
Enter His Gates with Thanksgiving

by David Buttram

I am glad for this opportunity to share truths from the Word of God with you today. I believe they will bless you and help you draw closer to God. At least that is my heart's cry. Please allow the message to be absorbed and reflected upon while the Holy Spirit ministers truth to you.

David wrote Psalms 15 and 24 primarily as a means of instructing the people of Israel on how to worship the one, true God. For their part, they were to prepare their hearts and souls to meet God in the tabernacle.

In Psalms 15 David asks God, "*Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*" In the language of today, he said, "Lord, who is it that will assemble or gather together in Your house? Who will reside or settle down in that place that is pure and devoted to You?"

God provided David, and us, with an answer. In that answer is given truths that will enable us to enter into a realm of worship that will motivate and empower us in these last days.

The Christian who walks perfectly and "worketh righteousness" in verse two instructs us not to be satisfied with a life of good thoughts and intentions. We must put "feet of action" to our thoughts. Yes, we are saved by grace and not by works of our hands (Eph. 2:8, 9), but our works are important and will be judged.

True worship occurs when we praise and thank God for His loving kindness, mercy, and love. No matter what our present circumstances are, God is good and worthy to be praised! Every thing on this earth is temporary - our homes, cars, money, our very lives - but praise God, we have an eternal home with Him in the eternities of the eternities. The death, burial, and resurrection of His only Son, Jesus, has purchased all things for those who love, worship and adore Him. We are living in the last days; even the secular world senses that something is going to happen. Don't be in love with the things of this life. Nothing is going to last except that which is done for the Lord. Serving God with gladness of heart, thanksgiving in every circumstance, and a song on our lips is true worship.

God has told us how He wants us to come into His presence: "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Psalm 100:4).

Putting the events of the past days behind us and filling our spirit with an attitude of praise and thanksgiving will open the windows of Heaven.

From God's Word we see that our worship experience will be richer and fuller if we first empty ourselves of all anxiety and frustration before entering into Almighty God's presence. Putting the events of the past days behind us and filling our spirit with an attitude of praise and thanksgiving will open the windows of Heaven.

I like a custom I have observed in our churches in Haiti. Immediately after entering God's house, the Haitian Christian will find a place to kneel and pray. It may be at the altar at the front of the church. Perhaps they kneel at the steps of the platform or sometimes at one of the wooden benches. Wherever they pray, it is as though they are purging themselves of the defilement of that evil land before entering into the presence of God. I am always touched when I witness this time of preparation to meet God.

With this attitude, the song service will be richer and fuller; the choir more blessed, the sermon more relevant to you, and the fellowship of other believers will be more glorious. A warning is sounded in Hebrews 10:25 of not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together in the last days. I talk with many people who are not involved in a local church. Their reasons are many and varied, but few are valid.

Unless physical health or an unusual circumstance is involved, I urge and exhort you to attend church. With love and good works apparent in us, we can be used of God to minister to others. There is no perfect church in this world. We are all being perfected. But Jesus loved the Church, the early apostles loved the Church, and God manifests Himself through the Church.

I want to mention another part of worship - personal devotions. To be close to God we must study His Word, pray, and meditate. This time is to be private and secret. Matthew refers to a "closet" which has a door that can be shut (Matthew 6). The word closet means a "room for privacy or retirement." Where you find this private room doesn't matter, but just do it, for it allows the world with its distractions to be shut out, as you become "shut in" with God. If you need to hear from God, this is where He will speak to you, when He has your undivided attention.

I pray that the teaching I have shared with you on preparing for worship will be incorporated into your daily life.

God seeks a people who will worship and praise Him with thanksgiving. A life dedicated to God in this manner will be rich, full, and blessed.
