Grateful hearts sees each day as a gift. Amen? That’s why we call it the present.

Thankful people tend to focus less on what they lack and more on the privileges they have been given. Amen?

A couple of weeks ago, I shared at our men’s prayer breakfast…,

a story that I had read about a homeless disabled American Veteran, who had been invited to attend a very special THANKSGIVING banquet.

During the banquet , his name was called… and he was asked to come to the platform to receive a very special gift… The keys to a new home.

Well… As you can probably imagine, He nearly fell over!! He made his way to the platform as fast as his good leg could get him there…

He was so grateful & thankful he hugged just about everybody along the way…

He gave thanks to his fellow soldiers, the waiter staff, the band…

the presenter…

He “gave thanks” long before receiving the keys… or setting foot in his new home!!

“Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!” He shouted with tears in his eyes!!

True story!! Isn’t that a great thing?! I was so blessed by that story…

In John 14:2 Jesus tells his followers that He has to “go away for awhile…” the thought of which was troubling to them since they had devoted their lives to following & serving Him…

but Jesus makes a very special promise to them… that while He is away, He would be preparing a place for them.

Beloved of God, when the Lord does something… it is greater than anything we can ever imagine!

So to those who continue to follow & serve Jesus today, the title deed to your mansion in glory is every bit as certain as that of the soldier. Amen?!

It was a surprise to him… But Jesus wants us to know… Why?

So that we will stay motivated… and not lose our connection with the Almighty, while He is away…

Be excited and openly praise and thank God… Not just what He has done & what we have… but for what He is doing and what He has waiting.

Hours before Jesus’ arrest & crucifixion, Jesus was in the upper room with His disciples… Luke 22:19 tells us that Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to His followers…

“Give thanks” in the Greek is the word “Eucharisto”…

The root of which is… “Charis” which means “grace”.

Jesus took the bread and saw it as “grace” (an undeserved gift from His Father)… He gave thanks to Him for it, broke it and shared it with others…

But Jesus was also “giving thanks” for what was to come… His body broken & spilled out… for the Salvation for all who receive & follow.

Everyday, God gives us the opportunity to humble ourselves and…

1. Give thanks for the GRACE… The underserved blessings that we have received and share with others (yes), but don’t forget to “give thanks” for what is coming…

the amazing things that Jesus has waiting for you… a future that is certain… That He is waiting for you to step into…

The more we think about what God is waiting to do in our lives… the more reason there is to…

1. Give thanks for JOY

Another part of that Greek word “Eucharisto” (give thanks) is

“Chara” which means joy.

Even-though Jesus was just hours away from being betrayed by Judas, arrested by the Romans, denied by Peter, falsely accused, severely beaten and crucified,

He maintained His joy… because He could see beyond the crucifixion… even beyond the resurrection…

To millions giving their lives to follow Him and the eternity they would spend together on the New Heaven & New Earth…

It’s difficult to imagine the JOY that brought to Jesus…

How many of us could use more JOY in their life?

It can happen by making “why” Jesus did what He did (the Salvation of others) the highest priority in our lives… and giving thanks to the Father for the eternal impact that will have on heaven…

Where is JOY found? The “Eucharisto” the table of “Thanksgiving”.

Even in the midst of a messy, heart broken, affliction filled, life…,

“Giving thanks” to God, makes JOY possible.

Most of us enter the world screaming “WWWWHHHHHHYYYYYY???”

My prayer is that more of us will leave whispering “Thank You Lord”…

Our ushers are going to come forward and distribute the communion elements, so we can thank the Lord for His grace and the joy He gives together…

Special music & Prayer – “Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!”

* 1 Corinthians 11:23-24
* 1 Corinthians 11:25-26

Jesus said “whenever”… Like every day… as often as you eat & drink…

Here is another important aspect of “Eucharisto” or “giving thanks”…

The Scriptures reveal that when God is thanked, He often does miraculous things!!

In John 6:2-14, the feeding of the 5000 – What did Jesus have to be thankful for?

V2 great crowds of people began following Him… people represent souls that have the opportunity to follow Him, serve Him and live eternally...

Jesus was thankful for the power He possessed to perform miracles in the lives of others, that would them to understand that He is God’s Son and the only way to Heaven.

V3 He was able to walk up a mountainside & sat down with his disciples…

V4 Thankful to He was part of a family/a people group that routinely told others about God’s saving grace thru the observance of Passover.

V5-6 He was a gifted teacher who tested/challenged His followers to use their faith to look beyond the logic/conventional wisdom of the world.

V7-9 Thankful that He had disciples who regularly demonstrated their need for spiritual growth/understanding. LOL!!

V10 Thankful that there was plenty of room to minister to others and meet their needs.

But when did the real JOY become possible? At the “Euchristo”

V11 – When Jesus “Gave Thanks” for God’s “grace” of 5 loaves and 2 fish thru a little boy… then the “Good Good Father” opened the windows of heaven and poured JOY out upon them all!!

So much so that V13 says there were 12 baskets of JOYFUL left-overs!

But notice how careful Jesus is with the “grace” that had been given…

V12 Gather it all up… “let none of it be wasted”…

Can you imagine the JOY they they all experienced that day?

V14 tells us that the presence of “thanksgiving”… God’s grace… and JOY made believers out of some… (Grace upon grace…)

1. Give thanks for the some.

God’s grace & joy together are kind of like…

* Turkey w/dressing…
* Mashed potatoes w/gravy…
* Marshmallows on top of the yams…
* Green beans w/Mushroom soup and those fried onion things…
* Pumpkin pie w/whipped cream…

As we “give thanks” around our tables this Thanksgiving… Remember to “give thanks” to Jesus with a grateful heart…

Not just for what we have, but for the “good stuff” that you, as followers of Jesus have waiting…

Some at your table may be drawn to God by the Holy Spirit… thru the grace and your joy you express…

“Give thanks” daily… every chance you get… Happy Thanksgiving!!