

## The Gift of Gratitude

*Psalm 100*

### Introduction

- Began this year with the message: *Keep It Simple*
  - Little did any of us know how significant that message would be
  - While these times have created chaos, they have also simplified many of the things in our lives.
  - We have had to find a way to do without and with little- we've had to find a way to keep things simple without losing the meaning of what is most important.
- Keeping things simple requires us to return to the basics
  - Over the last few weeks we have focused on one of the most simplistic and yet most powerful practices of our faith: Prayer
  - Through prayer we learned
    - The Promise of Prayer is that if we seek God we will find God
    - The Invitation of Prayer to know God and to serve God
    - The Wisdom of Prayer is that it is more than a religious exercise but offers substance to our lives.
- Today we return to another basic element of our faith: Gratitude
  - Believe it or not, Thanksgiving is 25 days away
  - Given the challenging year we have all experienced it may seem difficult to give thanks
  - BUT, I was struck by something I read as I prepared for this sermon- *Gratitude is a Gift*
    - When I was a kid, my friend and I would go to each other's house and compare what we got for Christmas
    - Very few times did we receive the same gifts
    - Immediately after evaluating what each other got, we would make a list of the things the other person got in order for our parents to buy us what we didn't get.
  - To truly understand the gift of gratitude is not to compare how we have been blessed compared to someone else, but to acknowledge what God has already given to us; mainly the gift of salvation
  - Once we acknowledge the gift of salvation we can begin to recognize who God is and just how blessed we really are.
- Just like many things this year, Thanksgiving will be different
  - A time with family and friends may not be the same
  - Despite the restrictions, this could possibly one of the greatest opportunities for us to appreciate the gift of gratitude God offers to each and every one of us.

- Sometimes it takes times when our lives feel restricted and things are simplified in order for us to realize just how much God have given to us.
- Today we begin our Thanksgiving Sermon Series with **Psalm 100**
  - Psalm 100 is a psalm that prepares God's people for worship
  - Examples of songs that prepare a response
    - "Hail to the Chief"- stand out of respect
    - The National Anthem- place your hand over your heart
    - OSU Fight Song- stand and cheer (unless you are from WV and you respond another way!)
    - Doxology- stand for offering
  - Psalm 100 acts in a similar way to prepare us to enter into the presence of God with a grateful heart!
  - I think this is a fitting way for us to begin as we prepare for Thanksgiving.

### Our Gratitude Is Not Based on Talent

- **Psalm 100:1-2**
  - The number of times this has been used as an excuse for not being able to sing
    - "It may not be a pretty noise, but at least it is joyful!"
  - Our gratitude has nothing to do with our talent- quite frankly it has nothing to do with us
    - Consider **vs. 3, "Know the Lord, he is God!"**
    - Consider **vs. 5, "For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever."**
    - It doesn't say:
      - "Compare your blessings to someone else"
      - "Some should be more grateful than others"
    - The gift of gratitude has everything to do with who God is; not on who we are
  - The stanzas interchange
    - Stanzas 1 and 3 relate to the response of the worshipper
    - Stanzas 2 and 4 relate to who God is
    - This is how worship works
      - We worship God because of what he has done and who he is
      - Even when God doesn't act in the immediate or seems absent- maybe like right now- we give thanks to God, we acknowledge the gift of gratitude because of what God has already done
      - We know that what God has already done, God will do again- it is what we call FAITH.
  - Think back through what we have discussed throughout the pandemic
    - "Where is God?"

- God reveals himself when it appears as though God is absent. In other words, God shows up in the challenges of our life.
- This is the very reason that we need to seek God, because when we seek God we will find God
- “God’s Messenger”
  - We bear witness to God’s presence and we trust God’s promises
  - Our worship is a testimony to the rest of the world, especially when things seem to be going wrong.
- Our source of worship is not what we find within our own being or achievement
  - Our source of worship is solely in who God is
  - Significant to us if we are going to be grateful this year
  - Gratitude is a gift that God has already given us. It’s up to us whether we receive it, accept it and acknowledge it!

