

**Date:** 26 January 2020  
**Services:** Sunshine Beach and Tewantin  
**Series:** Wisdom for the new year  
**Title:** How shall I repay the Lord  
**Passage:** Psalm 116  
**Outline:**  
**1. The Rev'd Richard Johnson**  
**2. Psalm 116:12-13**  
**3. Eph 5:20 'Giving thanks FOR all things'**  
**4. Acts 16 Paul and Silas**

### **The Rev'd Richard Johnson**

Anglican clergyman and chaplain designate to the colony of NSW. Arrived on the First Fleet of 11 ships after a gruelling 8 months at sea (with the loss of only 32 lives) on 26th Jan 1788. His wife was pregnant during the voyage but lost the baby not long after their arrival. Johnson preached his initial sermon on Sun 3rd Feb, one week after landing, to a congregation of convicts and troops under a great gum tree.

Johnson was a product of the evangelical revival in England. Born in 1757 at Weston, near Hull, he was educated at Magdalene College, Cambridge. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1783 and was ordained a deacon and priest by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1786. Five months before the First Fleet set sail, he was recommended to the post of chaplain by the philanthropist William Wilberforce and the Rev John Newton who wrote a dedicatory verse to Johnson before he left. The British Prime Minister William Pitt approved the appointment. Johnson was the first of a group of pastors who ensured that evangelical Christianity dominated the Protestant Church in Australia for the duration of the 19th Century.

Johnson carried on for a total of 12 years, travelling widely throughout the new colony conducting baptisms, marriages and funerals, as well as attending executions and acting as magistrate when needed. He supervised the schooling of the colony which was first started in the primitive church building. Johnson was a man of strong Christian character and commitment. He exhibited great courage in the face of incredible hardships. (On the voyage over, the seas were so rough and tempestuous that he and his wife were washed out of their cabin!). A humble and dogged man of plain habits. A lover of the Bible, a man of prayer and compassion. He returned to England in 1800 because of ill health. He died in 1827.

(Extracted from 'Stories of Australian Christian Heritage' by Elizabeth Rogers Kotlowski, 2006, Strand Publishing)

### **Psalm 116:12-13**

'What shall I return to the LORD for all His goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.'

When I stopped to consider the voyage of Rev Johnson and his pregnant wife who were on one of their 11 ships (approx 34metres long and 9.5metres wide) for 8 months with convicts and soldiers (average of 150 persons each ship) in weather so rough, that at one stage the waves swept them out of their bed and cabin, I wonder how Rev Johnson came to this scripture from which to preach his first sermon a week after they had landed in Sydney Cove. My belief is that Rev Johnson, being of strong Christian character, understood that in the middle of all they were in, PRAISE and THANKSGIVING is what pleases God and can change adverse attitudes - angry? Disgruntled? cold? Hungry? Tired? ill? Afraid? Consider - a new land, no buildings, strange animals and sounds, only food left over from the voyage, etc, etc.

## **Eph 5:20 'Giving thanks FOR all things.'**

1 Thess 5:18 'IN EVERYTHING give thanks for this is the will of God for you'. Heb 13:15 Instructs us to 'continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise'. And also, in this Psalm 116:17 'I will sacrifice a thank offering to You and call upon the name of the LORD.' And again Psalm 107:21-22 'Let them give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for mankind. Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of His works with songs of joy.'

## **CHANGING OUR ATTITUDE OF COMPLAINING AND FAULTFINDING INTO AN ATTITUDE OF THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE!**

(If you don't know what to say, check out Psalms 91-104) What are the consequences of complaining and moaning? Compare with the Children of Israel coming out of Egypt heading for the Promised Land. Because of their continual complaint and criticism of Moses and God, a whole generation died out in the wilderness after wandering in the desert for 40 years. God had provided water, bread, meat, air-con day and night, their shoes and clothes didn't wear out, and God lead them and guided them every day!! That was still not enough!!!

ON the other hand, compare with Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 20) Had 3 great armies join forces and came against Judah.

Jehoshaphat was king and he believed in God so called the people to prayer. A word from God was given by a prophet "Do not be afraid or discouraged of this vast army, for the battle is not yours, but God's . . . Take up your positions, stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you." So, the king appointed the singers to lead the army into battle, "to sing to the Lord and to praise Him for the splendour of His holiness" and to "Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever." The Bible tells us 'As they began to sing and praise. . .' The soldiers of the invading armies killed one another so when Judah came over the hill, there were dead bodies lying on the ground. No survivors! It took 3 DAYS to carry off the plunder of equipment, clothing and articles of great value. It was more than they could take away!

## **Acts 16 Paul and Silas**

IN prison for casting out an evil spirit in a woman who had been telling fortunes. Because of loss of income from this woman, the controlling men had Paul and Silas put into the inner prison after beating them with rods, stripping them of their clothing and having their feet put into stocks. At midnight - As they were praying and singing hymns to God!! EARTHQUAKE Prison doors opened, everyone's chains fell off, foundations shaken. The consequence - the jailer and family were all converted to Christ! In prayer and praise, Paul and Silas were 'lifting up the cup of salvation.' Their offering to God in the midst of adverse circumstances. God heard and rescued them!!! What would God do for us if we changed our attitude from grumbling and complaining, from negative speech and fault finding, to Praise and Thanksgiving and 'calling on the name of the LORD'?

Government, climate change, drought, fires, floods, hail, dust storms, prices, etc. How do we react to all this?

"What can I give back to God for the blessings He's poured out on me? I'll lift high the cup of salvation - a toast to God! I'll pray in the name of God; I'll complete what I promised to do, and I'll do it together with His people". (NLT)