# The Language of Gratitude

*Psalm 100*

November 22, 2026 — New Baptist Church
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This Thursday is Thanksgiving. And since the giving of thanks is such an important habit and spiritual discipline, I always want to use this Sunday to talk about it. Gratitude is not only the right response to what God has done — giving thanks is also how we see, recognize, and give testimony to God at work in our lives and in the world around us. I like to think of the giving of thanks as a form of spiritual eyesight.

The Hebrew word for thanks is *yādâ*), a word that occurs over 100 times in the Old Testament, more than half of them in the Book of Psalms. And within the Psalter, nearly a third of all 150 psalms contain this word for giving thanks to God. Yet among all those psalms, there is only one that carries as its title "A Psalm for Giving Thanks." That is the psalm we will be looking at today: Psalm 100.

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## The Five Love Languages of Gratitude

A little over thirty years ago, possibly the most popular book on marriage and relationships was published: *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman. Since then, more than twenty million copies have been sold, and it has been translated into over fifty languages. What makes the book so enduring is its very simple message: love is more than just words — it includes actions as well. And to love well, you need to learn how to show it in a way your spouse, or those you love, will actually receive it. Chapman names five ways people speak and receive love: words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical touch. The book is a great reminder that we speak love in both words and actions.

I highlight this because Psalm 100 — A Psalm for Giving Thanks — is doing much the same thing. In this psalm there are seven imperatives, and I am gathering them into what I am calling the five languages of gratitude: five ways to show the Lord your thankfulness. These five ways correspond with our mouths, our hands, our time, our hearts and minds, and our treasures. Let's begin.

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## The First Language: Words of Praise

> *"Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!" — Psalm 100:1*

I have been trying to find a word or image association for each psalm we study. Last week, for Psalm 103, it was one soul, zero forgetfulness, three reminders. Today, for Psalm 100, the image is what you do when your football team runs back a 100-yard touchdown. What do you do? You make a joyful noise. You shout. That shout of joy and excitement is exactly what Scripture describes as a joyful noise to the Lord. If you can do it for a football team, you can do it for the Lord.

My favorite example of this in Scripture comes from Joshua 6. The Israelites have been told to march around the walls of Jericho, and on the seventh day, after the long trumpet blast, they are to shout — the same word — a joyful noise to the Lord. And when they did, the walls fell. What a powerful image. Shouts of praise to the Lord destroyed the enemy's walls.

We are to praise God, giving Him thanks, out loud and on purpose.

Now, in Hebrew the verb for giving thanks is *yādâ*). The best way I have found to memorize words in a foreign language is through association. I have connected *yādâ* (give thanks) with that silly phrase, "yada, yada, yada" — which means something like "blah, blah, blah." It describes something predictable, boring, not worth paying attention to.

I make the connection this way: one of the primary problems of the fallen human heart is that we look at what God has done — His creation, His continued faithfulness, His mercies that are new every morning — and instead of making a joyful noise to the Lord with thanks, *yādâ*, we say, "yada, yada, yada." We have heard it before. It doesn't register anymore.

So today, and tomorrow, and next week: make a joyful noise to the Lord. Name the things He has done in your life. Recognize His work when you see it. Speak of Him publicly. This is the first language of thanksgiving — words of praise turned toward the Lord.

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## The Second Language: Serve the Lord with Gladness

> *"Serve the LORD with gladness!" — Psalm 100:2a*

The second language of gratitude is what we do with our hands. We say thank you to God not just with our mouths but through acts of service. This is a natural response of a grateful heart. When you are genuinely thankful for someone and for what they have given you, there is a desire to do something for them as an expression of that gratitude.

And it is precisely that gratitude which brings gladness into the serving. How does one serve the Lord? Jesus spent a great deal of time on this question. In Matthew 25 He draws a direct line between serving Him and serving others: *"Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me"* (Matthew 25:40). We serve the Lord through serving others.

There are many ways to say thank you to the Lord through acts of service. We recognized some of those people already today — our Sunday school teachers. And to be clear, they do not teach Sunday school to be recognized by us. They do so because the Lord has put it on their hearts, and it is their way of saying thank you to Him. The same is true of the many other ways we serve — in the church, in the workplace, at school, at home, and in the community.

According to our passage, we are to serve the Lord with *gladness*. That word matters. We serve not simply because we have to, but because we get to.

Have you ever gone to Chick-fil-A, said thank you after placing an order, and had someone respond "my pleasure" in a way that is anything but? They are ready to clock out. They say it only because they are supposed to. There are a lot of people serving God like that — "my pleasure." And I think most of us have been there.

Scripture tells us that the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). So when I do not feel glad in my serving, my response is not to manage my own heart and try to manufacture happiness. It is to turn to the Lord and find rest and refreshment in Him. That is where the joy is. That is where the gladness comes from. "Lord, here I am. Fill me again with your presence. Help me catch a glimpse of your glory." And it is when I have joy in Him that serving Him becomes something done with gladness.

Or to say it another way: if you are struggling with the second language of gratitude — serving the Lord with gladness — go back and work on the first. Make a joyful noise to the Lord.

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## The Third Language: Spending Time with the Lord

> *"Come into his presence with singing!" — Psalm 100:2b*

> *"Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!" — Psalm 100:4a*

The third language of gratitude is spending time with the Lord. We see it in both verse 2 and verse 4. How does the Lord want you to show your gratitude? By spending time with Him. I love that.

