



# THANKSGIVING WORSHIP

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord.

**People: We give God thanks for all he has provided for us.**

Leader: Praise God, his mighty name.

**People: We praise your name above all other names, every knee shall bow, every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord.**

Leader: Despite hard times, we lift our heads up to you.

**People: For you comfort us and show us the way. Let us worship God!**

**Hymn:** #803 Come, ye thankful people, come

## **Prayers of Adoration and Confession & The Lord's Prayer**

Gracious and loving God, you know our hearts even before we can articulate them into words. You seek us out each day, comforting and guiding us to green pastures. You wait for us to turn around; you open your arms wide open to welcome us into your fold. You offer us grace even when we go astray. You are an awesome God!

How can we simply acknowledge you? Our hearts are burning with thankfulness. We see you everywhere. We see your extraordinary gifts in creation, in families, in our neighborhood, and in our churches. We see your people extend a helping hand and use their resources to build a better community for everyone to enjoy. We give you thanks.

At this time, our hearts are filled with joy and blessing but there are days when our hearts are filled with doubt, failure, and anxiety, and our light inside does not shine. At times, we try to find other sources to light the light inside of us, thinking that will do, but soon find out that the light only gets dimmer and dimmer. We come to you this morning to ask for your forgiveness. We come on bended knees with a humble heart so that you can redirect us on the right path, so that you can rekindle our light inside to glow brighter and brighter.

Thank you, God, for sending us your Son so that we may have life, not just any life, but a life filled with joy and happiness in Christ. As Jesus has taught us the power of prayer, let us together say:

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever. Amen.

## Assurance of Pardon

Friends, we are created in the image of God,  
And so, we are the people of God. When we come to God and ask for forgiveness,  
God will grace us abundantly. God is good, his love endures forever. Amen.

**Hymn:** #807 We plough the fields and scatter

## Scripture Readings

New Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 8:7-18

Responsive Reading: Psalm 138:1-5

New Testament Reading: Luke 17:11-19

## Message: "Do You Remember What God Has Done for You?"

Let us pray: Through the written word and the spoken word, may we know your Living Word, Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

I would like to ask you a question: How did God change your life? What great event in your life has God been a part of? Do you remember how God delivered you out of your misery, and brought you out of the storm? Even during these unprecedented times, we trust that God will help us through. Think about it for a minute: hold onto that thought. Likewise, Moses made sure that the Israelites did not forget what God had done for them, how God brought them out of Egypt, how they crossed the Red Sea and wandered in the desert for 40 years. God's love for the people was steadfast. In our reading from Deuteronomy, it was Moses who reminded the Israelites of the almighty acts of God. Moses underscored the importance of keeping the commandments for the Lord, to walk in his ways and to fear him. Moses spoke only of what God wanted him to speak; God used Moses to remind the people how important it was to keep his commandments, his rules and his statutes. Why was it important to keep God's commandments?

Why is it important to remember what God has done for the people? To answer these questions, we need to look at Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 5 which says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." How do the Israelites love the Lord; yes, by keeping the commandments, walking in his ways, and fearing Him. How do they show their love to God? They show their love to God by being thankful for everything they

have received. Colossians 3:17 says, "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him." In the words of the Psalmist, who says, "I give thanks with my whole heart", this also points out that the Psalmist remembers what God has done in his life. "I give you thanks" in Hebrew has a deeper meaning to it: To give thanks is to know. John Goldingay, in his commentary on the Psalms, has this to say: **"giving thanks" has less to do with some internal feeling of gratitude and more about sending God a thank you note. And the thank you note that God desires is to tell others what God has done; to proclaim the good news of God's gracious actions to the assembly of believers, to the surrounding neighborhood, and to the world.**

Friends, how sincere are we when we say, "Thank you, God"? When we say, "Thank you, God", do we remember our baptism, when we hold the bread and wine and recite the Thanksgiving prayer? Do we remember what Jesus has done for us? Or has it become a pattern, a ritual we just do without thinking of all the almighty acts God has done in our lives? You see, God asks us to go deeper into our hearts, to remember what God has done in our lives. Only when we remember will something wonderful stir inside of us that we cannot help but give thanks to God, our gratitude overflows. We cannot help but give thanks to God.

The one man who turns around and falls at Jesus' feet may not remember what God has done for the people because he is a Samaritan, but he has heard Jesus, the great healer, passing by. He may not follow the Jewish laws or go to the temple because he is an outsider, a Samaritan, and a leper. As you may already know, people who had this disease were cut off from their families and their community. Their only community was to live with other lepers in a confined area. Leviticus chapter 13 verses 45-46 reads, "A person who has a dreaded skin disease must wear torn clothes, leave his hair uncombed, cover the lower part of his face and call out, "Unclean, unclean". He remains unclean as long as he has the disease and he must live outside the camp, away from others. You could imagine how much they were ostracised, and fingers pointed at them. They had no voice, no power, no dignity. They were pretty much dead. As Jesus was going through a village, the ten lepers shouted "Jesus Master, have pity on us." Jesus saw them and said to them, "Go and let the priests examine you." It was written in the Jewish law, one had to go see the priest to get a bill of approval that he or she was free from leprosy and deemed clean. That is what they did, they did what their custom, their law dictated them to do. Except for one. On their way

to see the priest, they were made clean. It was the Samaritan who came back praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself to the ground at Jesus' feet and thanked him. Why did he do that? Why did he return to Jesus, to simply say thank you? What does this thank you mean?

