

# Pilgrim Thankfulness and Psalm 118

Gulf Gate Church 11.30.08

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## *Song 1: Forever*

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### **0.40** Psalm 118:1-4

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Let Israel say: "His love endures forever."

Let the house of Aaron say: "His love endures forever."

Let those who fear the LORD say: "His love endures forever."

† This is a call to praise! Let those who are in this church, those who love our Lord, say, "His love endures forever!"

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## *Song 1: Forever [continued]*

**Psalm 118:5-9**

In my anguish I cried to the LORD, and he answered by setting me free.

The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?

The LORD is with me; he is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies.

It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.

It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.

- † The Lord has set us free! He has set us free from the power of sin, from death, and from Hell!
  - Knowing we have deliverance to Heaven, why should we fear anything on earth? The worst that can happen here is death, and – as the apostle Paul said in Philippians 1:21 – death for the believer is gain, a trip to a better place!
- † It is interesting to consider different types of deliverance for believers.
  - In death, we are delivered to our salvation in Heaven.
  - In our troubles, we are sometimes delivered to victory, though this is not promised by God, and thus is not certain.
  - What is certain, what is promised in this life, is deliverance to the strength, courage, and wisdom necessary to do the right thing, to resist temptation, to live in God's light, and thus to bring glory to the Lord.
- † Man always seems to have so much to offer: more money, better lifestyle, material things, all kinds of physical stimulation, ego building, power and influence... but what does it amount to next to what the Lord has to offer?
  - God offers us new life! he offers us transformation and righteousness! he offers us intimacy with himself and deliverance!
  - Even in earthly situations, it is better to trust in the ways of the Lord and trust in his blessing, than to choose to live by the ways of man and seek man's blessing.
  - Indeed, it is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. Words by which to live!

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*Song 2*

**Psalm 118:10-14**

All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the LORD I cut them off.

They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the LORD I cut them off.

They swarmed around me like bees, but they died out as quickly as burning thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them off.

I was pushed back and about to fall, but the LORD helped me.

The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.

† Sometimes God empowers us to triumph over our struggles, and that is great cause for thanksgiving!

- We call him the eleventh hour God, because he likes to deliver us when it is obvious he is our only answer, when there is no doubt that it is his intervention that is delivering us, when we are desperately turning to him instead of relying on ourselves.
- Thank you God, for helping us in our daily struggles! for helping us to endure all, and to be victorious in some.

† The Lord is my strength and my song, he has become my salvation! What beautiful words.

- Victory comes when we learn to rely on God for our strength and we find our joy in him!
- Even when life sometimes overwhelms us and we face a defeat, we can have the inner victory of trusting in the Lord, of thanking him for our blessings, and of finding our identity and purpose in him.
- This is victory over Satan and those who oppose God and his people.
- We can have joy, peace, and love even in our times of trial, because the Holy Spirit is with us to supply them.
- The Lord is my strength and my song, he has become my salvation!

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*Song 3*

**Psalm 118:15-21**

Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: “The LORD's right hand has done mighty things!

The LORD's right hand is lifted high; the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!”

I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done.

The LORD has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death.

Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.

This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter.

I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.

† The Lord chastened the author to lead him to righteousness.

- Sometimes in this life, God allows us some suffering to discipline us, especially to help us grow spiritually and grow in our dependence on him.
- God desires to be our deliverer, our salvation, but first we have to be ready to let go of our sense of control, to acknowledge that not only can we not be saved except by his grace, but really we cannot grow spiritually or do anything useful to his kingdom except by his grace.
- We must learn to depend on God, to seek out his deliverance and not rely on our own capabilities. And when he delivers us, we must proclaim what the Lord has done!

† If you are suffering now, take heart: it does not mean the Lord has abandoned you.

- In fact, we know from our discussion of Psalm 110 last week that God will never forsake us because we have Christ as our mediator.
- God will see you through this time of trial, no matter what its cause.
- We continue to pray for God's answer to our needs, and we shall thank him in advance for his deliverance from our troubles, and even thank him for the troubles that will help us become better people.
- If you need prayer today or want to declare your thanksgiving, come forward now, during this next song, and let us pray with you.

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*Song 4*

**Psalm 118:22-29**

The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;

the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.

The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.

You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

† As the psalm begins, so it ends, we give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love endures forever.

