

Thanksgiving to God

Key Verses: *“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”*
—Psalm 100:4,5

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 100:1-5

and with joy. In our lesson, the psalmist writes: “Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.”
—Ps. 100:1,2

“Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” (vs. 3) In this verse we find the basis for our rendering praise to the Heavenly Father. It acknowledges that as sheep, we are totally dependent upon him for our sustenance and care.

There is an intimacy in terms of the fellowship that we enjoy with our God, which reflects a mutual love that, in turn, motivates us to render praise to such an exalted

THE EXPRESSED DESIRE

to thank and praise our Heavenly Father should be made manifest both verbally and through actions. The Prophet Jeremiah wrote the following: “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.” (Jer. 15:16) Thus, in addition to obedience in following divine instructions, any service rendered to the Heavenly Father should be done both voluntarily

being. As elaborated upon in our Key Verses, those who have entered the narrow way through consecration and spirit begetting take great delight in laying down their lives in serving the cause of righteousness, knowing that God's mercy and truth endure forever.

During the coming kingdom of righteousness, mankind at large will rejoice and praise God for the unfolding of his plan that will eliminate sorrow, pain, and death. (Rev. 21:3,4) How marvelous it is that our God not only has great riches in store for the faithful members of the body of Christ, but also that each member of the human race will be given the opportunity to come to a full appreciation of our Creator and worship him forever, if obedient.

For the consecrated, during our present earthly sojourn, a higher level of gratitude implies that we are to be thankful and render praise not only for the good and pleasant experiences which come to us by God's providences, but also for the trials and difficult experiences which he permits in our lives. Giving thanks for these is not easy to do, especially at first. However, as we develop a faith based upon God's promises, we will be able to realize more and more that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28) These "all things" may include difficulties, persecutions, financial troubles, health problems, or the death of a loved one. They may also include being slandered, evil-spoken of, or personally misrepresented by others.

When the kingdom has accomplished its intended purpose, however, the human family will then comprehend the blessings associated with God's plan. As they prosper under that arrangement, how much they too will increase in their ability and desire to praise our Creator. How different conditions will be at that time. "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore."—Ps. 86:12■