

**Psalm 116:1-19 (NIV)**

1 I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.  
 2 Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. 3  
 The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon  
 me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. 4 Then I called on the name  
 of the LORD: “O LORD, save me!” 5 The LORD is gracious and  
 righteous; our God is full of compassion. 6 The LORD protects the  
 simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me. 7 Be at rest once  
 more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. 8 For you, O  
 LORD, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet  
 from stumbling, 9 that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the  
 living. 10 I believed; therefore I said, “I am greatly afflicted.” 11 And  
 in my dismay I said, “All men are liars.” 12 How can I repay the LORD  
 for all his goodness to me? 13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call  
 on the name of the LORD. 14 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the  
 presence of all his people. 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the  
 death of his saints. 16 O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your  
 servant, the son of your maidservant; you have freed me from my  
 chains. 17 I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name  
 of the LORD. 18 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of  
 all his people, 19 in the courts of the house of the LORD-- in your  
 midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD.

19-116-1-Thanksgiving in Psalm 116

love, deliverance, protection, provision, gratitude

Psalm 116

*Gratitude* reveals our relationship with God; *thanksgiving* seals it.

**INTRODUCTION:** (Text as Scripture Reading)

–As we review **Psalm 116**, we are focusing on *thanksgiving*. But first, a question: “*How does it differ from gratitude?*” *Gratitude* as an attitude; *thanksgiving* expresses it. Usually we think of expressing it *verbally*. But authentic thanksgiving not only expresses the attitude of gratitude, but also demonstrates a relational connection.

–In **Psalm 116**, we’ll see another way these terms differ: **HOM.idea**. So, *how does gratitude show our bond with God?* Let’s look first at...

**I. Feeling Gratitude for Answered Prayer**– v.1-4, *I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the LORD: “O LORD, save me!”*

A. Prayer is a natural reflex in human beings, existing in some degree in all religions. (Even part-time religious believers never have to *talk themselves into using prayer*. To eliminate prayer from their thinking, they have to *talk their minds out of it!*)

B. Prayer asks 2 big theological questions:

1. “*Is anybody there?*” [In some movie comedies you may have seen one character rapping on another’s head, asking, “*Is anybody home?*”] (Prayer, for some people, is an experiment to learn if God really exists.)
2. But for those who are sure He does exist, prayer can ask *another* question: “*Does God care?*”

C. When *entangled* with the “*cords of death*,” caught in “*the anguish of the grave*,” and “*overcome by trouble and sorrow*,” this psalmist “*called on the name of the LORD: O LORD, save me!*” And what happened?

1. First, he found that God did care! God *heard his voice*, *heard his cry for mercy*,” and “*turned his ear to*” listen to his prayer.
2. But then, when his prayer was answered, he made a decision: “*Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live.*”

**TRANS:** God has answered more prayers in our lives than we can even

remember. That's because new problems facing us may distract us from the ones He just resolved. OR we may get so caught up enjoying the blessings received that we forget Who sent them. But, this psalmist was grateful, and his gratitude to God became an emotional expression: "I love the LORD" as well as a behavioral commitment: "I will call on him as long as I live." **Gratitude reveals our relationship with God; thanksgiving seals it.** Part of the expressed gratitude is displayed by...

**II. Recounting His Goodness to Us— v.5-11**, *The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The LORD protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me. Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living. I believed; therefore I said, "I am greatly afflicted." And in my dismay I said, "All men are liars."*

- A. Several modern translations offer a better rendering of those last two verses— **v.10-11 (NLT)**, I believed in you, so I said, "I am deeply troubled, LORD." In my anxiety I cried out to you, "These people are all liars!" (In this sense, those verses continue to state trust in the midst of challenging circumstances. The focus is on: "**I believed in you...**")
- B. What happens when we recount God's blessings, His gracious and compassionate protection, the deliverance of our "soul from death," our "eyes from tears," our "feet from stumbling"? **2 wonderful things**:
1. Our journey takes on an inner peace: "Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you." (**Inner turmoil** is "the stuff dreams are made of" **when they become nightmares!** Jesus is our **Healer** not just of our *spirit and body*: **He heals the human soul.**)
  2. Our journey comes under new management, as we begin to "walk before the LORD in the land of the living." (What does this mean?)
    - a. To walk **before the LORD** means living our lives with a conscious sense of His presence, *wherever* we are, *whatever* we're doing.
    - b. To walk **before the LORD** means letting His will direct our steps by submitting our will to the authority of His Word.
    - c. To walk **before the LORD** means adopting God's viewpoint so that our life "in the land of the living" becomes Kingdom living.

**TRANS:** Counting our blessings and recounting God's goodness turn the attitude of gratitude into an expression of thanksgiving. When the

grateful feelings of our heart reach the joyful proclamations of our lips, we confirm our relationship with God before others. This is a way of...

**III. Sealing Our Dedication with Thanksgiving— v.12-17**, *How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant; you have freed me from my chains. I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD.*

- A. If we could serve God for as many millennia as there are stars in the universe, **never** could we "repay...all his goodness to" us.
1. If His gifts could be repaid, they'd not be gifts but earnings, fair-trade exchanges. (If service could reimburse God for blessings, we'd owe Him not thanksgiving but a tally of work hours.)
  2. C. S. Lewis said that Christianity differs from other religions because of "**grace**"— *God's unmerited and freely-given favor*.
- B. But grace enables the Christian to say with the psalmist: "*O LORD, truly I am your servant;...you have freed me from my chains.*" (**As freed prisoners, we serve Him with loving gratitude as we**—\*
1. \*"*lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.*" (At each prayerful celebration of the Eucharist [lit.: "thanksgiving"], we lift up Christ's cup of salvation, and "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.")
  2. \*fulfill our "vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people." (Why **v.15** ?— "*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.*")
    - a. **Jesus asks His Bride**, "Take up your cross and follow Me." (Our "**I will**" pledges a death to self-life and our marriage to His life.)
    - b. As a Husband who openly pledged His troth to us on the Cross, **He calls His Bride to live out our vows as publicly as He did**.

### **CONCLUSION:**

—The attitude of gratitude is fulfilled by open expression— **v.18-19**, *I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the LORD—in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD. That public expression sets a seal on our relationship with God*, letting all around us know what Christ means us. And people who know us should be very familiar with those last 3 words of this psalm being often on our lips. When they're in a conversation with us, they should never be surprised to hear us saying, "*Praise the LORD.*"