

NOTES

God is and what God does:

- i) He answers prayer (v. 2);
- ii) He forgives us (v. 3);
- iii) He answers us with, "...awesome and righteous deeds..." (v. 5);
- iv) He formed the mountains (v. 6);
- v) He stilled the roaring seas (v. 7); and
- vi) He cares for and abundantly provides for the land (and people too!) (vv. 9-13).

The psalmist had said back in verse 4b, "We are filled with the good things of your house..."

Why do good things come our way - because there is a God who is there, and He is the God of Abundance.

Therefore, consider this question: *What are some of those 'good things' in your life right now?*

II. Shout for Joy? Really?

In this Psalm, we get this picture of the earth itself shouting for joy and singing (vv. 8, 13).

For some of us, it's easy to join in with the rest of creation and shout for joy and sing. For others of us, especially if we're going through a season where it feels like the 'bad things' far exceed the 'good things' in our lives, we might wonder, really? How can I shout for joy in the middle of what I'm going through?

"Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth." (Psalm 100:1)
But how?

We may not always be able to 'shout for joy,' but we can engage in a practice that will cultivate joy in us - the practice of gratitude.

III. Our Gratitude

*"Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name."
Psalm 100:4*

A few other examples in Scripture where giving thanks is encouraged or commanded:

*"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
1 Thessalonians 5:18*

¹⁵*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

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¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:15-17

³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

Ephesians 5:3-4

Gratitude is often defined as a state of appreciation or an attitude of appreciating the positive things in one's life. The practice of gratitude – when gratitude becomes something we *do* – this is the shape that it takes: 'give thanks to Him.'

Giving thanks to Him is not just to feel something or to think something but to do something. With our bodies. With our lips. With our pen to paper maybe even.

Perhaps it looks like identifying things we are thankful for, writing them down and then verbally giving thanks to God for those things.

My guess is that if our God is the God of Abundance, if He's our Heavenly Father who gives good gifts to His children, odds are that even if you're walking through the darkest season of your life right now, there are good things in your life that you give thanks to God for.

What are those things in your life that you can give thanks to God for?

How might God be inviting you to respond to this invitation to thanksgiving?

What might it look like for you to practice gratitude?

Christian thanksgiving ultimately always has to look like thanksgiving to God for what He has done for us through Jesus. In Jesus, the God of Abundance empties Himself and takes on flesh. He lives among us, and He pours Himself out to the point of going to the cross on our behalf.

One way we practice gratitude is through engaging in Communion – or, the Eucharist – where we 'give thanks' to Jesus as we partake in this.



Open Up

1. Who are some of the people in your life whom you would describe as 'grateful' people? What is it like to interact with them? What do you think made them the way that they are?

Dig In - Read Psalm 65

1. What are some things that first stand out to you in this text? Are there any verses or images that show up in the Psalm that particularly resonate with you?
2. Does this text challenge your current view of God in any way? If so, how so?
3. In the message, we talked about the practice of gratitude as an appropriate response to the God who is revealed in Psalm 65. What are some of those 'good things' in your life right now? How has God shown Himself to be the God of Abundance in your life? What are some things you need to give thanks to God for?
4. Have you ever taken up the practice of gratitude in an intentional way? In seasons of life where you've done this, what impact has that had on your own heart?
5. Have you found it easier to be grateful during the 'good' seasons or during the 'hard' seasons of your life? Do you think it is possible to be grateful even in the middle of the hard stuff? If so, how so?
6. What do you think it could look like for you to engage in the practice of gratitude in your current season of life? Or, said slightly differently, how is the Lord inviting you to live out the command, "*give thanks in all circumstances...*" (1 Thessalonians 5:18a)?

Prayer:

Share prayer requests. Also, identify some specific things that each of you is grateful for, and take some time to give thanks to God!