

Worship November 22, 2020

Welcome

I welcome you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

God is with us now and we ask for wisdom!

God gives us hope and makes us strong!

We open our hearts to be filled with riches!

We praise God and we will make a joyful noise!

Opening Prayer

Let us pray, "O God for all the blessings we enjoy, we give you thanks. Help us look at the world around us in such a way that we see your hand in creation and in those we meet. Help us be a blessing today and all our days to those we encounter. Lord Thanksgiving looks different this year but even with the differences open our eyes to your beauty all around us. As we gather to worship open our eyes to you and only you. AMEN.

Hymn UMH # 131 We Gather Together

Scripture Psalm 100 (NRSV)

A Psalm of thanksgiving.

¹ Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.

² Worship the LORD with gladness;
 come into his presence with singing.

³ Know that the LORD is God.

 It is he that made us, and we are his;
 we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
 and his courts with praise.

 Give thanks to him, bless his name.

⁵ For the LORD is good;

 his steadfast love endures forever,
 and his faithfulness to all generations.

Hymn TFWS #2074 Shout to the Lord

Meditation Prayer

The Thanksgiving List

Outline and portions contributed by Bruce Lee on Nov 17, 2016

It is pretty common to make a Christmas wish list. At our house we all create the usual Christmas list but I also have to add additional ideas.

You see Between November 24 and December 25 My dear husband must deal with our anniversary, my birthday and Christmas. I can see him rolling his eyes right now as he hears this reminder! But today, I want us to think about a Thanksgiving Day list of all the things that we are thankful for.

I am thankful for...

10. A house – many people in this world have no place to live. Even in our small community there are people that have had to move in with family or friends, there are kids couch hopping – staying with a friend as long as they are allowed and then they have to find another friend with another couch. And I have met people with no home, no family or friends in the area and no couch.

9. Food - we always have plenty to eat at our house. Many people do not. I have seen people standing beside the road holding a sign that says, "Will work for food." Have you? And I know our local food shelves are heavily used.

8. Clothes – I never have to worry about whether there will be clothes in my closet for me to put on each day. Many people only have the clothes that they are wearing.

7. Health – I am thankful that I am blessed with fairly good health. Many people have serious illnesses which keeps them from enjoying a full and happy life and now with the Covid virus it is much worse.

6. My country – I am thankful that I live in a country where I enjoy great freedom. In many countries you can be put in prison, or even put to death, for telling others about Jesus.
5. Churches – I am thankful for the Six Churches that I have called my church home, including Mora and Ogilvie UMC's.
4. Friends – I am thankful for my friends. I have friends in each of my church homes. Some I count my closest and best friends for life, my support system. I have always had friends to encourage me and support me.
3. Family – I am thankful for family. That is likely near the top of your list too. Family by blood, by marriage and chosen.
2. Parents – I am thankful for parents that gave me life and loved me. I am thankful for my mom who taught me about Jesus and his love for me.
1. Jesus – Jesus is number one on the list of things for which I am thankful.

No one ever loved me like Jesus. He loves me so much that he was willing to die on a cross so that I can have everlasting life. Thank you, Jesus.

With Jesus we have so much for which to celebrate on Thanksgiving! But has it ever occurred to you that no Americans were more needy than that small handful from the Mayflower? They had no homes. No government agency to help them build homes. They had no means of transportation but their legs. Their only food came from the sea and the forest, and they had to get it for themselves (catch it, clean it, butcher it and cook it). They had no money and no place to spend money if they had had any. They had no entertainment except what they made for themselves, no means of communication with their relatives in England, no social security or Medicare. But they would not have called themselves needy. For they did have 4 of the greatest human assets: initiative, courage, a willingness to work, and an endless faith in God. Our forefathers had "an endless faith in God." That almost sounds strange to us here today.

