenant the Lord made which we should be most grateful for is the **New Covenant** made by the blood of Jesus Christ.

“And the great King above all gods.” The LORD is King of kings and LORD of lords, greater than any created thing.

In the New Testament Paul clearly told us who is King of kings.

1 Timothy 6:13 I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

1 Timothy 6:14 that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing,

1 Timothy 6:15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, NKJV

Jesus is the One who has all power and strength, and He is the One who rules the universe from His throne in heaven.

The greatness of any man fades in comparison to the glory of Jesus Christ. The most influential person on Earth is nothing next to King Jesus.

Jesus is the God-man, immortal without beginning or end, and if His glory were fully revealed, it would kill a mere mortal man.

Notice, ***“In His hand are the deep places of the earth.”***

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. NKJV

Because the LORD created heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them, He still has the power to control nature.

In the ***Gospel of Mark***, after Jesus and His Disciples taught the multitudes, they were all in a boat when a great storm came.

Mark 4:36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.

Mark 4:37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.

Mark 4:38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

Mark 4:39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

Mark 4:40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"

Mark 4:41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" NKJV

III. We belong to the King Shepherd.

Read *Psalm 95:6-7a*

Notice that David says, "*Let us worship and bow down*".

It is noteworthy that the Hebrew word used here for *worship*, actually means to *bow down before a superior in homage*. To *worship* the LORD is to demonstrate what He is worth to us.

Tozer, "*Worship is to feel in your heart and express in some appropriate manner, admiring awe and astonished wonder and overpowering love in the presence of Our Father in heaven.*"

William Temple said, "*To worship is*"

- To quicken the conscience by the holiness of God.
- To feed the mind with the truth of God.

- To purge the **imagination** by the beauty of God.
- To open the **heart** to the love of God.
- To devote the **will** to the purpose of God.

We should have individual worship at all times, but there is something special when we have corporate times of worship as well.

By saying, “*Let us worship*”, David was calling the **community** of believers together, to humbly come before the Lord in worship and submission, and as David said, “*Bow down*”.

And why should we worship and bow down to the LORD?

Psalm 95:7 For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. NKJV

“*The sheep of His hand*” means we are under His care and protection.

Jesus said in *John 10:11*, “*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. NKJV*”

Jesus came for one reason, to lay down His life for His Sheep, and His sheep come from every tribe and every nation. He is the creator of all men, and there is only One Shepherd.

The Father loves Jesus because He willingly died for us, and we should love Him for that reason as well.

A Good Shepherd would willingly offer His life to save His own sheep, and that is exactly what Jesus did for you and me.

Jesus laid down His life. He was in full control during His mock trials, He was in full control over Pontius Pilate, and He was in full control over the Roman centurions.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter drew his sword to fight off those who came to arrest Jesus....

Matthew 26:52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Matthew 26:53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?

Matthew 26:54 How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" NKJV

Most commentators believe a *legion* of soldiers was around 6,000 men so, twelve *legions of angels* would be 72,000.

Knowing Jesus chose us, came to rescue us, came to redeem us from the curse, and then gave us His blessing through faith in Him, is enough to cause us to worship and be thankful to Him.

IV. Worship the LORD for His promised rest.

Read *Psalms 95:7b-11*

David is referring to the Children of Israel after they came out of Egypt, who because of their complaining and **unbelief** spent 40 years in the desert and never went into the Promised Land.

This is also in *Hebrews 4*. Here are 3 interpretations of this *rest*.

1. This is a *rest* that comes from eternal bliss.
2. This is the *rest* and peace we receive with faith in Christ.
We are no longer enemies, so we are at peace with God.
3. This is the *rest* we will have during the Millennial Kingdom, as the Lion lays at peace with the Lamb.

Hebrews 4:1 Since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

Hebrews 4:2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

Hebrews 4:3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. NKJV

James Boice said, “If you want to worship God, make sure you do not harden your heart against God’s Word, or quarrel with him or test him, as the ancients did.”

Those who believe the promises of the LORD and wholeheartedly trust Him for salvation will have His *rest*.

Just saying Jesus Christ is the Son of God will not give us *rest*, but trusting in Him completely is what gives *rest* to our souls.

After the Children of Israel wandered the desert for 40 years that entire generation died, and then Joshua led the new generation into the Promised Land.

But even after Joshua led the new generation into the Promised Land, there was still another *rest* for God's people, yet to come.

This is speaking of a spiritual *rest* that can only be provided through Jesus because Jesus is King of kings and the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life to offer His sheep, *rest*.

God's *rest* is found in a **person**, Jesus Christ, not in a religion, doctrines, or ideas.

Christ-followers are promised heaven someday, but we are offered His peace, *rest*, and abundant life today.

1. Trust in Christ's sacrificial death gives us *rest* from the burden of our sins and a guilty conscience.

Hebrews 9:14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? NKJV

2. Trust in our loving Savior gives us *rest* as we place our burdens on Him.

1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

1 Peter 5:7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. NKJV

3. Trust in Jesus provides us with joy, even in trying times.

1 Peter 1:8 Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

1 Peter 1:9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls. NKJV

4. Trust in Jesus provides us with the same *rest* He enjoys.

Hebrews 4:4 "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works" NKJV

Genesis 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. NKJV

Hughes said, “God’s *rest* began with the completion of the cosmos and continues on and on — and thus is available to all his children. Its fullness is available to all.” (R. Kent Hughes)

V. Practical Application.

We have so many things to be thankful for and we know that every good and perfect gift comes from the Lord.

Knowing Jesus chose us, came to rescue us, came to redeem us from the curse and then give us His blessing through faith in Him; is more than enough to be thankful for.

Knowing the Lord is able and faithful to fulfill all of His promises is more than enough to be thankful for.

Knowing the Lord protects His children is more than enough to be thankful for.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. NKJV

Thankfulness is a discipline. Like any spiritual discipline, it takes a work of the Holy Spirit, but it also takes practice and hard work on our part, as we die to ourselves.

5 attributes of thankful people I borrowed from *Sarah Colligan*.

1. Thankful people are humble.

Humility is the beauty that comes from knowing who you are in Christ and knowing you are loved, despite the fact that you're flawed, imperfect, and undeserving.

2. Thankful people are giving and content.

Humble thankful people are happy givers who are fully aware and in awe of the grace bestowed on them.

Focusing on thankfulness takes our eyes off of ourselves and puts them on God's blessings and focus on the positive sides to our circumstances.

3. Thankful people aren't judgmental.

Thankful people are less likely to judge other people. They already know what they have been given.

When you're deeply thankful, your focus is on the good and you even begin to focus on the good in other people.

4. Thankful people don't gossip.

Gossip is intended to tear other people down.

When you're grateful, humble, and content with your own life, you are less likely to speak badly of others, especially behind their backs.

5. Thankful people are encouraging.

Thankful people are a pleasure to be around because you leave their presence feeling like everything is going to be okay.

There are forces at work all around us, every day. Some forces push us away from Christ and some pull us closer toward Him.

Being grateful in life also pulls me into God's will.

So, let's be people who have a thankful attitude, especially as we celebrate the holidays; let's practice being thankful by...

- Remembering our condition before Christ and *rest* in Him.
- Recognizing our real need is Jesus Himself.
- Obeying the LORD's way of doing things.
- Sharing what the LORD has done in and through us.

Re-read *Psalm 95:1-2*

This holiday season, may we take the opportunity to worship Jesus individually, as well as corporately.

For Jesus is King of kings, and we are His sheep.