'Giving Grateful Praise'

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Preacher: Andrew Price

`[0:00]` What have I been doing with all my life? Well, I'll tell you what we've been doing. We've been raising three children and our youngest has finished school! And tomorrow night is her valedictory dinner.

And we'll all be celebrating with Thanksgiving the end of her and all our children's schooling, as well as some of the students receiving awards. And like previous years, parents will celebrate with Thanksgiving in different ways.
Some will clap and cheer. In previous years, we've seen some parents even do fist pumps in the air. And it also might include, depend on which culture you're from.
Some parents, perhaps from a British culture, might be yelling, huzzah! That's British, I think. Or Chinese, jia yu. Is that, I don't know if I messed that up. Or an African, I can't do this one, but have a listen.
Or not? Labalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabal
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abalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabalabal is tomorrow night parents will shout for joy in different ways to celebrate with thanksgiving the end of their children's schooling and our psalm today is a psalm for giving grateful praise that's the heading that the psalmist themselves gave their psalms these headings are part of the original uh hebrew text in other words it celebrates with thanksgiving not the end of a child's schooling but the character and work of our great god and god is so worthy of thanksgiving that the psalm itself repeats and so in verses one and two there are three imperatives or commands of giving thanks uh followed by some reasons in verse three in the italics and then the psalm repeats uh giving another three commands or imperatives to give thanks with even more reasons uh why and this repetition makes the point that our god really is worthy of our grateful praise so it is right that we give thanks uh point one verse one the psalmist says shout for joy to the lord or the earth here is the first of the three commands and it's to shout for joy or to rejoice now i know most of us uh don't like to show too much emotion unless our sports team wins and then we get excited but it is actually okay to rejoice and even let out a thank you god that's okay to do i mean have you ever lost something like your wallet or purse or your phone or your keys and you know you're frantically searching for it and then after a while of not finding it you remember that you should really have prayed about it a bunch earlier and so you pray you please god help and then after some time they they turn up in the most odd location like the washing basket or the fridge or wherever and it's such a relief isn't it and why not then at that point let out a thank you god or when you get the last car park or those good test results or that answer to prayer it's okay to let out a thank you god after all non-christians do it all the time in an unbelieving way don't they you hear them always exclaim oh thank god well let's reclaim that and do it in a believing way thank you god it's okay to give a shout of joyful praise and thanksgiving this is one way where to give thankful praise as is verse two worship the lord with gladness come before him with joyful songs now there's two here the first one is to worship or literally to serve the word worship really means to serve we are to serve the lord and notice it says with gladness as sometimes we can serve god begrudgingly like when we realize it's our turn on the church roster to serve which means something like getting there early or doing more work during the week and when we realize it's our turn it's easy to let out a sigh or groan of resignation oh yeah that's right but we're to serve god with gladness
`[5:04]` not with groaning because this is part of our thankfulness to him part of our thankful response to who he is and what he's done for us as we'll soon see and so it's encouraging to hear

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people do this people have said to me in light of jeff's passing if there's anything else we can do please let us know we're happy to help that's serving with gladness happiness or i was looking for some bible readers uh for a service and one lady uh offered and said it's always a joy to read god's word serving with gladness this is another way we are to express our thanks to god as is coming before god in joyful songs at the end of verse two you see uh songs and hymns they have both music and words right yes that's right yep and music engages the emotions of our hearts while words carry the thoughts of our minds our heads and so together singing expresses our thanks and praise with both our heads and hearts you see and this hit home again uh to me recently when we sang a song at our combined 5 pm service the sunday after jeff hall passed and i spoke from 1 corinthians 15 about the hope we have because of christ's death and resurrection and then we sang this song which you probably won't know but it's called christ my hope in life and death and you could hear it engage everyone's head and heart because it pretty much lifted the roof in thankful praise to god for the hope he has given us in christ coming before god with joyful songs expresses our thanks and praise with both head and heart and so as parents and kids give grateful praise tomorrow night in different ways for the end of their schooling whether by clapping or cheering or saying different things we are to give grateful praise to god in different ways like rejoicing and serving and singing but why point two well verse three know that the lord is god it is he who made us and we are his we are his people and the sheep of his pasture now the word lord in verse three has a typo do you know what it is there's a hint have a look at the word lord in verse one and two it's not in capitals it should be in capitals and that's because it's god's personal name it's literally yahweh it's the name god gave his people uh back in uh exodus through moses and it helped his people differentiate between their god and all the other gods of which there were oodles of particularly then and so what it's really saying is know that yahweh is god in other words know that our god god is the true god and that's worth giving thanks for because it means we have the real deal doesn't it it's a bit like those medical trials as sometimes they give one group of patients the the real drug and sometimes and then another group of patients gets the placebo or the the fake drug and so the doctors it helps them to work out how effective the real drug is and of course if it is good and effective and then the group with the real drug rejoices with thankfulness because they've got the real deal which saves them well we've got the real god who saves us not some placebo gods who don't and so we're not wasting our time being here this morning or following god in life you see knowing that the lord is the true god really is a reason to give thanks and praise as is the fact that he made us

