

HARVEST THANKSGIVING – PSALM 104:1, 10-15

**WHAT HAS GOD DONE FOR US?**

Let's look at what's on the Table:

It's great to see so much food on the table & so well laid-out for us; there are all kinds of things here.

Do you see anything there that you like? Your favourite food? **God has given us food to eat.**

Are there are some things that are not food? Flowers: we have this wonderful picture that Kids' Church made last week, with help from Babs McIntosh; some photos were up on screen before the service and there's another there now! These are flowers that Babs dried and brought them along and the children made this picture out of the flowers and we have it here. **God has given us flowers to enjoy.**

We will read **Psalm 104: 1,10-15:**

What did God do?

- Springs pour out water so that donkeys can quench their thirst and the birds can build their nests by waters and sing amongst the branches of the trees.
- God waters the mountains so that the water comes down to satisfy all the earth and things can grow.
- Grass grows for the cattle
- There are plants for people to cultivate to bring food from the earth and there are three other things listed: wine to gladden the heart, oil to make the face shine and bread to keep us alive.

There are more things too: the sun and moon, day, night, seasons; the earth full of animals, the sea full of creatures and so on. God has done all of this, made all of these things. So harvest is about God giving us all that we need, food to eat, water to drink, everything we need for life. **God gives us water and bread.**

There is something else on the table that is not food – the cross.

There is one more thing that God has done for us and that is sending Jesus. Jesus came into world to be the Saviour of the world, to help people in need, to love and care for us. He called Himself the 'bread of life' because He came to satisfy every need that we have in life. He did that by living a good life, but most of all He did that by dying on a cross for us, to take away our sin. God raised Jesus from the dead to come alive again to show the world His power, but more to show the world that Jesus really is our Saviour for ever. **God gives us a Saviour, Jesus.**

God has done all of this for us: He has given us the food that's on the table; He's given the world all that it needs for our food to grow; He's given us Jesus; He's given us all kinds of other things too, as the next hymn shows us. Let's see what is in the hymn and these are all gifts God has given to us. **Hymn 181.**

**CHALLENGING THE WORLD**

We visit Soriya village, Poipet, Cambodia and 2 families who are helped by CHO in different ways; I don't know their names!

1. a girl and her two brothers who farm a piece of land owned by their father, but their father has gone away. CHO gives them seed to plant and fertiliser to make the crops grow better and some training once a month in how to grow crops and then how to market them; once a week the CHO worker comes to visit them to make sure that they're getting on well. These three children were growing melons, aubergines, beans and bananas to sell in the markets to have money to live. When we visited them, they gave us a present of the biggest melon they had that day.

2. Another family and their four pigs. CHO gives the family these pigs and they are not to eat, but the pigs have babies and the family sell the baby pigs to other farmers and make money from selling the pigs; then the pigs have more babies and do the same all over again. By giving the family four pigs they can help that family live for long time and people begin to care for themselves rather than depend on people giving them food.

In 2000 the governments of the world signed up to the Millennium Development Goals, so that by 2015 the world will:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

There has been a summit meeting at the UN in New York this week to see where we have got to in this process after ten years and with only five years to go; there is a long way to go with some of them and these two stories from CHO are just examples of the good that is being done in the world to help people not be poor any more. We challenge the world to do better; let us pray.

### **OVERFLOWING WITH GRATITUDE**

How do we say thank you?

- Letters: we give flowers on Sunday to people and I then get cards and letters from people to say 'thank you' not only because we have given them flowers, but they are glad that someone remembers them. Phone, texts and e-mail do the same.
- Presents: we say 'thank you' by giving people chocolates, flowers etc.
- Grace cube: there are different words on each face and then roll the dice before a meal and then say the words on the side that comes up on top; it is a way of saying 'thank you' to God for the food we're about to eat; it is a way of remembering that it is God who gives us our food.
- What was the first word of Ps 104 – "Praise"! 'Praise' is a thank-you word. It's what we do when we sing hymns that tell the world what God has done. Psalm 104 went on to tell us some of the things that God does in the world: He gives water, food, etc. So we sing: *All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above; then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all His love.* Or there are other hymns and songs we sing that help us say 'thank you' to God for His love in other ways, in Jesus and the cross etc. Singing is another way of saying 'thank you'.

There are all kinds of ways of saying 'thank you' to people; we show that we're grateful to them for their gift, time, help, love. There are ways of saying 'thank you' to God for all his love.

How grateful? We say 'thank you' because we are grateful; the more grateful we feel, the more we say 'thank you'. Someone give you a tin of beans and you feel grateful, but if someone gives you a box of chocolates or £1000, you will feel more grateful, surely. The more someone does, more grateful we should be, but not always work.

**No gratitude?:** sometimes we complain that God has done nothing for us; or we forget to say 'thank you' and take for granted God's gifts and blessings. Something like this happened to Jesus: there were ten men who were ill with leprosy; they were

made to live outside their town and nobody would talk to them let alone touch them; they were made to walk down the street telling people they were 'unclean'. These ten men asked Jesus for His help, that He heal them and He did; all ten of them were healed and able to live in town again, to be with their families and friends, to go to work and do all the things they had enjoyed but had not been able to do because of their illness. How many of them came back to say 'thank you'? All ten? Nine? Five? No. Only one! Only one of them came back to say 'thank you'. The other nine seemed to feel no gratitude at all!

**Overflowing with gratitude:** "*Rejoice in...*" (Philippians 4:4) Paul urges us to be glad, to be completely grateful. Why? Two reasons: first of all "*I can...*" (Phil 4:13) Paul has learned that God will give him everything he needs; he can do everything because God gives him strength; so he rejoices. Secondly, "*my God...*" (Phil 4:19) God will provide for His people in every way; God will meet all our needs, whether for food or for grace, or strength, or forgiveness, or love, or peace, or hope, or comfort, or self-esteem and dignity – whatever we may need God will provide for us.

God who gives us the food we need - how much gratitude do we feel? God loves us so much that He gave us His Son – how much gratitude? Jesus gave His life – how much gratitude? We have everything we need to live life – how much gratitude? None? A little? A lot? Overflowing with gratitude? **Rejoice! Praise!** God has given us all we will ever need and much more besides.