

## How Can I Thank You?

By David Wright

The anonymous author of Psalm 116 had suffered an affliction that brought him to the brink of death. “The snares of death encompassed me,” he said. “I suffered distress and anguish” (v. 3). However, when he prayed fervently for help, the answer was gracious. God delivered his “soul from death,” his “eyes from tears,” and his “feet from stumbling” (v. 8). Now, the psalmist rejoiced, “I walk before the Lord in the land of the living” (v. 9).

The inspired writer was so grateful for God’s kindness that he wondered how to repay it: “What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me?” (Ps. 116:12). The psalmist’s love for the Lord suggested a twofold answer.

First, the psalmist pledged to offer thanks in worship. He would “lift up the cup of salvation [the drink offering]” (Ps. 116:13). He would offer “the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord” (v. 17). In form Christian worship differs from the OT sacrificial system with its burnt offerings and cups of wine poured out on the altar. The motivation for worship, though, hasn’t changed at all. Anyone truly grateful for God’s abundant grace will be eager to join the psalmist in proclaiming, “Praise the Lord!” (v. 19).

Second, the psalmist gave thanks by presenting himself for service to God. “O Lord,” he said, “I am thy servant” (Ps. 116:16). This pledge pointed to the poet’s dedication and humility. By losing himself in the will of God and the needs of others, he would make his entire life an outpouring of sincere gratitude.

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