- In the psalm, God’s love is exhibited by his deliverance. The author of the psalm remembered one or more times of deliverance from his enemies and then shifted his thoughts to the ultimate deliverance – moving from discussing the physical to discussing the more spiritual – and he prophetically discussed Christ’s return for judgment and deliverance.
- It is Jesus who came in the name of God the Father, to save, and it is Jesus who will come again in the name of God the Father to deliver the earth from evil and set up his kingdom.

† With the author, we look forward to the time of Christ’s return. During our time of delay until Christ comes back, we know believers are likely to suffer, at least through sacrifice and persecution.

- Yet we are delivered right now in the sense that we can be blessed right now with an intimacy with God which was not available to the average believer at the time this psalm was written, we can ensure we are within God’s will for us, and we know we have the ultimate deliverance, the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ.
- The Hebrew word for “save us” is **יְשַׁע** which was translated into Greek as **ὁσαυνά** or “Hosanna!” Save us Lord!
- The gospels tell us that when Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time, on Palm Sunday, the crowds recognized him, and they shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!” [Matthew 21:9; Mark 11:9-10]

† Jesus is the stone the builders rejected but became the capstone or cornerstone!

- Jesus himself quoted this psalm [Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17] when telling the parable of the vineyard, prophesying that he would be rejected by the religious leaders of Israel but would become the foundation of the church.
- He also quoted this psalm when he mourned over Jerusalem, saying in Luke 13:35, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until the time comes when you say, ‘BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!’”

- † In Acts [4:11], Peter quoted this same verse, explaining this identification with Jesus and saying there is salvation in no one else!
  - In his first epistle [1 Peter 2:7], Peter said Jesus was not only the foundation for the church but also the stumbling block for those who rejected the faith: It is Jesus who makes our faith unique, the only faith in which you cannot do anything to get right with God, but instead must put your faith in God to make things right with you, through the work of Jesus on the cross.
  - Jesus is the only one who can save us, because he was the only one who could bring us peace and reconciliation with God the Father, our holy God who was righteously angry over our sin.
  - God is holy and we are not, but Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, and so God sees us through the lens of Christ, and declares us righteous because of Christ.
  
- † This is what the unbelieving world cannot accept.
  - They cannot accept on the one hand a God who does not save everyone, nor on the other hand a God who does not make us earn our salvation. They like to believe all people are worthy in their own right, whereas we know none of us are worthy, but are saved by grace.
  - The world cannot accept God coming to earth as a man and sacrificing himself for us. They argue Jesus was just a man or even some other created creature, and that his death was just an example of humility, but they are so wrong!
  - Our God is one God, but he is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and we give thanks today for that revelation and for the knowledge that the Son came to save us forever by sacrificing himself on the cross.
  - Give thanks to the Lord, church! for he is good, his love endures forever!

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*Song 5 and prayer*

**Pilgrims**

- † The harvest the Pilgrims celebrated was not a good one.
  - They had learned from Squanto, a native who became a Christian, how to grow corn in little hillocks with dead fish as fertilizer, so the corn came in well, but all the crops the Pilgrims supposedly knew how to grow – the wheat, barley, and peas – failed completely.
  - But the corn harvest alone allowed them to double their food allotment, so they declared a holiday to rejoice together.
  
- † They also were thankful they had made peace with the local natives and had begun trading for beaver pelts; they had not suffered any mutiny or desertion, and they had enjoyed good health for months.
  - So four men went out and shot some ducks for the main course, and the company invited the local native chief, Massasoit.
  - Massasoit showed us with ninety braves, causing the Pilgrims into a bit of a panic, because they did not have enough food for all those people. But the braves went out and bagged five deer and plenty of smaller critters.
  - Captain Standish held a military review and they had games of skill and chance. For three days, the Pilgrims and their guests celebrated.
  
- † We might eat different things than the Pilgrims – and different from each other – but hopefully we each carry a spirit of thankfulness in our lives.
  - I hope this year provides a good holiday season for you, and that you have a plentiful harvest, however that might look.
  - Above all, let us be thankful for what we have. It might not seem like much in human terms, but in our salvation we know we are blessed beyond what we deserve and we have received the greatest gift, so everything else is – if you will pardon the holiday pun – gravy.
  - We are going to worship with one more song, but let me give you a benediction now: Peace and the blessings of the Lord be with you . . . Amen.

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***Song 6: Praise the Father, Praise the Son***