

Thankful For The Simple Things

Luke 10

Introduction

- Wednesday, Veterans' Day
 - Kid's had off from school
 - Grandparents took them to their cousins in PA for the day
 - Their cousins are twins who are only a year apart from our kids
 - They love playing together; get along very well
 - Always look forward to seeing each other
 - Haven't always had this opportunity
 - Our nephew is in the Air Force
 - Stationed in Okinawa, Japan
 - Stationed in ID
 - Recently took on the role of a recruiter in PA, which has brought him much closer to home.
 - A reason to be thankful for the simple things during this pandemic
 - Not only the service of our military
 - BUT also for the family relationships that we have to share
 - So when the kids came home, they had all sorts of things to share with us about the great day they had.
- Wednesday was a day to give thanks
 - Reminder of our Veterans who are active and retired
 - Their sacrifice always seems to put things into perspective whatever may be going on in our world or our personal lives.
 - I thought it was interesting how both Gov. DeWine and Gov. Justice acknowledged the sacrifice of our veterans and used their sacrifice as an example that we all need to carry as we continue to fight COVID-19
 - Gratitude reminds us of the blessings that we have been given and the sacrifices that have been made on our behalf to enjoy those blessings.
- Today we are going to continue our sermon series: *The Gift of Gratitude*
 - So far we have learned that Gratitude is a gift that God gives to us
 - The Gift of Gratitude is something that we do not earn, but God freely gives to us primarily through Salvation.
 - Much like the sacrifice made by our veterans, the Gift of Gratitude reminds us of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf for the forgiveness of our sins.
 - It's because of Jesus' sacrifice that we not only give thanks, but we also serve according to His will.

- **Luke 10**
 - Jesus sends out 72 disciples (in addition to the 12 disciples)
 - Sort of like how we sent our kids out to their cousins
 - Their task was a worthy task, but it was also one that was difficult
 - Jesus required them to rely simply on what God would provide
 - When the 72 returned, they were excited
 - Like my kids when they returned from their cousins, the disciples had a lot of stories to share
 - And like a proud parent, Jesus also was excited and gave thanks to the Father
 - Although the resources provided to the disciples were basic/simple, they were also powerful and profound
 - This is really how the Gift of Gratitude works- simple, yet powerful
 - If we are not humble we have the tendency to miss what God has given to us.
 - Thankful for the Simple Things

Hardship is Part of Gratitude

- **Luke 10:1**
 - Sent ahead of Jesus
 - Preparing the way for the Lord (this was also the role given to John the Baptist)
 - Till the land- which is what **verse 2** indicates
 - BUT Why?
 - Significant to proclaiming the grace that God has already given and will offer
 - We find ourselves in a similar position
 - Jesus has come and died on the cross- the Gift of Gratitude
 - Jesus will come again- The Gift in it's fullness
 - It is our Gratitude for the gift that God has extended to us that we share with the rest of the world
 - Here is what God has done
 - Here is what God will do
 - Preparing people's hearts for when Jesus will come again
- **Luke 10:2-3**
 - This is no easy task
 - Few workers
 - Lambs among wolves
 - Somewhere we have gotten Gratitude all mixed up
 - Gratitude represents blessing- the good life
 - Gratitude and hardship don't seem to go together

- And yet, if you read the Bible God's people are constantly experiencing hardship before blessing
- If Jesus experienced hardship before blessing, why would we think we are exempt?
- Why is it that when bad things happen, so many Christians are ready to hit the exit button?
 - Well things didn't work out, look how bad things are- Jesus must be coming
 - Part of the Gift of Gratitude is knowing that when all is said and done Jesus will return and set the world straight.
 - I don't need any further prophecies to tell me how things will end or whether we are close to the end
 - The Bible tells us that we are living in the Last Days and have been since Jesus ascended into heaven
 - The Bible also is consistent in what our role as Christians is to be: laborers in the harvest field.
 - Part of being a laborer is that hardship is inevitable, however what sets us apart is that whatever the hardship, The Lord of the Harvest is not sending us out to be defeated, but to win.
 - We can celebrate that victory now even when the work is hard. In fact it is the Gratitude that we express through the hardship that becomes our witness to the rest of the world!
 - I believe that some of our greatest victories come through the hardships we face
 - God reveals himself as we exercise our faith
 - Faith may seem simple, but it is powerful
 - If we consider Jesus' words here, there's still a lot of work to be done and in order to complete the work sacrifice and hardship are part of the journey toward Gratitude.
 - **Luke 10:4**
 - Tools for the Journey- Simple
 - Tools for Worship- God's Word and the Holy Spirit
 - Thankful for the Simple Things- they may be simple, but they are powerful!
 - Jesus doesn't promise an easy rode, but he also isn't sending the 72 out in defeat.
 - Whether their message is received or rejected- they will still have success
 - Their success is not in what they will accomplish, but in the simple, yet powerful promise of God.

