

## November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (full notes)

### "Are You A Thankful Believer In Christ?"

The Bible repeatedly tells us we need to be Thankful:

**Ephesians 5:15-20**, "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but *be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.*"

**Colossians 3:15-16**, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. *Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*"

*God's people are to be filled with the Spirit, the word of Christ richly dwelling in us; speaking to one another, in and with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.*

The word *psalm* means "praise." The Book of **Psalms** is God's divine Word, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by men such as David, Moses, and Solomon, for the purpose of giving praise, honor, and thanksgiving to God, while also bringing challenge, confrontation, consolation, and comfort to God's people.

Unlike the Psalms, **hymns** are not by divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, although they may very well incorporate portions of Scripture and be filled with rich doctrinal truth. In Jesus' day, hymns were part of Jewish worship, e.g., after the Last Supper, Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn before departing for Gethsemane.

The term **spiritual songs** is more general. Believers are to express their faith in song, and the songs of the church should deal with spiritual themes that teach Christian doctrine, encouraging believers toward love and good deeds; while exalting the purpose and provision of Christ, and the holiness and power of God.

Read **1Peter 1:1-2...** Peter is writing to God's people, those who have believed in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He calls them strangers in the world, alien residents [sojourners, exiles, foreigners, pilgrims] whose true citizenship is in heaven, not on the earth.

Peter encourages these believers to be thankful, as they faithfully serve God in a godless society that is hostile toward God and His Word.

Read **1Peter 1:3-5...** It is by God's grace and mercy that we have eternal life, and our hope is in God's Son, Jesus Christ. We are protected by God's divine power, now and forever; and this was displayed through Christ's sacrificial death (paying for our sins) and His sovereign resurrection (demonstrating eternal life).

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Read **1Peter 1:6-7...** We rejoice because of our new birth which is spiritual, incorruptible, immortal, and eternal. But we also know that we will suffer, just as believers all over the world suffer for Christ. The trials we experience as Christians allow our faith to be proven, confirming that we have received salvation, as we bring glory, honor and praise to God.

Read **1Peter 1:8-9...** Our victory over suffering is attained through obedience to God in Christ. Those who belong to Christ will seek to serve Him here on earth.

Read **1Peter 1:10-12...** The OT prophets spoke about GRACE coming to Gentiles even though they didn't fully understand that God's One and Only Son would come to earth to suffer and die for the sins of mankind; only through Christ's holy and sinless sacrifice could forgiveness for sins and eternal life be granted.

Read **1Peter 1:13-14...** We must prepare our minds for action, trusting God to provide for and protect us, remaining obedient to God's instructions, demonstrating a changed life for all to see, as we proclaim the message of Christ.

Read **1Peter 1:15-17...** Our obedience to God's Word is expressed through our belief and behavior, as we are conformed to the character of Christ; the Holy Spirit indwells and empowers us to live as citizens of Heaven, being strangers and pilgrims here on Earth.

History tells us of a special group of people called Pilgrims, devout Christians, devoted to, believing in, and testifying about God's Son, while being harassed and mistreated by England's government and the Church of England. What was their offense? They wanted to worship God through Jesus Christ alone, not the King, nor the Church, of England.

Pastor John Robinson sensed God's hand upon these Pilgrims, believing they were being called to take the "light of Christ" to the wilderness of America, as, "sons and daughters of Abraham by faith," God's people, bringing the message of salvation to this new land.

Two ships set sail for America in 1620, the Speedwell and the Mayflower. Three days into the voyage the Speedwell had trouble and was forced to turn back.

One week later, repairs made, they again set out, only to have more trouble; after a thorough inspection, it was determined that the Speedwell would not make the voyage to America.

The passengers and cargo from both ships would now have to fit on the Mayflower, causing overcrowding among other problems; and so, Pastor Robinson sought to unify those who were determined to make the journey. These people would need to be bound strongly to God and to each other, if they were to endure the treacherous sea journey that was ahead of them.

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William Bradford, the Pilgrim’s historian, wrote, “Like Gideon’s army, this small number was divided as if the Lord, by His work of providence, thought these few were still too many for the great work He had to do.”