### The Tools of Gratitude: Holy Spirit and Word of God

- Psalm 100:2b-4
  - Tools for Worship
    - Piano and Worship Team
    - Now, Video’s and Worship Team
      - Not the same, but opened us to new songs and new experiences
      - Worship has become as much about the visual aspect as the singing
    - Grateful for the tools we have to offer!
  - Tools of Gratitude (preparation for worship)
    - Holy Spirit
      - “Come into his presence”
      - “Enter his gates”
    - Word of God
      - “Know that the Lord, he is God!”
    - Biblical Example
      - Ephesians 5:18-21
        - *Temptation*
        - Filled with the Holy Spirit
        - Encouraging one another with worship
        - Submitting to one another
      - Colossians 3:16-17
        - Dwelling of God’s Word
        - Encouraging one another with worship

- Do everything out of a heart of gratitude
- The Invitation of Prayer
  - Entering the presence of God and Knowing God are what occurs through prayer
  - Reflective moment which prepares us to worship God out of the gratitude of our heart.
- Putting the tools together
  - “Psalm 100 describes the process of preparation, anticipation, and participation in worship. If we are controlled by the Holy Spirit of God and the Holy Word of God, we will reveal it in the way we worship God.”<sup>1</sup>
  - “Instead of imitating the world, we will be led by the Word and the Spirit to be joyful in the Lord, submissive to the Lord, and thankful to the Lord, and the world will see the difference.”<sup>2</sup>
  - I would add: Both prayer and praise are tools to keep us focused on God by the leading of the Word and the Spirit. They draw us closer to God and away from temptation.
  - Reflect on last week’s sermon related to avoiding temptation and how gratitude can help us to see things different from the world (such as the absence of God during the pandemic)
- The Gift of Gratitude changes everything!

### The Purpose of Gratitude

- **Psalm 100:5**
  - This verse shows up numerous times throughout the psalms
  - It’s foundational to the gift of gratitude
    - We have a tendency to only be thankful when things are good in our life
    - vs. 5 reminds us that the gift of gratitude is eternal no matter the circumstances
    - As we said earlier, Gratitude is not based on our talent.
    - Gratitude has nothing to do with our failures or successes
    - The purpose of our Gratitude is in who God is
- **Psalm 100:3**
  - Important for us to “Know the Lord”
  - Created us
  - We are his
  - Provides for his sheep
- Our identity is found in the Gift of Gratitude

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, ed. *The Wiersbe Study Bible: Be Transformed by the Power of God’s Word (NKJV)*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson. pg. 847.

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, 847.

- Israel's worship was different from all the nations
- They did not worship an unknown god
- They did not worship a god that they had to appease in order to receive favor
- When we worship God from a place of gratitude our worship sets us apart
- Gratitude is Evangelism/Witness
  - Psalm 100:1, "all the earth"
  - Not only does the gift of Gratitude provide our identity, but it also is our witness to the rest of the world!
  - There is something (someone!) who has given us a reason to "make a joyful noise"
- The Gift of Gratitude is why we serve
  - Psalm 100:2a
  - Colossians 3:17 (ESV), "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."
- If you are struggling to find a reason to be grateful today consider this
  - God has created us and provides for us
  - We find our identity in God
  - We find our witness through Gratitude
  - We find a reason to serve through Gratitude

### Conclusion

- I understand that we all want to move on from this crisis in our world
- BUT, could it also be an opportunity for us to discover how simple and yet how powerful our faith really is?
- Could we walk away from 2020 having a greater appreciation for the Gift of Gratitude that God offers to all of us?
- Gratitude is not based on you, it is based on who God is
- We need to utilize the tools of the Holy Spirit and God's Word to enhance our understanding of the Gift of Gratitude
- Psalm 100:5
  - We worship God for what he has already done, knowing that what God has done in the past, He will do again.
  - How Grateful are you this morning?
  - It is a gift God has already given to you!
  - Receive it, Accept it, and Acknowledge it,