TWO PSALMS OF THANKSGIVING

Adapted from a Jacob's Ladder Religion Lesson

The Book of Psalms is a collection of beautiful poetry and songs, given to us by the Lord. Many of the psalms were written by King David. Some were written by other people. These poems often are words of praise to the Lord and thanks for His gifts which are our blessings from Him.

The psalms are used by many churches as words for their hymns. The Children of Israel sang them during times of worship, and they were often accompanied by instruments similar to a harp.

Today, we will look at some verses from two of the psalms. The first tells us about some of the gifts that the Lord gives us which we can be thankful for. The Lord wants us to thank Him because He knows that giving thanks brings joy to our heart and brings us closer to Him. Read the first nine verses of the song and notice the gifts we are to thank the Lord for.

> Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!
> For His mercy endures forever.
> Oh, give thanks to the God of gods!
> For His mercy endures forever.
> Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords!
> For His mercy endures forever:
> To Him who alone does great wonders,
> For His mercy endures forever;
> To Him who by wisdom made the heavens,
> For His mercy endures forever;
> To Him who laid out the earth above the waters,
> For His mercy endures forever;
> To Him who made great lights,
> For His mercy endures forever—
> The sun to rule by day,
> For His mercy endures forever;
> The moon and stars to rule by night,
> For His mercy endures forever.
>
> Psalm 136:1-9

What gifts from the Lord are mentioned in the psalm? The Lord created all things in this world and in the heavens. The Lord also made us so that He could love us and look after us as our Heavenly Father. His creation gives us everything that we need. When we think about this, we can say, "Thank you, Lord, for such wonderful gifts, the gift of life and the gift of Your love."

Did you notice the words that were repeated over and over in the Psalm? “His mercy endures forever.” The Lord’s mercy endures forever. That means that He will always love each one of us and will continually help us to find the way to happiness with Him in heaven. One way the Lord helps us is through His Word. There, the Lord’s truths stand ready to help all people forever. We can thank the Lord for these truths and the wonderful blessings they can bring.

The second set of verses tells us about how we can thank the Lord. Notice the different ways that are suggested.

> Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands!
> Serve the Lord with gladness;
> Come before His presence with singing.
> Know that the Lord, He is God;
> It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;
> We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.
> Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,
> And into His courts with praise.
> Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.
> For the Lord is good;
> His mercy is everlasting,
> And His truth endures to all generations.
>
> Psalm 100:1-5

How can we thank the Lord? The psalm tells us to shout and sing with joy. When we are joyful in our worship of the Lord it is a way of saying “Thank you!” to Him. The Lord is delighted by the happy, joyful songs that we sing to Him.

The Lord also takes special delight in us when we happily follow His teachings and do what He asks us to do with a cheerful attitude. This is what is meant by “Serve the Lord with gladness.” Sometimes we may feel sad or be in a bad mood. We may even feel like not doing what we know is right. When we remember to put on a happy attitude and do what is right, we are saying “Thank you!” to the Lord.

Thinking about these psalms can help us remember some of the things we can thank the Lord for and some different ways in which we can thank Him. When we thank the Lord, it can open our hearts to Him in a way that allows Him to be closely present with us and bring us happiness.