

Living Praise - Thanksgiving

Psalm 115:17-18

I wonder if you have anything to be thankful for today. And then I wonder, are you thankful? Are you thankful for the things you have? In Psalm chapter 115, verses 17 and 18, it says, *The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence. But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.*

Praise is a form of thanksgiving. When we praise God, we're, in essence, thanking Him for the things He's done for us. And I wonder today, are you thanking the Lord? Are you thankful that God has given you what you have? Now, I realize that many people are going through a difficult time. I realize that there's sickness, there's death, and there's financial difficulties today in our world, but we still have much to be thankful for. And this season as we look to Thanksgiving, I wonder today are you praising the Lord?

Just before we look into the lesson today that God's laid on my heart, I pray that you would go to our website and let us share with you and share with God the things that God has done for you. Would you share that with us today? A testimony from the Lord from your heart. Go to our website, www.LRWM.org. Share the blessings that God has bestowed upon you with us. We want to praise God with you and thank God for you and for the things He's done for you. On the website there, you can email us and let us know the answered prayers that God has given you, and we would also like to pray with you and for you of the necessities and the things in your life that you need today. I want to pray for you. I want to go to God in prayer for you and ask God's blessings upon your life. Go to www.LRWM.org today and share with me the things that you need prayer about, and I'll pray with you.

Thanksgiving – did you know that Thanksgiving might not be celebrated in the United States today were it not for a patient, persistent woman named Sarah Hale. Now, it's well known that the first Thanksgiving Day was celebrated by the Pilgrim Fathers in 1621, and this was done to give thanks for their fine harvest after a terrible first winter in the New World. Now in 1789, President George Washington issued a Thanksgiving Day proclamation to commemorate the first Pilgrim celebration.

And this is something you may not have known. Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, discontinued this Thanksgiving practice, calling Thanksgiving a kingly practice. And after this, Thanksgiving was observed by some individual states and on whatever date suited their fancy. Then in 1828, Mrs. Hale, the editor of the magazine, *Godly Ladies Book* – and you may know her better when I tell you what she wrote. She wrote “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” She began campaigning for the restoration of Thanksgiving as a national holiday. She wrote letters and sought appointments with national leaders from the president down. Time after time, she was politely rebuffed, sometimes being told it was impossible and impractical and sometimes being dismissed with a “This is none of your business” scolding.

And finally in 1863, President Lincoln listened seriously to her plea that North and South lay aside enmities and strife on Thanksgiving Day. Now the president, President Lincoln, proclaimed the fourth Thursday in November to be the official national Thanksgiving Day. This day was finally ratified by the US Congress in 1941. And I would have you know today that there is a movement that would have us stop Thanksgiving Day, because, you see, that day was set aside that

we should praise God, that we should give thanks to God.

Now, when the word gets out and the radicals, the liberals of our country, realize – and I'm sure that most of them do... a lot of them do – that we are to pray on that day, "Oh well, that's against religion. That's against people's beliefs so we should stop this Thanksgiving foolishness." Well, the Bible tells us that it makes no difference what other people do, that you and I as saved people, as Christians, as people on our way to Heaven, we are to give God the thanks and glory that He deserves.

Once again, in Psalm 115, verse 18, it says, *But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.* Living praise is what you and I should have toward the Lord. Why? Because we're alive. And in verse 18, it talks about a happy resolution – *We will bless the LORD.* We will bless the Lord in our hearts, in our songs, in our testimonies, in our actions. We are to be resolved to give the Lord our loving praise because we are blessed of the Lord, and shall we not bless Him today? Shall we not say, "Bless you, Father. Thank you for giving me eternal life." And He will be a blessing to us more and more. He will reveal His love to us. Let's praise Him more and more. Let this be our vow that we will bless the Lord come what may.

