

Psalms for Every Season: Thanksgiving

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Psalm 118

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Reflection & Discussion

The thanksgiving psalms are for a season *after* something has happened

These are the moments to look back and say “God, you were faithful”.

*What is the difference between thanksgiving and praise?

*How does taking part in thanksgiving keep us awake to what God is doing in our lives?

Remembering God’s faithfulness reshapes how we see everything else

Read and discuss Psalm 118 (NIV)

¹ Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

² Let Israel say:

“His love endures forever.”

³ Let the house of Aaron say:

“His love endures forever.”

⁴ Let those who fear the Lord say:

“His love endures forever.”

⁵ When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord;
he brought me into a spacious place.

⁶ The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?

⁷ The Lord is with me; he is my helper.

I look in triumph on my enemies.

⁸ It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in humans.

⁹ It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in princes.

¹⁰ All the nations surrounded me,
but in the name of the Lord I cut them down.

¹¹ They surrounded me on every side,
but in the name of the Lord I cut them down.

¹² They swarmed around me like bees,
but they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns;
in the name of the Lord I cut them down.

¹³ I was pushed back and about to fall,
but the Lord helped me.

¹⁴ The Lord is my strength and my defense;
he has become my salvation.

¹⁵ Shouts of joy and victory
resound in the tents of the righteous:

“The Lord’s right hand has done mighty things!

¹⁶ The Lord’s right hand is lifted high;
the Lord’s right hand has done mighty things!”

¹⁷ I will not die but live,
and will proclaim what the Lord has done.

¹⁸ The Lord has chastened me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.

¹⁹ Open for me the gates of the righteous;
I will enter and give thanks to the Lord.

²⁰ This is the gate of the Lord
through which the righteous may enter.

²¹ I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.

²² The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

²³ the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴ The Lord has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad.

²⁵ Lord, save us!
Lord, grant us success!

²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
From the house of the Lord we bless you.

²⁷ The Lord is God,
and he has made his light shine on us.

With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession
up to the horns of the altar.

²⁸ You are my God, and I will praise you;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.

²⁹ Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

*What do you notice about this Psalm? What does the structure show us about how to give thanks?

*Has remembering God’s faithfulness in the past ever helped you to face what is in front of you now?

Thanksgiving in the psalms is not just a feeling that arrives when life gets easier

It is a choice to remember and say out loud what God has done.

*Have you experienced a time of thanksgiving in your life? How were you able to see God at work in the midst of circumstance?

*How is the Lord good right now?

*How does giving thanks as a community help you as an individual?

Jesus doesn't just fit Psalm 118, he brings its deepest meaning into focus

In Jesus it becomes the story of how God saves his people fully and finally.

*How do we read this psalm now in the light of Jesus?

*Would you consider yourself a person of thanksgiving? How could you develop this response?

*What is the Spirit saying to you through the thanksgiving psalms about your current season of life? What invitation do you sense?

Thanksgiving prompts:

This past week, where did you need help and you received it, even in a small way?

What is steady in your life right now? What might you normally overlook, but it's actually a gift?

Who has God proven to be to you?

What are you thankful for today?

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