

## Giving Thanks – Purpose and Power

### *The purpose and power of giving thanks*

Throughout God's word there is much emphasis on the giving of thanks to God. There must be a specific reason for this, so, let us think about and gain some understanding of the purpose and power of giving thanks to God.

There are two basic aspects to giving of thanks.

The first one is backward looking. It is the outward expression of gratitude to God for mercies received. It expresses our appreciation for all he has done and acknowledges God as the Author, the Source, the Creator, and the Giver of all good.

#### **1. Thanks for Mercies Received**

We will start with this first aspect, thanking for mercies received.

Giving thanks, or thanksgiving, is associated with, and stems from, inner gratitude. Giving thanks is the outward expression of a conscious inward gratitude to God for mercies received.

Gratitude arises within the emotional area of the soul. It is involuntary, it's an inner feeling that simply arises, it's passive and remains unexpressed unless vocalised as thanksgiving. Whereas, giving thanks is outward, it's vocal, it gives expression to the feeling of inner gratitude. Until gratitude is outwardly expressed as thanks, it remains hidden, secret, unknown to everyone but you.

Giving thanks to God is simply putting words to our inner feeling of gratitude and presenting these words to God's ears. They tell God how much you value Him and His goodness to you. Having meditated upon all the good things God has done, gratitude arises within the soul, and then voluntarily, you break out vocally in thanks and praise to God, letting Him know your inner feelings toward Him.

This is somewhat similar in function to what happens at salvation.

Rom 10:9-10 ... *"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."*

There's the heart believing and the mouth confessing. Gratitude is the inner or heart appreciation part and giving thanks is the outward or confessing part.

There's more to this though. There's a link between meditation on God's goodness which begets gratitude, and a resulting desire to consecrate one's self more and more to God. This is because the more we get to know God and see, appreciate and receive of His goodness the more we want to know Him and draw even closer to Him, yielding ourselves more and more to Him and His purposes.

David is a good example of this, just read through the Psalms and see how his thanksgiving to God and his consecration to God are linked.

Right from the beginning the Levites were given the instruction to give thanks and praise to God:

1 Chron 23:30 ... *"They are to stand every morning to **thank and to praise the Lord**, and likewise at evening."*

And we are instructed to do the same:

Col 3:15-17 ... *"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and **be thankful**. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with **thankfulness** in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks** through Him to God the Father."*

Eph 5:19-20 ... *"Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; **always giving thanks** for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father."*

## 2. Thanks in Anticipation of God's Intervention

Then, there is the second aspect of giving thanks. While the first aspect looks back in appreciation for all God's blessings and goodness, this second aspect looks forward in trust and anticipation of God's mercy and miraculous intervention on our behalf, or on behalf of the person/s for whom we are interceding.

There are many examples throughout the scriptures.

2 Chron 20:20-22 ... *"They rose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa; and when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, put your trust in the Lord your God and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed.' When he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the Lord and those who praised Him in holy attire, as they went out before the army and said, '**Give thanks to the Lord**, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.' When they began singing and praising, **the Lord set ambushes** against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; **so they were routed**."*

Praise and giving thanks released God's power to overpower the enemy.

Dan 6:10, 23 ... *"Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and **giving thanks before his God**, as he had been doing previously ... Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and **no injury whatever was found on him**, because he had trusted in his God."*

Thanks to God stopped the mouths of the lions.

John 6:11-12 ... *"Jesus then took the loaves, and **having given thanks**, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. When **they were filled**, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost."*

Giving thanks released the miracle of multiplication of the 5 loaves and 2 fish.

Similarly, in Matt 15:36-37 and Mark 8:6-8 we read of the multiplication of the 7 loaves and few fish as a result of the giving of thanks to God.

Luke 17:12-19 ... *“And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, ‘go shew yourselves unto the priests.’ And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were **cleansed**. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, **giving him thanks**: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee **whole**.”*

Ten were cleansed and healed of the disease, but only one gave thanks, and he was made whole. Missing parts restored (and possibly he was made whole spiritually too)!

Acts 27:35-37, 41-44 ... *“Having said this, he took bread and **gave thanks to God in the presence of all**, and he broke it and began to eat. All of them were encouraged and they themselves also took food. All of us in the ship were two hundred and seventy-six persons ... But striking a reef where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern began to be broken up by the force of the waves. The soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none of them would swim away and escape; but the centurion, wanting to bring Paul safely through, kept them from their intention, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, and the rest should follow, some on planks, and others on various things from the ship. And so it happened that **they all were brought safely to land**.”*

Thanks to God resulted in the miraculous safe landing of everyone on land.

Thanks to God acknowledges Him as the one true God with whom nothing is impossible. Thanks releases God’s miracles on our behalf or on behalf of those for whom we pray.

So we are encouraged to trust and thank God in every situation and circumstance we are in.

Ps 100:4-5 ... *“Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.”*

Praise and thanksgiving are the entrance or gateway to the presence of God – the One from whom all blessings flow.

Ps 28:7 ... *“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall **thank** Him. The Lord is their strength, and He is a saving defense to His anointed.”*

God inhabits our praises. Praise binds and pushes back the enemy, and thanks releases the miraculous power of God on our behalf.

It's not always easy to give thanks in every situation, but it is the key to unlocking God's power. His name is Saviour, Deliverer, Healer, Provider, Strength, Wisdom, and on and on.

Heb 13:15 ... *"Through Him then, let us continually offer up **a sacrifice of praise** to God, that is, the fruit of lips that **give thanks to His name.**"*

So let's give thanks to God, both for mercies received and for His intervention in matters ahead of us.

1 Thess 5:17-18 ... *"Pray without ceasing; **in everything give thanks**; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

Phil 4:6-7 ... *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

1 Tim 2:1-4 ... *"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and **thanksgivings**, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. his is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*