

# Living with Gratitude in God's Creation

Thomas Robinson, November 21, 2010

## Psalm 100:1-5

*A psalm. For giving grateful praise.*

- <sup>1</sup> Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.  
<sup>2</sup> **Worship** the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.  
<sup>3</sup> **Know** that the LORD is God.  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.  
<sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.  
<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good  
and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

## 2 Corinthians 9:10-15

- <sup>10</sup> He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.  
<sup>11</sup> **You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way**, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. <sup>12</sup> For the ministry of this service is not only **supplying the needs** of the saints but is also **overflowing in many thanksgivings to God**.  
<sup>13</sup> By their approval of this service, they will **glorify God** because of your submission flowing from your **confession of the gospel of Christ**, and the **generosity** of your contribution for them and for all others,  
<sup>14</sup> while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing **grace of God** upon you.  
<sup>15</sup> **Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!**

## Ephesians 5:15-20

- <sup>15</sup> **Look carefully then how you walk**, not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the **best use of the time**, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be foolish, but **understand** what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be **filled with the Spirit**, <sup>19</sup> addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** and making melody to the Lord with your heart, <sup>20</sup> **giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**.

## 1 Chronicles 16:7-12, 28-29, 31-34

- <sup>7</sup> Then on that day David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the LORD by Asaph and his brothers.  
<sup>8</sup> **Oh give thanks to the LORD**; call upon his name;  
make known his deeds among the peoples!  
<sup>9</sup> Sing to him; sing praises to him;  
tell of all his wondrous works!  
<sup>10</sup> Glory in his holy name;  
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!  
<sup>11</sup> **Seek the LORD and his strength**;  
seek his presence continually!  
<sup>12</sup> Remember the **wondrous works** that he has done,  
his miracles and the judgments he uttered,...
- <sup>28</sup> Ascribe to the LORD, O clans of the peoples,  
ascribe to the LORD **glory and strength!**  
<sup>29</sup> Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;  
bring an offering and come before him!  
Worship the LORD in the **splendor of holiness**...  
<sup>31</sup> Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice,  
and let them say among the nations,  
**"The LORD reigns!"**  
<sup>32</sup> Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;  
let the field exult, and everything in it!

<sup>33</sup> Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy  
before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

<sup>34</sup> Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever!

1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 106:1; 118:29 (and many other places)

הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:

Hodou ladonai, kee tov, kee lohlam chasdoe.

Give Thanks to the Lord, for He is Good, for His Love is forever.

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## Thanksgiving in a Complicated World

Giving Thanks takes us into the heart of life with God. God is creator of this world, but he made it complicated – a world in which we make a difference for better or worse. A world full of good & bad, pleasure & suffering, nobility & wickedness, freedom & oppression.

The “problem of evil” is often raised against belief in God. But non-belief doesn’t solve the problem. It leaves the suffering and says that it is meaningless. Only in Jesus do we see God neck-deep under our evil, suffering, death; taking it on himself, creating hope and life.

When you step inside that Gospel, you learn not just to be stoic in suffering, but to rejoice and give thanks in all the circumstances of life – even sitting in prison with Paul.

The true challenge is the “problem of good.” How can there be so much beauty, strength, life, creativity, hope, healing, justice, love in a world where so many things can go wrong.

Christian worship is Eucharist (Thanksgiving) – broken body, shed blood, the gift of life – God’s sacrifice to give us his eternal life, enfold us in his love, redeem his whole creation. It fills our teaching. We sing thanks; we pray thanks; we give to learn/express gratitude.

## Thanksgiving and Stewardship of God’s Creation

The moment we are born we receive the vast gift of this world and life. It’s a great journey, a challenging exploration, a home, a dangerous adventure, a school for human character. Christians need to join fully in scientific discovery, artistic expression, creation of culture.

We work in the world knowing that “*The Lord is God...and we are his.*” We receive the world as a trust given to us, within a larger reality. We are God’s stewards of a beautiful creation, to implement God’s own creative care for his world, to bless and not destroy.

We are stewards of our own lives (we return them to God), in all their complexity and individuality. We are stewards of our experiences, sufferings, successes, gifts. We need to take our gifts seriously, not denigrate them. We need to learn through our pains.

We learn to see everything as a trust not a possession. Nothing is permanently ours except the life we create by God’s grace. But that, inadequate as we are, God takes and makes into something truly astonishing – coming to new life in a world renewed by God.

## Thanksgiving in the Circles of Family and Community

Giving thanks, stewardship, generosity, worship are to be shared. They expand in ever-widening circles. We are grateful for healthy families, for all we learn of love and vulnerability. We seek healing for broken relationships. Invest time and energy in loving relationships.

We’re part of a community of thanks with others on the same journey. But also back and forward through time. We “*give thanks to the Lord for He is good. His love endures forever.*”