

OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

THANKSGIVING

WHOLE HEARTED THANKS (PSALM 111:1-10)

OCTOBER 7, 2018



SERMON OUTLINE

What do I need to do with what I have heard today?

MAIN POINT

All that God is and does is worthy of worship and praise.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

- 1. Who is someone you admire or are thankful for in your life? Why are you grateful for him or her? List some reasons why you think of him or her in that way.**
- 2. Is your life characterized by thankfulness? What might a pattern of thankfulness (or lack thereof) indicate about the level of recognition of God's work in your life?**

Leader: All of God's work is praiseworthy and good, in the psalm we will look at today, the psalmist laid out in detail which parts are good, why they are good, etc. The psalmist covered a broad range of spiritual and physical needs that are met in God's work and give specific ways for all people to praise Him. When we reflect on who God is and recount all that He has done, our natural response should be worship and praise, especially when gathering together as a community.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 111:1.

3. How is praise described here and what would that have looked like? How does the description of praise in this verse compare to our typical expressions of praise?

4. When seasons of trial or doubt happen in your life, why is it important to offer praise in community? How is the community of the church a reason for praise in and of itself?

Leader: The praise described in this verse takes place in the community of the congregation. Offering praise in community lends itself to mutual encouragement and multiplied worship. Expressing thanksgiving to God in community reminds one another of the work and goodness of God. This is especially helpful for those who find themselves in seasons of trial or doubt. Being reminded of the truth about God gives reason for worship and adoration.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 111:2-8.

5. The word “work” is mentioned in almost every verse in this section. What are some of the attributes that the psalmist attached to God’s work? How did he describe them?

6. What are some specific, tangible examples of God’s work for His people in the historical context of Israel? What are some specific, tangible examples of God’s work in your life?

Leader: In verse 6, the writer described a significant theme for the Israelites. They were rescued from Egypt, brought into the promised land, and defeated many enemies as they defended the land to provide the “inheritance of nations.”

Throughout the Bible, much of the work of God was not only for the benefit of the Israelites, but also for the surrounding nations, that they would know the one true God. One example of this is Rahab in Joshua 2:8-11.

7. What are some ways we could share with others how God has worked in our lives that might lead those who do not know God to think of Him in a praiseworthy way and desire to know Him?

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> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 111:9-10.

8. In his conclusion, the psalmist gave three main reasons to praise God. What are they?

Leader: In conclusion, the psalmist named three main reasons to praise God: 1. God has rescued the people; 2. He kept His covenant with them; and 3. He is holy. These three reasons are as true for us today in Christ as they were for Israel.

9. Which of these three reasons for praise in verse 9 stands out to you? Which are you most naturally drawn to?

10. What about God do you find awe-inspiring? How might you intentionally meditate on the character and work of God, that you might be led to worship Him?

11. Why would the psalmist mention “the fear of the Lord” at the end of such a positive and uplifting psalm? How do the characteristics and works of God help us understand that phrase? How might “fear” in this instance help us grow closer to God while still maintaining a heart of joy and praise?

Leader: The fear referenced in verse 10 is not the same as the fear experienced by those who face God’s wrath. Rather, this fear denotes respect as a child holds respect for a parent, seeking obedience in love. This type of fear gives wisdom in that we learn the best way to live as we seek obedience to God. Fear of the Lord brings insight that can never be gained in the wisdom of men.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

12. What did you do this Thanksgiving weekend to incorporate praise of God’s works into your festivities? Why is it important to set aside specific times devoted to praise and thanksgiving?

13. Consider some of the big moments in your life where you praised God. What happened? What attributes were you reminded of? What happens to our faith as we share those instances? How might others be impacted by our sharing these moments?

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PRAYER

Spend some time praising the Lord, thanking Him for who He is and for the specific things He has done in the lives of the members of this group. Ask for the Spirit's help to recognize how God is working, and to cultivate a heart of praise.

MEMORIZE

¹ Praise the Lord. I will extol the Lord with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly. — Psalm 111:1

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

PSALM 111:1-10

111:1a-b. The psalmist bursts forth with his familiar declaration, praise the Lord. It is lifted up with passion, fervency, zeal, and emotion. There is a resolve here, a determination, to praise God. No matter how he feels, or what his circumstances are, in good times and bad times, David will praise the Lord. With deepest gratitude to God, he offers this praise with all my heart. If God is known in the heart, he is worthy of our very highest praise.

111:1c. Personal worship must be publicly expressed in the council of the upright, referring to the most godly of the saints. The upright are the truly godly who gather for corporate worship. Further, the psalmist will praise God in the assembly of believers, a reference to the larger congregation in the temple. There are times for private devotions, but they are no substitute for public worship. A life of faith was intended to be a corporate experience, lived in fellowship with other believers, in which worship is an important part.

111:2-3. God is praised, first, for his works which he has done for his people. They are great (*gadol*) in size and importance. Immense and vast are his works (*ma'asim*) in creation, providence, and revelation. These works are pondered by all who delight in them, causing them to praise God. They are unfathomable—beyond what man's mind can conceive. God's greatness is also seen in his deeds, which are his providential acts by which he governs over all circumstances and events. What God creates he sustains, upholds, directs, and governs. All these divine deeds are glorious, revealing God's kingly splendor; majestic, manifesting his grandeur; and righteousness, displaying his holiness. God's righteousness is displayed through his deeds, which are perfect and right.

111:4. God's works are identified as wonders (*pala*), which are usual but which are beyond the ordinary course of events. This refers to the soul-startling effect God's works have on those who observe them, leaving the observers filled with many wonders. It refers to a time of dramatic divine intervention, most often to the saving acts of God when he graciously intervenes and delivers his people out of their trials and distresses. They are to be remembered, too awesome to be forgotten, as the result of the gracious and compassionate character of God.

111:5. God provides food for his people, surely a reference to the manna and quail God gave during the years of Israel's desert wandering. Graciously, God met their needs (Ps. 78:23-24),

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remembering his covenant that he established on Mount Sinai.

111:6. God has shown his power in his many works. When Israel entered the promised land, he defeated their enemies who lived in Canaan. Further, God stopped the Jordan River, leveled the walls of Jericho, and defeated the Canaanites. In so doing, God gave Israel the lands previously occupied by other nations.

111:7. God's works are faithful, perfectly fulfilling the many promises written in his Word. God's acts are just, meaning always right and equitable. Moreover, all his precepts are trustworthy, meaning infallible, dependable, and they will surely come to pass. Not one jot or tittle will fall from the law.

111:8 All the divine works are steadfast for ever and ever. They are established for all time, firmly fixed, done forever, never to be undone. God's works are lasting, permanent, irrevocable, everlasting, and eternal. They will not be nullified by man or ever undone.

111:9. Here is God's greatest work, redemption. Here is the deliverance Israel experienced from Egyptian bondage and from Babylonian captivity. God is a deliverer who delights in rescuing his people from their trials and afflictions. The work of creation is great (v. 2), but the work of saving his people is even greater (v. 9).

111:10. The reverential fear of the Lord is the necessary prerequisite of all wisdom. In this psalm, the wisest thing a person can do is to praise the Lord (vv. 1,10c). The sobering awe of God is the beginning (*reshith*) of wisdom; that is, the starting point and first principle of wisdom. Fearing God leads to wisdom, good understanding, obedience, and praise. This psalm now concludes where it began, with praise to God. There should be no end to praising God, which is the primary occupation of the saints.