Thanksgiving Day is more than turkey day. This year it might not even be turkey since we are asked to gather by household only and turkeys create a lot of leftovers. It is NOT a day that celebrates anyone's birthday or observes a battle fought on some field. Thanksgiving is a day set aside to express our thanks to God.

In 1789, George Washington made this public proclamation.

"By the President of the United States of America. A proclamation:

Whereas, it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor, and "Whereas, Both Houses of Congress" (Did you hear that, "Both Houses of Congress?") "have by their joint committee requested me `to recommend to the people of the United States a day of Public Thanksgiving and Prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God. . .'

But how many people even know what Thanksgiving Day really means?

I think that the 100th Psalm was written to deal with that attitude, to remind us of our need to be thankful, and to maintain an attitude of gratitude.

The 100th Psalm was written for the people of God. "When you set down at the table, in your warm homes, and you have plenty, don't forget God. He has blessed you with everything you have. But it doesn't take very long to realize that the people today need to be reminded of this truth.

I believe God had us in mind when the Psalmist David wrote this verse, Did you notice to whom it is addressed? The first verse says it is addressed to "all the earth," and the last verse says that it includes "all generations."

This message of thanksgiving applies to every person everywhere.

I think there is something about giving thanks together to God that breaks down barriers between people. It is a lot like Christian Communion. We might not be at the same table but when we say the table grace and give thanks for the meal we are as close to God and as close to being in unity as possible.

Do you have enough to live in harmony with one another and to be at peace with God

Alex Haley, the author of "Roots," had an unusual picture hanging on his office wall. It was a picture of a turtle on top of a fence post. When asked, "Why is that there?" Haley answered, "Every time I write something significant, every time I read my words and think that they are wonderful, and begin to feel proud of myself,

I look at the turtle on top of the fence post and remember that he didn't get there on his own.

He had help."

That is the basis of thankfulness and we need to remember that we got here with the help of God, and that He is the provider of every blessing we have.

Now, as we look more carefully at this Psalm, we find that there is a series of 5 commands given.

The first command is in vs. 1, "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth."

It means to "shout with the force of a trumpet blast," There are times to be quiet and solemn in the life of the church. We most often think of being quiet during prayer time. But there are over 60 times in the bible where it says "I cried with a "loud" voice"! What about singing in the bible? They sang with loud instruments and trumpets and cymbals and praise making a joyful noise. What about preaching. The prophet stood and cried with a loud voice even Jesus at the ninth hour cried with a loud voice.

The point here isn't just about volume but what comes from the very depths of your being. There is no such phrase as silent praise. Or a quiet Thanksgiving in the bible. So Jesus solved the problem. Jesus gave you a blessing. Jesus provided you with a blessing and you realize that it has come from God. So from the depths of your being you proclaim your praise.

Roland Allen tells about a missionary who came up to him one day after he had delivered his sermon. The missionary introduced himself and said, "I was a medical missionary for many years in India. And I served in a region where there was progressive blindness. People were born with healthy vision, but there was something in that area that caused people to lose their sight as they grew older." But this missionary had developed a treatment which would stop progressive blindness. So people came to him and he performed his treatment,

and they would leave realizing that they would have become completely blind, but because of him their sight had been saved. He said that they never said, "Thank you," because that phrase was not in their language. Instead, they spoke a word that meant, "I will tell your name." Wherever they went, they would tell the name of the missionary who had cured their blindness. They had received something so wonderful that they eagerly proclaimed it.

And that is what the Psalmist is saying. "Suddenly you realize that God has been so good to you that you can't keep it inside anymore. From the depths of your being you shout your joy unto the Lord."

The second command is, "Serve the Lord with gladness."

It doesn't say "serve the church." It doesn't say "serve the preacher." "It says, "serve the Lord with gladness."

This is about whatever you do. Sing with gladness. Pray with gladness. Show hospitality with gladness. Do it because you know Jesus loves you.

The third command is, "Come before Him with joyful songs."