Several hundred had begun the journey, but now their number was narrowed down to 102 hardy souls who were willing to risk all they had, even life itself, to venture across the sea to the untamed wilderness of America.

These 102 men, women, and children were crammed into a damp, dark, stuffy space, about the size of a volleyball court, below the ship’s main deck. Imagine! No fresh air or sunlight, existing on dried pork, dried peas, dried fish, and foul water as the ship constantly rolled from side to side, and bow to stern, for 66 days.

The Mayflower finally came within view of the New World, two days later her anchor was dropped just off of Cape Cod. A 30 foot flat bottom boat they had brought with them (from England) was then assembled and an exploration party was sent out to locate and establish a site for their new home.

Near the end of December 1620, the exploration party found a natural harbor with a gentle slope from the shore upward. The soil was rich and fertile, and there were four spring-fed creeks with water that was sweet and good; there were also woodlands nearby full of game and good timber. They called this place Plymouth, in memory of Plymouth, England, where they had received much kindness from the Christians there.

During that first winter, a “general sickness” took its toll upon their community. The long sea voyage and malnourishment resulted in scurvy; the cold winter and poor living conditions added pneumonia. Between December-March (1620-21), more than half of the pilgrims died; even so, Sunday Worship remained the high point of their week.

William Bradford, their historian, noted that they trusted in God’s providence time after time, apart from which, there is little doubt that their entire colony could have easily been wiped out by weather, disease, or Indian attack.

God seemed to go out of His way to care for these devout followers of Christ, even providing an English speaking Indian, named Squanto, to help them. Squanto taught the Pilgrims how to plant corn like the Indians, fertilizing it with fish. He also taught them how to plant pumpkins, how to hunt deer and how to trap beaver (the hides of which would become the most valuable asset they had for trade).

The summer of 1621 was a prosperous time for the Pilgrims, in light of the hardships and struggles they had gone through the previous winter; and the Fall harvest supplied more than enough corn for the coming winter.

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The Pilgrims were thankful for Squanto, and all God had done and provided; so, in October of 1621, Governor Bradford declared a day of public Thanksgiving. Chief Massasoit, from Squanto's tribe, along with many of his braves arrived with five large deer and a dozen fat turkeys, all ready to be roasted. Together the Indians and the Pilgrims gave thanks to God for all His provisions.

What if the Pilgrims hadn't survived? What if they had chosen to go to another land instead? The Pilgrims came to America as God's chosen people, desiring to honor and obey the God of Creation. God protected, provided for, and prospered them, as they set the foundations for America to become one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The Thanksgiving Holiday should reflect the heritage we have received from those first Christian Pilgrims; they came to this land at great cost, so that they might freely worship the KING of Kings and LORD of Lords.

Psalm 100 was one of the Pilgrim's favorite readings for their Sunday Worship.

**Psalm 100:1-5**, "Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing. Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations."

We should all be very thankful that we live in America, where we still have the freedom to worship God. We ought to thankfully remember that this inalienable right was carried here by the Pilgrims and demonstrated by those who followed, those who settled here with the intent for America to be one nation under God.

The Pilgrim's endured hardship, persecution, disease, even starvation, in order to freely worship God above all kings, governments, nations, and institutions.

If you belong to God the Father, through Christ the Son, the Holy Spirit of God lives in you, and you are shielded through faith by God's power for all of eternity; you have been given a new birth and a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade, kept in heaven for all who have overcome the corruption in this world, through Christ.

**1John 5:4-5**, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

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Pilgrims, we are, thankful and obedient, we must choose to be; and as we have the opportunity, like those first Pilgrims, let us continue to take the "Light of Christ" to the unbelieving who live in spiritual darkness. For we can be confident that God will provide all that is necessary to set them free and to glorify His name.

**2Corinthians 4:4**, "The god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the Light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." **6**, "For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

**1Corinthians 15:58**, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil (in the Lord) is not *in vain*."

**Colossians 3:17**, "Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

**1Thessalonians 5:16-18**, "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

*Pastor Mike*  
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