

## Theological Background

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Thankfulness has always been at the centre of the life and worship of God's people. Under the Law of Moses, there were not only sacrifices for forgiveness, there were 'thanks offerings' as well.

'Songs of thankfulness and praise...' are at the heart of Christian worship. Thankfulness is directed towards God who gives and sustains life. Seeing the world as God's creation underpins the way we approach everything in life, seeing it as a gift and not as a right.

Thankfulness is important. Luke tells the story of the ten lepers who were healed and is probably challenging his readers to examine themselves when he tells of the amazement of Jesus that only one, a Samaritan, came back to thank him. (Luke 17:11-19).

Jesus gave thanks to God (Matthew 11:25) and although the word 'thankfulness' is not common in the Gospels, recognition of his dependence on the Father infuses the whole life of Jesus. Thankfulness is a wholehearted response. It stems from a consciousness of God's gifts and blessings. It is a joyfulness that erupts into praise. Paul frequently encourages us to 'be thankful' (Colossians 3:15), to 'give thanks in all circumstances' (1 Thessalonians 5:18) and says that our lives should 'overflow with thankfulness' (Colossians 2:7).

For Christians the greatest of all acts of worship is simply called 'thanksgiving' - *eucharistia* in Greek - thanksgiving for the death and resurrection of God's Son and the way of forgiveness that is opened up.

## Theological Background

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### Biblical References

2 Chronicles 5:13

The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: 'He is good; his love endures forever.'

Psalm 28:7

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.

Mark 14:22-23

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take it; this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.

Luke 17:15-16

One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him - and he was a Samaritan.

Ephesians 5:19-20

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Colossians 2:6-7

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.