Psalm 98:4 says, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord." And that I can do. Have you noticed? In these first 3 commands, God has said, "I want you to be happy. Shout with joy, serve with gladness, and come with joyful songs."

Take a moment and think about whether or not you are happy. Is there joy in your heart? Is there celebration in your soul? Is there delight in your spirit? Is there thrill in songs? The Psalmist says, "Come before Him and serve Him and sing His praise with joy in your heart."

The fourth command is, "Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture."

God took every bone, every joint, and He welded them together and covered them with skin and gave us eyes that see, ears that hear and brains that think, and fingers that can pick things up. God made us, inside and out. He made each of us the way He wanted. That is a mystery, isn't it? I don't understand why, but somehow in God's wisdom He decided that this is how we should be.

And he is not done with us yet. He is not yet satisfied. He is still working on our weaknesses. He is still fine tuning our gifts. We are still unfinished products, a work in progress. God is still making each of us. He is still working your life. God is your maker, and you are created in His image. Therefore give Him thanks for what you can become.

Then He says, "We are His people, the sheep of His pasture." I remember as a kid in the Christmas play. Everyone wanted to be one of the wise men. Or Joseph or a shepherd. But no one volunteered to be the sheep. "It's not any fun being sheep," we say. But the problem is, we don't know where the green pastures are. And every time we go out searching for them, we invariably end up lost in the wilderness. He is saying, "You be the sheep. Let me be the shepherd, and I will lead you beside the still waters and the green pastures. Just let Jesus lead."

The fifth command is this, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good and His love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations."

In the O.T. the temple symbolized the presence of God. So whenever the people came to the temple and entered the courtyards, they knew that they had come into the presence of God.

We know God meets us wherever we are. God is everywhere. He is with you as you drive on the highway. He is with you when you work. He is with you right now in your home. He is with you every moment of your life. That is the real source of our thanksgiving, isn't it?

I have often wondered what if God began to treat us like we so often treat Him? What if God met our needs to the same extent that we give Him our lives? What if we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when God sent the rain? What if God stopped loving and caring for us because we failed to love and care for others? What if God took away His message because we wouldn't listen to His messenger? What if He wouldn't bless us today because we didn't thank Him yesterday? What if God answered our prayers the way we answer His call for service? What if God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we did not follow Him today?

Closing: I pray that this will be a meaningful Thanksgiving season for you. Take time to read the 100th Psalm again. And if you'll be mindful of those commands, your heart will overflow with thanksgiving to the Lord.

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Almighty God, we want to join our voices with all of creation and rejoice in Your goodness and grace. Thank You for Your great and mighty works and for the gifts and graces that You have given to us. Thank You that Your grace is sufficient for all and that no-one is excluded from Your good and gracious offer of salvation – through faith in Christ. Thank You that You loved us so much that You sent Jesus to be the reconciliation for our sins and thank You that by faith You have removed our sin as far as the east is from the west – and are prepared to do the same for all who will trust in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. May our lives be a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving – for You alone are worthy of all praise and worship. We pray all these things in the name of the Lord, Jesus the Christ, who taught us to pray as one, saying...

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

Hymn UMH #84 Thank You Lord

Offering

We are shepherd and sheep, wounded and healer. In the same spirit, we are both giver and receiver. Even as we have lavishly received, so now may we generously give.

Prayer of Dedication

Holy One, you have given us all that we have and all that we are. Through these gifts and in our lives, help us be the shepherds and healers and lovers that you are calling us to be. Amen.

HYMN TFWS #2036 Give Thanks

Benediction

Come, you who are blessed!

Inherit all that is prepared for you!

Go out into the world to share your blessings with all in need. Amen.

Announcements

- If you would like a hymnal and The Faith We Sing book call the church office and one will be delivered to you.
- A group of people have committed to pray for any/all concerns brought to them. Call Pastor Deb, 952-240-3836 or Ruth Smith, 763-302-9115