These verses describe spending time with the Lord through corporate worship — worship done together in community, like what we are doing right now. I have no objection to including private prayer and Scripture reading as a way to spend time with the Lord, but that is not what these verses are describing. They are describing public worship.

Notice the language of verse 4: "Enter his gates." It does not say turn on your television, download the latest podcast, or listen to the radio. It says *go*. Go to the place where His name is proclaimed and His people gather. The tools of our digital age are a gift when we cannot be present, but they are not the same as being together. How do you give thanks to God? According to this psalm, you gather together as a community of faith and give Him praise. Thank you for showing your gratitude to the Lord today.

Thus far we have talked about giving thanks to God with our mouths, with our hands, and with our time. Now we give Him thanks with our hearts and minds.

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## The Fourth Language: Fellowship with God

> *"Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." — Psalm 100:3*

The fourth language of gratitude is fellowship with God. Notice the action word here: *Know*. We give thanks to the Lord with our minds. And I believe that knowing is not mere intellectual acknowledgment — it is an intimacy that comes through relationship.

Whenever the Psalms speak of being the sheep of His pasture, your mind ought to move into the New Testament and see that image fulfilled in Jesus. He tells us plainly that He is the shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:11). So I do not think I am reaching when I read verse 3 as describing God as both our Creator and our Redeemer. This is what He has done to bring us into fellowship with Himself.

It reminds me of a quote from Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153): *"In the first creation he gave to me myself, but in His new creation He gave me Himself, and by that gift restored to me the self I had lost. Created first and then saved, I owe Him myself twice over."*

Created and redeemed. And what does God want in return? He wants you to enjoy Him. So often people are preoccupied with figuring out what God wants them to *do*, when what God actually wants is for us to *enjoy* Him. That enjoyment begins with faith and trust — with knowing Him.

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## The Fifth Language: Giving of Gifts

> *"Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!" — Psalm 100:4*

The fifth language of gratitude is giving thanks to the Lord with the things He has given to us. I want to focus on that verb *give* and its object *thanks*, because in Hebrew, the noun translated "thanks" here — *Todah* — is not some abstract verbal acknowledgment. It is a specific offering described in Leviticus 7:11–15: the thank offering.

That is what verse 4 is describing — people entering the temple courts to bring this particular offering and sacrifice to the Lord.

What made the thank offering different from every other sacrifice is worth pausing on. In all other temple sacrifices, the animal brought — a goat or a cow — was either burned entirely on the altar or portioned out to the priests. Not so with the thank offering. A person who brought a cow as a way of saying thank you to God had to eat the entire animal in a single day, in the presence of the Lord.

How in the world do you eat an entire cow in one day? You bring a lot of friends and family with you. The thank offering was designed to cause people to deliberately gather a large group together and, while eating, recount the good things God had done. *Give thanks to him; bless his name.*

So I see this fifth language of gratitude as not simply giving treasure to God, but giving it in such a way that His goodness gets proclaimed. You take what God has given you and use it in a way that says thank you to Him — and tells others about His faithfulness in the process.

This week is a great opportunity for exactly that. Over the carved turkey, share the blessings of God in your life. Take someone out to lunch and tell them how the Lord has been faithful to you. Give a gift to someone in need as a way of celebrating how God has provided for your own needs. Our giving becomes another way of telling the story of God's goodness. We take the blessings we have received and turn them into opportunities for others to recognize His faithfulness.

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## Why We Give Thanks

We thank the Lord with our mouths, our hands, our time, our hearts and minds, and our treasures. But why? Why do we do all of this?

Verse 5 tells us:

> *"For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations." — Psalm 100:5*

Notice what the psalmist is saying. We give thanks because God is *good* — not simply because good things have happened to us, but because God Himself is good. His steadfast love endures forever. His faithfulness continues from one generation to the next. The very God who has been faithful to the generations before us is the God who will be faithful to the generations that come after us.

And perhaps this brings us back to where we started. Giving thanks is a form of spiritual eyesight. It helps us see the goodness of God, recognize His faithfulness, and tell others what He has done.

So this Thanksgiving, don't simply count your blessings. Use those blessings to recognize the God who gave them. Give thanks with your mouth. Give thanks with your hands. Give thanks with your time. Give thanks with your heart. And give thanks with the things God has entrusted to you. And as you do, remember the reason for it all: the Lord is good. His steadfast love endures forever. And His faithfulness continues to every generation.

Amen.

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## A Closing Word: All People That on Earth Do Dwell

Every communion Sunday, we conclude our worship by singing the Doxology — "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." What you may not know is that the familiar tune we sing comes from an even older setting of Psalm 100, a hymn called "All People That on Earth Do Dwell." Over the centuries it became the doxology we know today.

This is fitting, because Psalm 100 is itself a doxology of praise. Psalms 93 through 99 — seven psalms — declare the glory, majesty, and sovereign reign of God. And then comes Psalm 100, calling all the earth to respond with joyful thanksgiving. It is the congregation's answering shout.

And so, as we conclude our worship today, we are going to do exactly what Psalm 100 calls us to do. We are going to stand together, make a joyful noise to the Lord, and give Him thanks.

Let's stand and sing Psalm 100 — "All People That on Earth Do Dwell."