

Apt rendering

*What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?
Psalm 116:12*

As the psalmist contemplates the grace of the Lord in delivering him from trouble and sorrow, and apparently death, he utters this question, which can be taken both as rhetorical and practical. In the rhetorical sense, it is evident that there is nothing that the Lord needs. He says so in Psalm 50. It is impossible to repay Him for all of His benefits bestowed. From the psalmist's point of view, this applies at least to the immediate deliverance described, but also appears from our text to extend to all of His benefits. In the practical sense, he answers his own question with a number of possibilities. First, he naturally says that he will in fact take the cup of salvation provided and call on the name of the Lord. Then he states twice that he will pay his vows unto the Lord in the presence of all His people. This would no doubt refer to particular sacrifices offered in the temple as prescribed in Leviticus for a thank offering, as he describes offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving and calling on the name of the Lord. Doing this in the presence of His people emphasizes the public nature of his thanks. In the midst of these responses, he announces his resolve to be the Lord's servant.

There are direct applications here for those of us who have been delivered from eternal death by Jesus Christ. We have no ability to repay Him for the gift of eternal life. So our first act of thanks to God for this gift is to humbly receive it by faith, calling on His name (Romans 10:13). After this, we can understand that the once for all offering that Christ made for us fulfills and replaces all Old Testament sacrifices (Hebrews 9:11-14). Therefore, as His redeemed, through His new and living way, we fulfill our vow to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Hebrews 13:15). Then, not only with our lips, but with our lives and all His benefits that He loads us with daily, we serve Him who is worthy of more than we could ever render, in the presence of all who would follow in giving Him thanks and praise.