

Psalm 104: Thanksgiving to the Glory of God

Written by Tim Black

Sunday, 23 November 2008 14:14 - Last Updated Sunday, 23 November 2008 14:23

1.

Introduction

1.

Thanksgiving is a time of year when we remember all of the great bounty of provisions God has given us in His creation and providence. Because God provided for the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Massachusetts in the harvest of 1621, our nation set aside Thanksgiving Day stating explicitly that its purpose is to give thanks to God for His providential blessings to us. But as Wikipedia will tell you, as year by year our Presidents have continued to proclaim a national Day of Thanksgiving, the Presidents who explicitly mention God's providence as the reason for the day have become fewer and farther between. And we as Americans have filled the Thanksgiving holiday with many good things which God created to be received with thanksgiving—turkey, family and friends, vacations & travel, parades, football, Thanksgiving TV specials, and the beginning of Christmas shopping—but I tell you, our culture and our commercialism are bent on filling Thanksgiving with everything but true thanksgiving that gives glory to God. It is so easy to exchange the truth of God for a lie, and worship the creature, rather than the Creator, who is forever blessed.

2.

God calls you in Psalm 104 to worship not the creature, but the Creator. In fact, Psalm 104 imitates parts of the pagan Egyptian Akhenaten's great *Hymn to the Sun*—it is partly a parody of a pagan hymn of thanksgiving!—for this specific purpose: to demonstrate "the incalculable difference between worshipping the sun and worshipping its Maker."

[1](#)

In v. 2 the light comes from God, not the sun; in v. 19 the sun is given second place to the moon, and the sun follows orders given to it by God.

3.

But the Psalm is more than just a rip-off of a pagan Egyptian song; no, this Psalm's construction and contents proclaim the glory of the true God and the true nature of His creation. The whole Psalm follows the pattern of the six days of creation in Gen. 1, moving from the light in the heavens to the division of heaven and earth, land and sea, and the many creatures that dwell in each of those realms, all of which God declared "very good" and designed to return their praise to Him on the seventh day through man, their chief caretaker and the one creature who alone was made in the image of their Creator. The Psalm declares without question that the glory in all of God's marvelous creatures is not first their own, but it is the glory of God.

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4.

This Psalm tells you two key truths:

1.

God's Glory Is in All for which We Give Thanks! vv. 1-30

2.

Therefore, You Are Called to: Give Thanks to the Glory of God! vv. 31-35

3.

Body

1.

God's Glory Is in All for which We Give Thanks 1-30. First, God's glory is in all for which we give thanks .

1.

In Himself and Heaven 1-4

1.

In vv. 1-4, you see that God's glory is in Himself and in heaven.

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1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty,

2 covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a

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tent.

3 He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind;

4 he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire.

-

God's glory doesn't come from His creation, it comes from Him! Heaven as the most glorious part of His creation exists in order to serve God Himself—the light is His garment, the heavens are His tent, the waters are the foundation of His house, the clouds are His chariot, the wind and fire are His wings, His messengers, His servants. Even the angels are sent forth to serve God alone.

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In Earth and its Geography 5-9

1.

In vv. 5-9, you see that God's glory is in earth and its geography, from the day He created it until now.

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5 He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved.

6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.

7 At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight.

8 The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them.

9 You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.

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In Water and Life 10-13

1.

In vv. 10-13, you see that God's glory is in water and the life it brings.

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10 You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills;
11 they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
12 Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches.
13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit
of your work.

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In Plants and Food 14-15

1.

In vv. 14-15, you see that God's glory is in plants and food they provide.

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14 You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he
may bring forth food from the earth
15 and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to
strengthen man's heart.

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Are you thankful for grass for your livestock, plants in your garden, food on your table,

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bread and wine for your heart? Then remember these things come from the Lord. True thanksgiving says to God, "You cause the grass to grow."

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In Trees and Homes 16-18

1.

In vv. 16-18, you see that God's glory is even to be found in trees and the homes they create

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16 The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.

17 In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees.

18 The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers.

-

Your nest, your home, your refuge, came not from your rugged individualism and private industry, from Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, or even from the president past or future. Your home came from the Lord.

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In Days and Work 19-23

1.

In vv. 19-23, you see that God's glory is in days and the work God has given you.

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- 19 He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting.
20 You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep about.
21 The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.
22 When the sun rises, they steal away and lie down in their dens.
23 Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening.

-

God has appointed the times and the boundaries of your dwelling, given you your work and your rest, your strength and health, vigor and victory. All these things are from God!

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In Providing for All Creatures 24-30

1.

"O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures." So the psalmist exclaims in praise to God, worshiping not the creature, but the Creator.

2.

And in vv. 24-30, you see that God's glory and wisdom and power is so richly displayed and grandly exalted in His providing for all creatures.

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- 24 O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.
25 Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great.
26 There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it.
27 These all look to you, to give them their food in due season.

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28 When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

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This Thanksgiving, is your refrigerator less full of food? Is your bank account less full of savings? Mine is too. But what you have gathered was put there by the hand of God. And thanks be to Him, what your table and tummy is filled with, is good.

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Akhenaten's Hymn to the Sun says "When you have risen they live, when you set they die," but it is not the Sun of the solar system who gives life and takes it away; but rather the true and living God!
! This Thanksgiving, do not sing the materialistic and humanistic hymns of the secular world, but with God's people in all ages give glory to the true and living God as the psalmist does, saying,

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29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

30 When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

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Give Thanks to the Glory of God 31-35

1.