Now notice in verse 18, there's an appropriate beginning here. *We will bless the LORD from this time forth....* When should we start praising the Lord? From this time forth. Maybe you haven't taken time even today to thank God for His goodness, to thank Him for the air you breathe, thank Him for wherever you're living. And you may not have much, but what you have is what God has given you, and you need to thank God for that today. We need to thank God when we are spiritually renewed and comforted. We need to thank God when we are led to confess Christ. That is a privilege we have been given as a

Christian and then we should begin the never-ending life psalm, the song of our life, *Jesus Saves.*

Service and song should go together. We should praise God and thank Him when the years end. At the year's end, we should thank Him on New Year's Day. We should thank Him on our birthdays. Not only at Thanksgiving time, but every day of our life, we need to bless God because the sin of the year is forgiven. We need to thank God because the needs of the year have been supplied. You haven't had much this year? Well, God's kept you alive. God's given you the breath of life. He's given you the knowledge to know that one day you're going to see Him face to face because you have trusted Jesus as your Savior. And we know that we need to thank God because the mercy of the year is enjoyed.

And notice something else. There's an everlasting continuance. Verse 18 says that we are to praise God *from this time forth and for evermore.* Weariness will not stop our praise. The government cannot stop our personal praise of God. Oh, yes, the government could come along and once again, as Thomas Jefferson did, and say, "From this point on there's not going to be a national day of thanksgiving." But thank God, we as individuals can say, "I don't care what you say, Government. I am going to praise God. I'm going to thank God for what He has given me in my life."

There should be an everlasting continuance. It says in verse 18 *from this time forth and for evermore.* Weariness will not stop our praise. We will renew our strength as we bless the Lord. Fainting will not end our praise. The Lord will keep our soul in His way and make us praise Him all our days. And nor shall death so much as interrupt our songs, but it will raise them to a pure and for higher height of blessing. We will be with the Lord one day, and then, we will be complete. Our songs will be louder than ever

because the Lord has saved us and raised us up with Him. We will be with Him one day and there, we will praise Him in person.

And we look and we understand that the everlasting continuance of praise is this – *from this time forth and for evermore*. Nothing is going to stop us from this as Christians, as saved people. No calamity will deprive us from the gratitude that we have for the Lord.

Job 1:21 says, *[T]he LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD*. We need to stand strong today. We need to stand together and serve God, praising God, and thanksgiving being presented to God. Give our thanks to Him for what He has given us. Let's not only do that at this time of year when we look to a Thanksgiving Day, but let's have Thanksgiving in our hearts continually every day of the year. When we bless the Lord for mercies, we prolong them. When we bless Him for miseries, we usually end them.

Praise is a soul in flower. Praise is a hearty blessing of the Lord. Praise is the soul fruit bearing. Praise is the honey of life. A person should as well as be dead to be without praise. It's the crown of life. Man's chief purpose is to glorify God. Hebrews 12:12 says, *Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees*. Quit moping around and praise the Lord.

Now, God wants you to be happy today. He wants you to be joyful today. He wants you to be thankful today, and the first way that we can be thankful is by trusting Him as our Savior. If you've not done that, may I invite you to do so right now.

“Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive you as my Savior right now.” If you'll believe in your heart that Jesus came and died for you on the cross and shed His blood and rose from the grave on the third day, if you believe that in your heart

and you ask Him to come in, the Bible says, *To as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons – or the children – of God*. [John 1:12]

If you'll trust Jesus today, He'll save you. Bow your head where you're at and ask Jesus to come into your heart.

And if you're a saved person today, thank Him today for your salvation. Bow your head and thank Him and... “Lord Jesus, thank You for being so good to me and giving me the breath of life that I can use that breath, this life, to serve You until I see You in person, either in the air or when You call me home.”

Thank you for being with me today, and let me invite you to look at our website, www.LRWM.org. On that website, you can download a transcript of this program absolutely free. It won't cost you anything. You can write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731, and I'll be glad to send you free of charge a printed transcript of this program.

Until this same time next week when you'll hear me say it's a good life, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.