as it says there he made us when he created us and all people that's why the psalmist back in verse 1 tells all the earth to shout for joy because god created all the earth and so all the earth owes him their lives occasionally i remind our kids to be more thankful to their mother and sometimes i add a reason because she gave birth to you and so you owe her your life well how much more so when it comes to god the god who enables mothers to give birth in the first place and the god who sustains our lungs to keep breathing so that the breath that you just took then is a gift from him we owe him everything you see and so is that not a reason to give him thankful praise and even more so for us who are christians for he didn't just make us as people he made us his people as verse 3 goes on to say and we are his we are his people the sheep of his pasture being the sheep of his pasture makes us his special people and it makes him our shepherd i like that famous psalm 23 the lord is my shepherd i shall not be in want for the things that i need for god provides for his people's need he makes us lie down in green pastures for food he leads us be quiet beside quiet waters uh for drink he guides us down paths of righteousness in life and he abides or stays with us such that when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death we need not fear because he is with us and will even bring us through death to life again all this is because he made us not just as people but his people the sheep of his pasture where he is our shepherd of course this is fulfilled in jesus who is our shepherd as we heard in our second reading who laid down his life for us to pay for our sins so that we could be forgiven and then given a place amongst his special people with life eternal if we believe in him this is an extraordinary gift and worthy of grateful praise isn't it our new archbishop is taking a group of people to the uk next year on a junket i mean a research trip uh and he invited me to go which surprised me and made me feel kind of special like when i told my wife michelle she was very jealous um a trip to the uk what an extraordinary gift but then i kept reading further in the email and i saw that i had to pay for it all so not quite a gift but jesus gives us more than a trip to the uk doesn't he he gives us life eternal in a perfect world to come where we'll be able

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to travel the world for free because he paid with his own life paid for our sins so that we could be part of his special people with life eternal that really is an extraordinary gift worthy of grateful praise isn't it and in case we don't get it the psalmist repeats it again by telling us again to give thanks point uh three verse four enter his gates with thanksgiving in his courts with praise give thanks to him and praise his name here are the next three imperatives or commands to enter to give thanks which is one word in the original and to praise now entering gates and courts is talking about the temple gates
and the temple courts that used to be in jerusalem in fact even back in verse two where it says come before him uh with uh joyful songs it means come before him at the temple but that is where god dwelt by his spirit of course all that's left of the temple today is the western war in jerusalem and that's actually okay because who replaced the temple jesus did in john's gospel we spoke about the temple as his body and so as we believe in jesus we are spiritually united to him and then we too become part of that temple where god dwells by his spirit and since we are always united to jesus then we always have god's spirit with us anytime anywhere which means we can come before god with thanksgiving and praise anytime anywhere can't we but the question is do we because we're supposed to i mean notice in verse four how even giving thanks and giving praise are both repeated enter his gates with thanksgiving his courts with praise and then the same thing again give thanks and praise his name because we're supposed to and so do we do we give thanks when we sit down to eat do we give thanks when we get through difficult times often we pray for difficult things and when they pass or go okay we we sometimes forget to do the next bit and that is give thanks for that answered prayer or don't we pray generally for things do we also pray with thanksgiving and do we praise his name by talking about how good he is to others like we'll do later in the service when we share points of thanksgiving we're supposed to do this what's more we have plenty of reason to do this like we saw before we know our god is the true god we have the real deal and he made us and gave us life such that we owe him our lives and that he even made us his special people the the sheep of his pasture with life eternal we have plenty of reason to thank him but just in case we don't get this the psalmist repeats this with even more reasons point four verse five for the lord is good his love endures forever his faithfulness continues through all generations the lord is good not only is he the real god but he is a good god goodness is his very nature it's who he is which means he's incapable of being bad doesn't it i know sometimes we can doubt god's goodness when we suffer badness in life but when whatever the situation we find ourselves in god can only do good because he is good which is a great encouragement indeed as that famous verse says in uh romans 8 28 and we know that in all things god works for the good of those who love him who have been called according to his purpose even if it's hard to see it at the time even if it's hard to accept that our greatest good is to be conformed to the likeness of his son but god works for our good and that's another reason to give him thanks isn't it indeed in verse 5 god's goodness is then shown in terms of his love and faithfulness his love that endures forever and his faithfulness that continues through all generations
which means it too endures forever and we only have to look at jesus to know the truth of this you see jesus is god's one and only son as you know the one who is most precious to god and so if there was ever a time when god would not do good every time when god would not love every time when god would not be faithful it would be the time when it came to give up his one and only son and yet he didn't did he god graciously gave when the time came and jesus willingly went when the time came jesus who's not just our shepherd but the good shepherd because he willingly laid down his life for us and the point is if god did such good for us if god so loved us if god kept his promises to us even when it costs him he's one and only son then we can be certain he'll continue to do good he'll continue to love he'll continue to be faithful to his promises that no matter what happens in life god still loves us that no matter what happens in life god will keep his promises to us that no matter what happens in life god will still do good which is ultimately to make us like the greatest person who ever lived his son jesus i remember hearing the testimony of someone who had an extremely difficult life uh in the last uh i think it was five to eight years i can't remember which uh he grew up in a christian family though but then uh when he was older things went pear-shaped uh he suffered a severe injury which then caused him to lose his job and he was out of work for i think it was a year and a half um and fell in great depression and his wife then left him because she had had enough and it got to the point where he wanted to take his own life he even managed to get a gun to do so but right at the end with the gun in his hand a sunday school song popped into his mind and it was that song jesus loves me this i know for the bible tells me so and then he realized that god's love

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endured for him even when other people's love stopped towards him he realized that god is still good even when others were not he realized that if god had given his only son for him god will continue to keep all his other promises too not only to get not not to give him an easy life no god doesn't promise that but to give him help through this life and to enjoy life eternal in the world to come and so this man turned back in faith and with great thanksgiving because this song of god's love for him saved his life both physically and spiritually and so no matter how bad life gets we always have plenty of reason to give grateful praise to god for on top of the other reasons we saw before in verse 3 here we see in verse 5 that god is always good he always loves he is always faithful and so will we continue to give grateful praise to god for we always have plenty of reason to in fact why don't we do that now by coming before him with joyful song in thanks and praise

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