

"Be Thankful"
 Psalm 100
 (Preached at Trinity, November 19, 2017)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. This Thursday we will join with millions of other Americans in the celebration of Thanksgiving. This is one of our oldest holidays dating back to 1621 when Governor William Bradford of New England proclaimed a day of "thanksgiving" and prayer to celebrate the Pilgrims' first harvest in America. One year earlier 102 men, women, and children plus a crew of 15-20 had set sail from England on the Mayflower in search for a place to settle where they could worship God without persecution. In spite of sickness and disease, all but two survived the 65 day journey across the Atlantic, but almost half died that first winter. Conditions were terrible, yet they continued to trust in God's Providence. The summer brought a rich harvest and they set this time apart for praise to God.
2. Few today know the whole story. Shortly after the thanksgiving feast of 1621 other colonists arrived on the ship "Fortune" which brought colonists, but no supplies. By the spring of 1622 their supply-stores of food were exhausted. Supplies promised by their investor-sponsors in England failed to arrive. In the summer of 1622 another company of settlers arrived aboard the ships "Charity" and "Swan." Their crops were depleted and damaged by the new colonists, and Indian threats prevented the colonists from expanding their fields. They suspended their autumn thanksgiving festival due to lack of provisions. By the spring of 1623 their situation bordered on desperation. William Bradford observed: *"They had need to pray that God would give them their dayly brade, above all people in the world."* As the spring of 1623 turned to summer, the situation went from desperate to impossible. The colonists planted corn in April, but by the third week of May a drought had set in. For six excruciating weeks there was excessive heat and no rain. Crops withered and died.
4. But by an act of God's kind Providence, within a few days Miles Standish arrived with supplies. These gracious provisions led to a second Thanksgiving. In the ensuing years it was commemorated annually—a time of thanksgiving to God. It became a time of family gatherings to celebrate God's rich bounty. In 1777 the First National Proclamation of Thanksgiving was given by the Continental Congress. In 1863 President Abraham Lincoln designated a national Thanksgiving Day.
5. Our nation has celebrated the holiday every year since. The only problem with this national holiday lies in the unfortunate fact that it has lost all meaning. Today it marks the official start of the holiday season. It's a day marked by the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and by an overflowing bounty of food and occasional expressions of gratitude for what we have, but the core expression of Thanksgiving has been lost. Can you be thankful without someone to whom you direct your gratitude? The very expression "thank you" supposes an object of the thanksgiving - Thank **you**. The Pilgrims knew the sovereignty of God and knew that every blessing flowed from Him. Thanksgiving was directed to this sovereign God

6. Most people will celebrate Thanksgiving this Thursday without directing their gratitude to God. For them, Thanksgiving has truly lost all meaning.
7. In these verses David declares the goodness of God who is worthy of all praise and worthy of all thanksgiving.
- 6 This morning I want us to embrace the subject of Thanksgiving. I'll focus on two simple questions.
First, why we must be thankful to God?
Second, what are some ways to increase our thankfulness?

I. ***Why Must We Be Thankful?***

A. Because He is God

Verse 3 - "Know that the LORD Himself is God"

1. He is our Creator - "It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves"
 - a. Our life is a wonderful grace from God
There is nothing in creation that gives us the right to exist
God does not need creation. He was not bound to bring life into being. He would have been perfectly fulfilled and infinitely satisfied with Himself without creation
 - b. The first four words in the Bible are, "In the beginning God"
If it had ended there God would have still been God
 - c. Do you awaken each day with a great gratitude for the gift of life?
Is your heart moved with thanksgiving as you consider the wonder of life?
 - d. Listen to the heart of David
Psalms 139:14 NAU - "I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well."
Most translations translate the word תָּרַן "praise" rather than "give thanks" – Either translation is correct. "Praise" is synonymous with thanksgiving.
2. Notice David gives a particular element – God is OUR God
"we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture."
 - a. At the heart of the New Covenant is our relationship with God.
Hebrews 8:10-11 KJV - "For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: ¹¹ And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."
 - b. We should be thankful above all men because God has chosen us to be His own

