

PRAISE GOD
Psalm 66
11/20/11

1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Thankfulness does not come naturally to most of us.

When things are going good we tend to take God's goodness for granted.

Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, "To be really enjoyed, sleep, health, and wealth must be interrupted."

God has warned us of this tendency.

Deuteronomy 8:12-14 ". . . when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived *in them*,¹³ and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies,¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God . . .

Sadly, what God had prophesied happened to Israel in the Old Testament.

Hosea 13:6 As *they had* their pasture, they became satisfied, And being satisfied, their heart became proud; Therefore they forgot Me.

God has truly blessed us as a nation and as individuals.

Our passage this morning reminds us of the greatness of God and what He has done.

It also reminds us of a number of things we should thank God for during this Thanksgiving week.

1. Praise God for His awesome works. 66:1-3a

This psalm opens with a universal call for all the creation to worship God.

1 To *shout* for joy to God

2 To *sing* the glory of His name

Glory- His significance, importance

Make His praise glorious

3a Praise God for His awesome works

Awesome- overwhelming, frightening

The power contained in the nucleus of an atom seen displayed in a nuclear bomb and in billions of stars

The power seen in a tornado, earthquake, volcano, tsunami

The vastness and beauty of His creation

The beauty of a radiant sunset, majestic mountain scene, dainty snow flake

The ruddy glory of the sunset sky,

The mellow tints upon the autumn fields,

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)

For each new morning with its light,

Father, we thank thee,

For rest and shelter of the night,

Father, we thank thee,

For health and food, for love and friends,

For everything thy goodness sends,

Father, in heaven, we thank thee.

We should thank God for little things we often take for granted.

As most of you know, Dan and I went to Russia again last month. What a contrast in cultures.

Until you have traveled to other countries you don't realize what a blessing we have in clean water, clean bathrooms, houses, a job, a car

The average income of most Russian Christians is under \$200 per month.

Many find it difficult to find a job.

They live in small high-rise apartments with a small kitchen, 1 or 2 small bedrooms, and a small bath. (the

living room often doubles as a bedroom), no family room, or garage. (most have no car)

They have no microwave or dishwasher.

Russian Christians have come out of 70 years of persecution under communism and but still live under a system of injustices.

We should thank God for the blessings He has given us in this rebellious and fallen world.

2. Praise God that He is more powerful than His enemies. 1:3b-7

3b-4 Rejoice that He will one day come and set up His kingdom

Establish safety

Enforce justice

At that time all the earth will worship Him

5-7 Here the Psalmist focuses on what God did for Israel during the exodus.

But what God has done for Israel He will do for all those who are truly His.

5 . . . Come and see the works of God, *Who is awesome in His deeds toward the sons of men.*

7 . . . He rules by His might forever; His eyes keep watch on the nations

Isaiah 41:10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?

3. Praise God for problems. 66:8-12a

a. God is watching over us. vv. 8-9

b. Yet God allows us to suffer. vv. 10-12a

Though God loves us and watches over us, yet He allows us to suffer.

We are living in difficult and uncertain days.

A faltering economy, job insecurity, retirement accounts at half their former value

Political uncertainty at home, and multiple enemies abroad

This past year many of you have experienced difficult times.

Lost job

Stroke, cancer, or other illness

A loved one has died

Painful health problems (backs, necks, fibromyalgia)

Loved ones with Alzheimer's disease

Sleep disorders

Children born with a "special needs"

Want to be married by no prospects

Married, but found out that their spouse has been unfaithful or left them

Parents whose kids are into drugs, alcohol or immorality

Parents whose older children have walked away and broken off all relationship with them

How can we give thanks? What is there to give thanks for?

Romans 8:28 God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Verse 10 gives three reasons God allows us to undergo suffering.

To test us

To reveal our flaws

To refine us

To purify us and make us better

To do good for us

Deuteronomy 8:15-17 "He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, *with its* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. ¹⁶ "In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, *that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.* ¹⁷ "Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.'

Psalm 30:6-7 . . . I said in my prosperity, "I will never be moved." ⁷ . . . You hid Your face, I was dismayed. ⁸ To You, O LORD, I called, And to the Lord I made supplication:

At the end of his life **Malcolm Muggeridge** said, "Looking over my 90 years, I realize I have never made any progress in good times. I only progressed in hard times."

So far we have seen several aspects of the greatness of God.

His awesome works

He rules by His might

He keeps watch over the nations

He keeps watch over us

He tests and refines us

In verses 12- 20 we will see God answers our prayers and delivers us.

In these verses we will also see several ways that we can thank God and worship Him.

4. Praise God when He brings deliverance and abundance. 66:12b-20

a. Keep your promises to God. vv. 12b-15

Ecclesiastes 5:5 It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

One expression of worship is presenting our offerings to Him.

They are expressions of our gratitude and faith

They show that we value Him.

Another expression of worship and thanksgiving is to:

b. Tell others what God has done. vv. 16-17

Report on my head and voice

c. Deal with your sin. vv. 18

Proverbs 28:13 He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion.

d. Praise God for answered prayer. vv. 19-20a

John Vawter letters

Friend in Boise in remission with cancer

Articles in file

e. Praise God for His steadfast lovingkindness. v. 20b

Hebrews 13:5 *Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 5:11-13 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. ¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.