

Sermon Draft

Text: Psalm 100

Sermon: “Psalm of Thanksgiving”

In 1992, Dr. Gary Chapman published a book entitled *The Five Love Languages*. His thesis was that people tend to show their love in one of five different ways. Though Dr. Chapman wrote from a Christian perspective, the idea of different languages for showing love caught on, even outside the Church.

The title ascribed to Psalm 100 from ancient times is “A Psalm of Thanksgiving.” The psalmist reveals what might be called “The Seven Thanksgiving Languages.” This is probably a topic to which most especially anyone outside the Church hasn’t given much thought. How do you give thanks? Is there a proper way to give thanks? Psalm 100 encourages us to give thanks: knowing that God is God.

We don’t naturally speak God’s language, but through the work of Jesus, God has made us His people so that we can know him as God, a way of giving thanks.

The Holy Spirit has worked faith in our hearts, and through faith in Jesus we know and confess God to be our maker and redeemer. In this way, we daily give thanks.

God calls us to give thanks by acknowledging that he is God. God calls us to give thanks to him in various ways (vs 1–4). There are seven imperatives given in the first four verses of this psalm. We are told to **make** a joyful noise, **serve** the Lord with gladness, **come** into his presence with singing, **know** that the Lord, he is God, **enter** his gates with thanksgiving, **give** thanks to him, and **bless** his name. These commands can be thought of as godly elements of thanksgiving.

Since we don't have time to cover all seven commands in this text, let's take a closer look at just one: God calls us to give thanks by knowing that he is God.

The psalmist gives us two specific things to know about God that are then reasons for giving thanks. We are called to be thankful knowing who God is (v 5).

In v 5, we are told that God is good and that his love and faithfulness last forever. In other words, we can be thankful that he is by nature “for us.” We are called to be thankful knowing what God has done (v 3). In v 3, we are told to know God has made us both physically and spiritually. Through the work of Jesus, God has made us his people so that we can know him as God and give thanks.

But since imperatives are generally Law, we should remember that we will not perform well, and our thanksgiving is diminished by our refusal to know God as God. We prefer to “know” ourselves to be god (v 3). Most Christians would never call themselves “god,” but we behave in ways that betray our true desires. We want to be in charge, make our own decisions and do what we want often not what God wants and demands. Whomever we fear, love, and trust becomes a god to us. That includes ourselves.

Our sin is a daily argument with God that we either are, or should be, in control of our own lives. It is difficult to be properly thankful to God when we argue with him that we are in control. We like to think of ourselves as self-made (v 3). We are proud of what we have accomplished, and all the stuff we have gathered to ourselves.

While the psalmist says we have not made ourselves, we receive the title “self-made” with great joy. It is difficult to be properly thankful to God when we refuse to acknowledge that he has made us. We are insulted by being called sheep (v 3). Though we may know little about sheep, being called the sheep of his pasture does not strike us as a compliment.

The idea of needing to be fed, watered, guided, and protected—in short, being dependent—is a blow to our ego. It is difficult to be properly thankful when we refuse to acknowledge that all that we are and all that we have comes from our God.

Our sin may prevent us from knowing God in a proper way, but he certainly knows all about us. Because God made us, he knows how to bring us to know him. He created us by his almighty Word. ***“It is he who made us, and we are his”*** (v 3). We believe that God not only made Adam and Eve, but that ***“God has made me and all creatures,”*** as the Small Catechism says. He is not called Father without cause. He knows us as the Father, who brought us into being. He also knew what to do to make us his people: he sent Jesus.

Though he made us, our sin separated us from our Father so that we were not his people. By his holy life, death, and resurrection, Jesus re-created us as the people of God. Through faith in Jesus, you are a child of God, his own people. And likewise through Jesus, God has worked in us a correct knowledge of him.

Our sin would prevent us from knowing God properly. But Jesus, in his action and in his Word, reveals God’s attitude toward us.

Only when we know God through faith in Jesus can we give thanks.

Now knowing God rightly, the people of God are thankful for what he has done. The Spirit of God has worked knowledge and faith in our hearts so that we can be thankful. We did not come to know God on our own. The Holy Spirit worked through the Word to bring the knowledge of God and faith in him into our hearts. God himself has made us thankful people.

In this passage, we are shown two ways in which the people of God give thanks. We know that God has created us. When we call God “Father,” we are confessing this knowledge; he made us. We give thanks to God by knowing and confessing that he made us. We know that God has made us his people.

When through faith we believe in Jesus as our Savior, we are confessing this knowledge; he re-created us in the forgiveness of our sin. We give thanks to God by knowing and confessing that we are his people. I guess all seven imperatives are connected.

Through the gift of our faith we know God and give thanks. We want to come into His presence and make a joyful noise. We enter here each Sunday with thanksgiving offer our praise and thanks for His steadfast love which endures forever and we serve Him and each other out of that thankfulness and we are blessed so we can be a blessing to others.

Seven languages of thanksgiving. There might be more than seven. But certainly there is this one: when we know who God is—good and loving and faithful to us forever, always for us—and we know what God has done for us—made us his people again by Jesus' life, death, and resurrection—then, well, knowing that, we thank God!

Amen