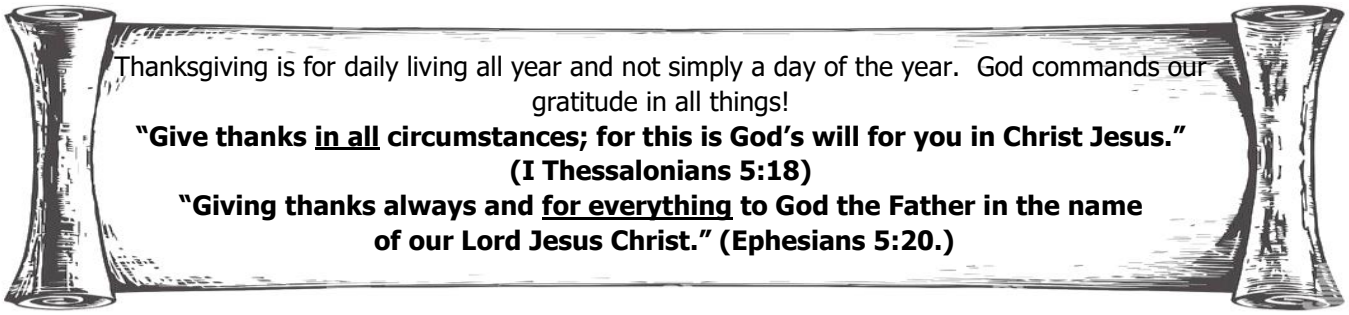
Sermon Notes

Sunday, November 22, 2026
"ThanksLiving"- It's Life Giving

Key Verses:



Thanksgiving is for daily living all year and not simply a day of the year. God commands our gratitude in all things!

"Give thanks <u>in all</u> circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (I Thessalonians 5:18)

"Giving thanks always and <u>for everything</u> to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5:20.)

<u>(Gratitude doesn't require me to be thankful for everything.
But gratitude reminds me there is always something about God worth being grateful for.)</u>

Why?

- God commands it for His glory.
  Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe. (Hebrews 12:28)

- God cares about our good. It truly is life giving.
  4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:4-7)

  Note: God longs to replace our anxiety with His peace as we practice gratitude/thanksgiving
  Biblical thanksgiving isn't merely an emotion produced by favorable circumstances. It's a practice that forms a person.

  Sidenote: Studies in Science
  What happens when individuals deliberately practice gratitude?
  Participants were given practices- gratitude journaling, writing gratitude letters, listing things for which one is grateful, gratitude reflection, gratitude meditation, gratitude walks, and
  expressing gratitude to another person.

Findings:

- Deliberately practicing gratitude can increase well-being and positive affect and can modestly reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and it can interrupt repetitive negative thinking.
- Social benefits. Gratitude doesn't just turn us inward, it also turns us outward toward other people. Helping others leads to physiological/social benefits
- In some studies some real biometrical data changed- i.e. Cortisol levels decreased. But they were always minimal. What did increase was the feeling of "gratitude" and the overall feeling of "betterment in life."
- Summary: The practice of gratitude doesn't change our circumstances but it changes us in real ways. Science has discovered WHAT we choose to focus on shapes our lives even more than the circumstances of our lives.

Big Point:

God asks us to practice gratitude not because He needs our appreciation but as a way to experience His transformation!

Getting Practical:
3 Encouragements, 2 positives, and 1 negative & 1 Promise found in Phil 4:4-6

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➢ Practice 1: Rejoice

"Rejoice in the Lord always." (verse 4)
Jesus isn't just another reason we can be grateful. Jesus is the reason we can always be grateful.
Rejoicing is the expression of joy. It is an act of gratitude.
Gratitude doesn't deny reality. It changes which reality gets our attention.
And, the greatest reality is that life is full of grace/gifts even when life is hard.

Our response to Grace (Charis)… Is gratitude (Eucharistia) … Expressed through joy (Chara)
Grace is what God gives. Gratitude is how we receive it. Rejoicing is how we express it!

When you can think of nothing else to be grateful for you can always choose to rejoice in Jesus.
And when you have everything to be grateful for you should always choose to rejoice in Jesus.
Because Jesus will be that thing/person that provides the anchor for all gratitude.
He is the Spring of Joy that all the little tributaries of happiness flow from.
Every negative circumstance gives me the opportunity to…

- Press into Jesus
  "14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-16)

- Become more like Jesus
  "2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything". (James 1:2-4)

  ✓ Note: What I find joy in or the lack of it, reveals my deepest priorities.
  Joy expressed in Gratitude can reshape my priorities.
  Gratitude reminds me of God's priorities for me.
  <u>We can always, in every circumstance choose to rejoice in Jesus.</u>

➢ Practice 2: Release

"Do not be anxious about anything" (verse 6a)
Anxiety/worry (carries the idea of dividing or separating.")
Status of a concerned heart or mind that is "fractured" or "divided"
Anxiety itself is not a sin. It is a test.
What will you do with your worry/anxiety?
Faith doesn't mean we don't feel anxious. It means we don't let anxiety have the final word. Jesus has the final word.
So we run to Him.

"6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you". (I Peter 5:6-7)

✓ Note: Often our lack of gratitude reveals our pride. Our ego wants to control circumstances and people around us. Our response to lack of control is often anxiety. Anxiety is the attempt to carry and control what we were never meant to carry. We can tighten our grip or surrender. A grateful heart sees what an entitled heart can't see. It sees a caring God.
<u>We can choose to humble ourselves and cast our cares on the one who cares for us.</u>

The remedy for carrying everything is to surrender to the one who carries you.

➢ Practice 3: Reframe the Request

"but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (Phil 4:6b)

- ✓ Note: In every situation we aren't just asked to pray. We are told to pray with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is the fruit of trust. Thanksgiving changes the conversation from what I need God to do to around me to what I know about the God who is in me. It changes the goal of getting God to change my circumstances to letting God change my character. We reframe our circumstances when we pray with Thanksgiving.
  We can thank God in every situations that He is for us, He loves us, His power is made perfect in our weakness.
  We can thank Him for the opportunity to be made more like Jesus and be closer to Jesus.
  We can retrain the brain when we reframe our prayers with Thanksgiving.

➢ Receive the Promise:

"**And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil 4:7)**
Peace= =to bind together/make whole.
Status of a "put together" mind/heart and being made whole.
Peace like Anxiety aren't necessarily "feelings" but the status of the soul/mind.

God promises a peace that guards our hearts when we trust in Him. This word, guard, is a military word. A city can be guarded by a Roman garrison. It can often be left unguarded. The defense against anxiety that wants to storm the walls of your heart is to pray while declaration of trust. That declaration is Thanksgiving.
"You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal." (Isaiah 26:2)

Final Thought: Gratitude not only shapes us. It shapes families and communities. Gratitude makes us people of Peace/Shalom. When our gratitude is grounded in finding our ultimate identity, source of hope, deepest joy in Jesus we become healing agents in our broken world.

"15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:15-17)

Notice the connection again between gratitude and peace. Thankfulness isn't simply a thing we do once a year, it is a life-style we are called to. Because thanksliving is life giving. It is life not simply to the hearts beating within us but it is life giving to the world around us..

Choose today to rejoice in Jesus. Choose to cast your cares on Jesus. Choose today to surrender your life to Jesus. Our world needs people who know where their joy comes from, know where to take their burdens, and who know where real peace is found.