

Nov 20,11 Thanksgiving 1Chron. 16:8-12;34-36

WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

“Count your blessings name them one by one,” the song goes. *“Count your many blessings see what God has done.”* This Thanksgiving many families will sit around the table feasting on great food enjoying each others, company. We are blessed again this year having family join us around our table. We not only get to celebrate Thanksgiving but and our grandson Gray’s 16th birthday. We have been very fortunate and blessed they have been able to be with us all these years. We have great fun, the women go shopping the day after Thanksgiving, and the guys watch football and take naps, and the teenagers generally end up playing games. It’s family time with a Thanksgiving feast and desserts, snacks and games. Missing around the table this year will be Dominic who is back in California in advance training but hopes to be home for Christmas.

Yes, ‘count your blessings, name them one by one’ is a great thing. Because it isn’t just counting those blessings, it’s seeing what God has done. Look around and notice those blessings. Family, health, friends, a great church family and so much more. Think about family and friends God has put in your path. Be thankful for even the little things in life that happen. Remember last week I spoke of Corrie Ten Boom being in the concentration camp and how she gave thanks for those bugs that kept the guards from entering their barracks. Because of that Corrie had a chance to share the message of Jesus with those who were with her. She brought calm in a place where panic was present. She brought peace to a place where no peace could be found. She brought hope of a better life in heaven for those who were sick and near death. She could thank God for his wonderful creatures, those nasty bugs that allowed her to minister to others in the name of our God. She could give thanks for all those blessings and much more.

Giving thanks is the right thing to do. Not just for food we eat, but for all the blessings that God gives to us. Give thanks to God for all the gifts that come to us. In a world where some have little or nothing at all, it is right to thank our God for all his provisions and for his loving care in our lives. It is with a thankful heart that I thank God for the many things he has done in my life and the people we have come to know and love in each church we have served. So many people, so many gifts, so much love poured out upon Carole and me. It has been wonderful and we look forward to many more blessings as years go on.

That brings me to this morning's Scripture. It's found in 1 Chronicles 16. King David is excited because the Ark of the Covenant has been brought to Jerusalem. He has danced before the Ark as others have sung in celebration that the long lost Ark has made the journey to its permanent home. It is recorded, *"They brought the ark of God and set it inside the tent that David had pitched for it and they presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the Lord. After....King David blessed the people in the Name of the Lord."* Following that with a grateful heart the king prayed to the Lord: **1 Chronicles 16 ...** ⁸ *Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.* ⁹ *Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.* ¹⁰ *Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.* ¹¹ *Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.* ¹² *Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced....* ¹⁴ *He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth.* ¹⁵ *He remembers^[a] his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations...* ³ *Sing to the LORD, all the earth, proclaim his salvation day after day.. ...* ²⁵ *For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise...* ³¹ *Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"* ³² ³⁴ *Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love*

endures forever. ³⁵ Cry out, “Save us, God our Savior; gather us and deliver us from the nations that we may give thanks to your holy name, and glory in your praise.” ³⁶ Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.”

With a grateful heart King David could look back and see how God had truly blessed his people as well as their ancestors. He was full of the joy of the Lord.

“Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; ... sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts” the king prayed, maybe even danced a few steps as well.

Yes, King David count your blessings. Remember all that God has done. Give thanks to the creator and sustainer the one who does wonderful miracles for his people.

At times it’s awesome to look back to what God has done. Reading the OT has been an eye opener to God’s justice and his grace. To those who repented, they found forgiveness. For those who wouldn’t follow his laws and commands they found punishment. Throughout one king to the other you find his love reaching far beyond the sky. His love is like the energizer bunny, it keeps on moving on from one generation to another. If we look deep we perhaps can see lots of things he has done in our lives as well. For all that, we give thanks. For all that is to come, we thank our God for being an awesome God as we count our blessings.