- B. We should be thankful because God is worthy of all praise and thanksgiving
Verse 4 - "Enter His gates with thanksgiving *And* His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name."
1. We bless God by ascribing to Him the praise that is due Him.
 2. God displays His goodness upon His creation
Verse 5 - "For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting And His faithfulness to all generations."
 3. God has been good to all men. The Septuagint translates this word using the same word Paul used in **Romans 2:4**
Romans 2:4 NAS - "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"
 "The goodness of God"
 This goodness and kindness of God should cause such gratitude in the hearts of man as to lead them to repentance
- C. Because God commands it - Over and over the Bible commands us to be thankful.
Verse 4 - "Enter His gates with thanksgiving *And* His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name."
1 Thessalonians 5:18 NAU - "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." - There are few things clearer than that.
Colossians 3:15 NAU - "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful."
1. God commands us to be thankful in everything - All things without exception.
 2. Every situation, every difficulty
- D. Because thanksgiving manifests true worship
1. Again, the Hebrew word for thankful is יָדָה yadah which is the same word usually translated "Praise" – You *cannot* praise Him without thanksgiving.
 - a. **Psalm 100** is a psalm of praise and worship
Verse 1 - "Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth."
Verse 2 - "Come before Him with joyful singing."
 - b. At the heart of this worship is thanksgiving
Verse 4 - "Enter His gates with thanksgiving *And* His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name."
 2. Thanksgiving humbles us and draws out of us acts of praise and worship
 When Mary sat weeping at the feet of Jesus she forgot herself as she poured the perfume on His feet wiping it with her hair
 Jesus was pleased with her act of love and gratitude
 3. All worship flows from thanksgiving
 If thanksgiving is the sign of godliness the number must be very small
 - a. How often do you hear people sing forth God's praises?
 - b. How often do you hear men curse God's name?

- E. Because thanksgiving is an inseparable mark of our redeemed nature
1. Thanksgiving is one of our identifying marks
Ephesians 5:3-4 NAU - "But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; ⁴ and *there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*"
 - a. You may boast that you profess religion - the devil transforms himself into an angel of light
 - b. You may boast that you believe in God - the devils believe and tremble
 - c. But are you thankful? - While the devils blaspheme we sing forth the praises of God
 2. We are thankful because we know we deserve nothing – we are recipients of God's infinite grace.
- F. Because ingratitude characterizes those who are lost
Romans 1:21-22 NAU - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools"
1. Ingratitude expresses pride and self-centeredness
2 Timothy 3:1-2 NAU - "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy"
 2. A man is ungrateful because he is self-centered – He feels he deserves what he has
 3. The greatest ingratitude is the failure to see the greatness of Christ
 4. The great ingratitude of this generation in the face of so many blessings
 - a. They seldom appreciate the fullness of what they have – until it is taken away and then they cry and weep and curse God
 - b. They take of God's bounty without ever giving thanks
This is supposed to be a Christian nation – how often do you see people bow to give thanks in restaurants.

II. What are some ways to increase our thankfulness

- A. By meditating upon the greatness of God
1. Our life must be a constant contemplation of God's infinite greatness
This is at the heart of **Psalms 100** - "Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth."
 2. Praise leads to thanksgiving – and thanksgiving leads to praise
Psalms 75:1 NAU - "We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks, For Your name is near; Men declare Your wondrous works."
Psalms 106:1 NAU - "Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting."

- B. By meditating upon our many blessings
1. Material blessings.
Our life is a continual expression of God's goodness.
Our family, our material comforts, our many pleasures – God is good.
What a tragedy to consume God's goodness without thanksgiving—
without praise and worship.
 2. We are particularly thankful for our blessings in Christ
Psalm 30:11-12 NAU - "You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness, ¹² That *my* soul may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever."
 - a. forgiveness of sins
 - b. peace of conscience and reconciliation with God
 - c. access to God in prayer
 - d. the promise of eternity with Him
 3. How many ways does God bless us that we are unaware of?
 1. Our health
 2. Safety through our day
 3. Restraining grace keeping us from sin
- C. By praying for a thankful heart
1. We must understand how wicked ingratitude is. An unthankful heart is great sin.
 2. Most people don't even consider that their lack of gratitude is great sin. What do you consider when you consider the word evil? Or the word wicked?
Is it abortion? Perhaps homosexuality? Child abuse? Incest? Murder? Adultery? Witchcraft? Drunkenness? Pornography?
How about ingratitude? Not being thankful? God sees this as great wickedness.
 3. We must confess our lack of gratitude which is characterized by our lack of praise—by the dullness of our worship. We must pray that God would fill our heart with thanksgiving.
- D. By gaining control of our murmuring tongue
1. Complaining is the height of ingratitude
 2. This was a great sin by the children of Israel in the wilderness
God's anger was kindled – in fact it was greatly kindled
Numbers 11:10 – "Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased."

Conclusion:

1. May we enjoy this Thursday by celebrating God, His mercies, His goodness. May our thanksgiving bring forth praise.
2. May we take the opportunity to demonstrate this to others.