The Samaritan obeyed God's commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. He realized that Jesus was the Son of God, calling out, "Master" which is only spoken to someone with authority. As he was going with the others, he saw his skin, completely healed, his skin smooth as silk. As a Samaritan, he was not someone who was tied down to the law, rather it was his faith in Jesus that compelled him to run back and praise God in a loud voice. He fell on Jesus' feet which indicated that he recognized that God was at work. He was walking in God's ways, and he feared God. For the Samaritan to thank Jesus was to glorify God.

In *A Second Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul*, the Rev. John R. Ramsey tells how in one church a certain person provided him with a rose boutonniere for the lapel of his suit every Sunday. At first, he really appreciated it, but then it sort of became routine. Then one Sunday it became very special. As he was leaving the Sunday service, a young boy walked up to him and said, "Sir, what are you going to do with your flower?" At first, the preacher didn't know what the boy was talking about. When it sank in, he pointed to the rose on his lapel and asked the boy, "Do you mean this?" The boy said, "Yes, sir. If you're just going to throw it away, I would like it."

The preacher smiled and told him he could have the flower and then casually asked what he was going to do with it. The boy, who was probably no more than 10 years old, looked up at the preacher and said, "Sir, I'm going to give it to my granny. My mother and father divorced last year. I was living with my mother, but she married again and wanted me to live with my father. I lived with him for a while, but he said I couldn't stay; so, he sent me to live with my grandmother. She is so good to me. She cooks for me and takes care of me. She has been so good to me that I wanted to give her that pretty flower for loving me." When the little boy finished, the preacher could hardly speak. His eyes filled with tears, and he knew he had been touched by God. He reached up and unpinned the rose. With the flower in his hand, he looked at the boy and said, "Son, that is the nicest thing that I've ever heard, but you can't have this flower because it's not enough. If you'll look in front of the pulpit, you'll see a big bouquet of flowers. Different families buy them for the church each week. Please take those flowers to your

granny because she deserves the very best." Then the boy made one last statement which the Rev. Ramsey said he would always treasure. The boy said, "What a wonderful day! I asked for one flower but got a beautiful bouquet."

That's the thankful spirit. That's the gratitude attitude. It's that attitude that should guide our giving and our lives. Like that boy's granny, God has blessed us so much. God has been so good to us that giving shouldn't even be a question. It should just flow from us naturally.

Our thanksgiving should come from remembering what God has done in our lives as Moses so earnestly reminds the Israelites. Why is remembering so important? It is important because we are human and we fall into sin, a sin of pride that everything we have is because we worked hard for it. True we did work hard for it, but God was part of it too. One commentator puts it like this, "Remembering the mighty acts of Yahweh is the pathway to wisdom and life. Forgetting Yahweh is the pathway to foolishness and death." The nine others who did not return to say, "thank you", forgot what God did in their lives, or they chose not to remember. They only remembered the Jewish law that limits them from living a life filled with thankfulness. They are only concerned about going back to their homes, to their families. But who actually healed them from this dreaded disease? Who restored them to wholeness? The Samaritan thanked Jesus from deep inside his heart. As John Goldingay says, "The thank you note that God desires is to tell others what God has done. To proclaim the good news of God's gracious actions to the assembly of believers, to the surrounding neighborhood, and to the world. When asked how it was that his skin was healed, who healed him, the Samaritan shouted out, "Jesus made me whole."

And Jesus said to him, "Get up and go, your faith has made you well." God asks us to thank God with all our heart, soul, and mind, to follow in his ways, and to fear him. When giving thanks, we proclaim the good news of God's gracious actions, we share our stories to others of how God has saved us, of how God has healed us, of how God has and continues to love us. Let us give thanks to God not only today but every day. Amen.

**Hymn:** #802 For the fruits of all creation

## Offering

Friends, our harvest is plenty, thanks be to God. When we share our harvest of time, resources, and lives, God's kingdom grows more and more. Let us continue to be Christ's light in our community, in our neighborhood, in our schools, in our workplaces, and in our homes so that they can experience God's love as it begins to grow in their hearts.

(Doxology optional)

## Offering Prayer

God who gives us abundantly, we come to you with our offerings, and ourselves so that your kingdom here continues to touch those who wander in the darkness. We are grateful for all that you have done for us, for all you have provided for us, now we would like to return a portion of our thankfulness to share with others so they too, can experience your love. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

**Hymn:** #324 Great is thy faithfulness

## Benediction

Friends, God provides for us each day.

As we go forth, let us give thanks each day and show others of God's amazing love! Give thanks to the Lord. We say, "Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Go now in peace!

*Written by the Rev. Joanne Lee, minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Barrie, Ontario.*