Let us think about how we have been blessed these days. I know most of us would say family and friends but are there other things that you want to thank our awesome God for **?(PAUSE TO PRAISE GOD)**

Join me in as we sing our thanksgiving to our God using our insert “Give thanks with a grateful heart.” **SING**

Today we are learning from King David a man after God's heart how to give thanks, as Paul would say, "in all things." We learn to look to God for strength day after day. King David did that when being pursued by King Saul. He never lost hope in the vision God gave him that he would one day be King of Israel. It now has happened and he is rejoicing telling his people not to give up hope when things don't go the way they think they should. Just trust in God, for he will do mighty works among them. If King David had a hymn book maybe he would have broken out singing, "Learning to lean, learning to lean, I'm learning to lean on Jesus. Finding more power than I'd ever dreamed, I'm learning to lean on Jesus." He might have reminded the people that 'God is good all the time and all the time God is good.' And I'm sure they all yelled, "Amen!"

Then the king perused the crowd catching each eye and said "*salvation came from their God.*" Many of them knew their history remembering what their ancestors had been through and how God had called them forth out of Egypt and not only brought them to the Promised Land but gave them the Promised Land. Battle after battle was won because they were God's people trusting in their God. When they went astray they paid the price. But they also knew when they continued to do what God wanted them to do, they found they had the victory.

Times have not changed. How many times have we been encouraged to "look to God for his strength and to seek his face always and remember his wonderful acts in our lives?" I'm sure you've heard sermons on that subject. Why? Because we learn from Scripture to trust in our God. *In 1887, following an evangelistic meeting held by Dwight L. Moody, a young man stood to share his story in an after-service testimony meeting. As he was speaking, it became clear to many that he knew little about the Bible or acceptable Christian doctrine. His closing lines, however, spoke volumes to seasoned and new believers alike. When asked about his*

future he said: “I'm not quite sure what my future holds. But I'm going to trust, and I'm going to obey.” Daniel Towner was so struck by the power of those simple words that he quickly jotted them down, then delivered them to John Sammis, who developed the lyrics to Trust and Obey. “Only trust him, only trust him now. He will save you, he will save you, he will save you now.”

Finally, we come to the last few verses of this psalm of thanksgiving where the king states, *“Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his love, (Yes His Love), endures forever.”*

Yes, God's love is everlasting. “Amazing love how can it be that thou my God didst die for me” is the phrase and chorus to one of my favorite hymns, “And Can it Be.” In Scripture John told of the greatest love that was offered to all when he wrote, “For God so loved the world that he gave us his son so that whoever will believe in him shall have eternal life.”

I don't know about you but those are some powerful words worth thanking our God for this Thanksgiving Sunday, in fact at any time.

We have heard about his mighty acts and how we can trust him. How he offers us salvation and how he continues to love us. That's pretty amazing. Who would have ever thought all that was possible. Through all those times of rebellion and not believing God, you know when you've made unwise choices, God continues to do mighty acts in our lives to draw us to him. Throughout our lives when tough times have come and we don't know where else to turn he simply taps us on the shoulder and says, “only trust me, only trust me now.” And when we suffer or feel unloved he often sends someone to tell us that God loves us. He may not be happy with us, but he still loves us. Isn't it amazing to read the Scriptures to see God's justice, yet also we find his mercy? To read the story of two thieves crucified with his son, one who refused to believe that the man in the middle was God's Son, so he entered eternity without grace. Yet, the other one who heard those

same words of mockery and even said a few himself, became like the Prodigal Son who came to his senses, realized his mistakes and sought forgiveness as he cried out to Jesus to remember him when he got to his home in paradise. Jesus could have yelled back you had your chance and you blew it! But he didn't! He said, "Today, you will be with me in paradise." Isn't that a love that will not ever let go? While we still have breath in us, there's always a chance to receive God's love.

Grace...that amazing grace that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind and now I see."

Yes, give thanks with grateful hearts, give thanks to the holy one. Give thanks because he has given Jesus Christ his son.

Happy Thanksgiving! Enjoy the meal. Enjoy your family and friends. Those going shopping enjoy the bargains. But most of all thank God for all he has done. And yes, Thank God for giving you his son.