What will you say this Thanksgiving? I'm thankful for this food? I'm thankful for my family? I'm thankful for the one perfectly renewable energy source, the sun? These things are good,

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but turn your eyes to something more glorious than this creation; more glorious than the sun itself. Turn your eyes to the God who dwells in unapproachable light, whose glory is in all the earth, but whose glory is far above the earth and skies.

2.

God's glory is in all for which we give thanks. The only right thing to do in response is to give thanks in a manner that gives all glory to God. And so the psalmist says in vv. 31-35, give thanks to the glory of God

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3.

Make God's Glory Your Highest Aim! 31-32

1.

First, in vv. 31-32, make God's glory your highest aim.

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31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works,
32 who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke!

-

When you sit at your Thanksgiving meal this year, I want you to say in your heart, more than I want my name, my glory, to remain in this world, I want the glory of the Lord to endure forever. More than I want to rejoice in this great food I've just eaten, I want You, O God, to have reason to rejoice in the things You have made. For "O Lord my God, You are very great!" Be exalted, O God, above the earth that trembles before you, above the great mountains that burn with fire to the heart of heaven when you touch them, be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be the glory.

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Sing Praise to God! 33

1.

If you see God's glory in His creation, and want to give Him all the glory, the second thing you should do is in v. 33, sing praise to God!

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33 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

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The birds in v. 12 sing without words or knowledge, but you who are made in the image of God can lift your heart and voice in songs of praise to Him that explicitly proclaim His excellencies to the whole creation and are a sweet, sweet sound in His ear.

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It is fitting that we have filled this night with songs of thanksgiving to God. If all God has given you, even your life and your very being, show the greatness of God's glory, you should sing praise and thanks to Him again. Not just tonight. But next Sunday, and the Sunday after that, and the Sunday after that, as long as you live.

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Here the psalm challenges you to truly give thanks to God in a way that glorifies Him. So many people today here in Caney and around our country say "Just give me Jesus, but I don't need to go to church," which is the body of Christ! "I believe in God, but I don't need to be in church on Sunday to sing to the Lord!" But I tell you the truth, if you say these things, you aren't even one seventh of the way to singing to the Lord as long as you live.

One day Jesus Christ will say to some, "

Depart from me; I never knew you.

" (

Matt. 7:23

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Meditate on the Lord! 34

1.

Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ? The psalmist says third, in v. 34, that to truly give glory to God you should meditate on the Lord!

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34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.

-

When you truly desire to glorify God, you want your attitudes, your thoughts, the ongoing habits of your heart to be pleasing to the Lord, because above all other things you find your heart's delight in Him. Do you see the relational intimacy, the fellowship of love, in this verse? We love Him because He first loved us. Because He is our joy, we want to be pleasing to Him. And we want to please Him by meditating on Him more, by knowing Him as we ought.

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Jesus said there is only one way to know God as you ought: "No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Despite all of God's glory and His blessings, if Jesus does not number you among the ones He knows, you will only know God as your Maker and your Judge, and you will not rejoice in Him, because, as

Is. 59:2

says "

Your sins have separated you from God.

"

-

But God is not only your Maker and Judge; He is the Savior of those who have sinned against Him. "God shows his love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for

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us. " (**Rom. 5:8**) If you remember any reason to thank the Lord tonight, let it be this, that through Christ's death to take the penalty for your sin, and His resurrection from the dead give you eternal life, you can say with **Psalm**

67

, "In

God is my salvation and my glory.

" Meditate on this "

gospel of the glory of Christ

" (

2 Cor. 4:4

), and you will rejoice in the Lord.

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True thanksgiving—thanksgiving to the glory of God—seeks to know and love Jesus Christ the Savior, seeks to think more of Him from day to day, and hear more of Him from Sunday to Sunday. Meditate on the Lord!

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Seek God's Justice, Not Yours! 35

1.

Fourth, in v. 35, seek God's justice, not yours!

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35 Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!

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Upon reading this we immediately throw up a red flag and say the psalmist is unjust! A Christian must be loving and kind, forgiving—and God says "bless, and do not curse." (**Rom.**

12:14

) But in these words, God calls you to seek His version of justice, and not your own.

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God's glory is perfect, and He displays it throughout this creation that we would worship Him in righteousness and truth. Scripture declares in **Eccl. 7:29** that "God made man upright, but men have sought out many devices."

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When you truly praise God for His glory, not just for His gifts to you but for His awesome majesty itself, you see how utterly evil it is for men to pervert God's creation, turning His glory into shame. But the psalmist calls you to say "Let God be true and every man a liar" (**Rom . 3:4**

), "if my right eye causes me to sin, I'll gouge it out, if your creatures turn against your glory as their Creator, let them burn! If I have to choose You or Your creation, O God, I choose You

!" "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (

Psalm 73:25-26

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Conclusion

1.

This Thanksgiving, give thanks in a way that glorifies God. When the time comes around your table to say what you are thankful for, make your answer be "I'm thankful for God's glory, for God's glory, and for God's glory." And when they ask you what you mean, tell them all the other things for which you are thankful show you the glory of God, and so you will sing of His glory as long as you live, you will meditate on His glory to bring joy to His heart, and you will give up everything if only God be glorified. That is Thanksgiving to the glory of God.

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[1](#) Derek Kidner, 368.