God's Presence is Simple yet Powerful

- **Luke 10:8-12**
- What is the message that these disciples are to share with the people they encounter?
 - "The Kingdom of God has come near"

- What does that mean?
- It means that God's presence and power are on the scene!
- No matter whether they are accepted or rejected- the message is the same
 - Speaks to God's presence and power in all situations
 - God's presence is simple yet powerful
- Devotional from this week- *The Long Way*. Leslie Koh. Our Daily Bread App. November 12, 2020.
 - God did not lead the Israelites on the shortest path through the wilderness (**Exodus 13:17**)
 - Concern that they would encounter challenges that would cause them to return to Egypt
 - Opportunity to grow in their faith and build the courage necessary for what lay ahead
 - Really spoke to me
 - Reflected back on the "long ways" that God has led me
 - At times makes you feel like you are wandering around in the wilderness, when in fact God is leading through the hardship for a greater purpose
 - Reference back to why God's Word is a powerful tool to Worship
 - God's Word provides direction for our lives
 - Reflect on it in relation to our lives to receive the Gift of Gratitude
- The road ahead that Jesus sent the 72 on was not the easy route
 - It wouldn't be an easy route for Jesus either
 - However, the message was the same "God is near"
 - The message was not only a warning, but a sign of encouragement
 - No matter the circumstances God is near
- God's presence is simple yet powerful
 - Knowing God is near is important to all of our lives
 - God will fulfill His purposes in His time
 - God requires us to remain faithful, especially as laborers in the harvest field

The Gift of Gratitude is Eternal

- **Luke 10:17-20**
 - Jackson and Avery returned home excited from the day they had with their cousins.
 - It was worth the two hour drive
 - Can't wait for the next play day
 - 72 excited for what they saw happen
 - Power over enemies
 - Satan fall

- Again, the promise that even though we are sent out and the journey will be hard, God does not send us out to lose- He will see to it that we succeed!
- Despite what they saw, Jesus tells the 72 that the Gift of Gratitude is not in the power, but in the promise of eternity
 - Right now, my kids can only see the moment or day that they had with their cousins
 - The real joy of their relationship with their cousins is more than just a day, but in the opportunity to continue to build their relationship with one another as they continue to grow
- Too much of our gratitude gets based on results
 - How much have we achieved?
 - How much do we have?
 - How well are things going?
 - These results will change throughout our lives, circumstances, and our perspective- however our Salvation never changes. It is eternal
 - The Gift of Gratitude is found in what God has already done for us.
- Why can I be thankful no matter what season it is?
 - Because I can look back and know that Jesus has saved me
 - AND, I can look forward to when Christ will return and honor The Gift He has given me.
 - The Gift of Gratitude is Eternal- the more we live into this reality the more we will be able to give thanks every day of our lives!

The Gift of Gratitude is Simple Yet Profound

- **Luke 10:21-24**
 - Not only do the 72 rejoice when they return, but so does Jesus
 - Jesus' response strikes me as odd
 - Of course Jesus is happy for the 72, but if God is all-knowing would he really be surprised?
 - I guess, I knew that my kids would enjoy the day with their cousins, but there still was something about them returning and sharing their stories that made me grateful.
- Jesus picks up on something very simple
 - It is the simple faith-like children
 - The road was difficult, but the 72 proved to be faithful and followed the instructions laid out and as a result God revealed his power through them.
 - These 72 were not special in that they had special gifts or seats of authority. They were ordinary, simple people like most of us who just wanted to be used by God.

- They went out as lambs among wolves with very little resources. Just trust God's provision
- The faith they exercised was simple, but profound.
- So, is the Gift of Gratitude

Conclusion

- I truly believe that God has something wonderful to show us this Thanksgiving
- In a nutshell, it is the Gift of Gratitude
- Maybe I'm just overly optimistic, but I believe that God will use this difficult season in our world to bring about a wonderful harvest in our lives, churches and world
- BUT ONLY IF we are faithful laborers
- The road will be difficult
 - The resources may seem few
 - However:
 - God's presence is always with us
 - Our Salvation is Eternal
 - What we will discover at the end of the day is that The Gift of Gratitude is Simple yet powerful and profound!
- Be Thankful for the Simple Things!