

Thanksgiving 2016

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Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0:00] Verse 30, Psalm 69, verse 30, I will praise the name of God with a song, I will magnify Him! I will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This will please the Lord more than an ox or a bull with horns! Let's pray. Our Father God, this morning as we take the word in hand, we are mindful that you have given to us scriptures as a blessing, as an incredible encouragement, as instruction that we who are your children may be fully equipped for all good works.

And we want to be a people that this morning, through the enabling of the Spirit of God, both cure the word and also apply the word in practical, daily, Christ-honoring behavior and thinking.

Furthermore, and it is our heart together, that those who are here this morning that do not know Christ, who at this moment have no eternal reason to be thankful by the working of your Spirit would be drawn to the cross and leave here, knowing Christ as their Savior, rejoicing forevermore in the blessing of complete forgiveness for sins and for the joy of knowing you as their God and Savior.

We ask this this morning for the glory of Christ. Amen. So here we are. This is the Thanksgiving service that we do before Thanksgiving.

And the reason we do that is because we want to kind of remind you, not that you'd forget about Thanksgiving. I mean, it's all out there, right? Everybody knows about Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving, I am getting slammed in my inbox with all kinds of announcements about how important not actually Thanksgiving is, but Black Friday. It's like, give me a break, you know?

[2:17] And it's all, we're aware of that. And so one of the things that we have done over the years is we've taken the time, this service in particular, to kind of focus our hearts and remind ourselves of just how significant the issue of Thanksgiving is in the believer's life.

And so in addition to the dinner that we're going to enjoy, we take the time in a service to look at the Word of God and say, well, okay, how important is Thanksgiving to the believer? And so we're going to think this morning, we're going to step away from the book of John that we have been working our way through, and we're going to just think in practical, in a topical fashion, looking at the subject of Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving. And so let me draw attention, first of all, to the fact that a characteristic of the believer's faith and worship is this attitude of Thanksgiving. So keep in your mind, a characteristic, if I'm a believer, then Thanksgiving is to be one of the markers of my life.

I'm a parent. And thankfully, I'm past the stage. By the way, being an empty nester is not all that bad, just in case you're wondering. I'm past the stage where I am coaching my children on a regular basis to say thank you, thank you, thank you. How many of you are still doing that? You know, it's like, and they didn't get it the first or the second or third or, you know, and you just keep on doing it.

It reminds me of a situation that I heard about once where a grandmother was in a room and happened to be tottering around in the kitchen, and a little granddaughter came in and said, give me a glass of water. Well, you know how it is with parents, you know. Grandparents are about the same way. It's like, give me a glass of water. No, that doesn't work. And so grandmother just kind of played on loud. She didn't hear it. And so the little girl dialed it up a little bit. Get me a glass of water. Grandmother just didn't respond. And so the grandmother thought it would be appropriate to coach. And what kind of things would you coach? It's like, what's the magic word? How many of you use that magic word? Anybody ever done that? Okay. I'm waiting for something, you know, and you're kind of trying to nurture it out so you don't have to get right in the face. You know, it's like, trying to be gentle. And finally, it got to the point that grandmother said, so what should you say? A little granddaughter turned towards one of the brothers and said, give me a glass of water right now, pointing to the brother. The expectation was, hey, I don't need to be coached on the issue of thankfulness and was unwilling to accommodate the grandmother in this particular case. And we can kind of identify, we who are parents, we've been there. We're trying to work on that because being thankful is something that good parents try to weave into the fabric of their children's lives. Am I right or wrong? Now, this morning, I am not interested in weaving thankfulness into your life as a matter of good behavior. That's pretty important to understand.

[5 : 33] You see, when we really think about the matter of thankfulness, I want you to understand that biblical thankfulness is more than good manners. And the truth of the matter is, if you're sitting here this morning and the truth is, and you can kind of nudge your wife or your husband and say, hey, how am I doing at this later on? In fact, if you're really nervy, do you know what I mean by really nervy? If you've got the guts to hear the truth, say to those who are fairly close to you after the service, so how thankful am I as a general rule? Write that down in the margin somewhere so you don't forget it. It's not a little bad takeaway. How thankful am I as a general rule? Write that down.

Back we come. Biblical thankfulness is more than good manners. Thankfulness really is a reflection of our view of God. Remember I said, I'm not interested in kind of coaching you manners so that you go around, oh, thank you. I'm looking for a change in the way you think about God that produces a thankful spirit on a consistent basis without coaching. I want to go a little further on this issue and help you understand that thankfulness really is also a reflection of our relationship with God. For one, it says what we think about God, but it also shows our relationship with God. Do you understand that? Thankfulness shows relationship. Would you agree with that?

Thankfulness shows relationship. Let me illustrate it this way, and I'm hesitant to use this illustration, but it serves well, and my wife is in Texas. I am very thankful for Judith. I am very thankful to Judith. I thank her for the fact that she is who she is and the blessings that she is to me, and I thank her all the time. I thank her for the meals she cooks. I thank her for the organization that she brings to our home. I almost sent her a picture of the kitchen counter this morning to show her that the kitchen counter is in relatively the same shape as when she left. She went to Texas on Saturday, and I thought, you know, I probably should just run the camera like this so that she sees that when she comes back. It's not a disaster yet. I'm thankful that she makes the bed in the morning.

I get up quite a bit earlier than she does, but I thank her for that. I thank her for doing my laundry. It's an amazing thing. We have a clothes shoot on the second floor, and I put the things. It drops down there. It's gone, and then it comes back in a basket that I have to carry up, but it comes back folded. And every now and then, she goes back through, and I'm an organizational disaster.

She goes back through and organizes my sock drawer. Do you know how it gets organized? Colors. She organizes my underwear. You don't need to know about that, okay?

[8 : 49] But organization. I got to tell you, the first thing I thanked Judith for when we were dating was her laundry skills. I was in college, and I don't want to talk about my dressing behavior and habits, but let me tell you, it was very limited. And I remember that laundry was done. It got thrown into a net bag, and then the net bag, without unpacking, got thrown into a heavy-duty washer and just kind of thumped its way through, and whatever came out, that's what it was. Now, I know, none of you ever there, but when Judith came into my life, the first thing she did is that she took my laundry, and things went from dark, dull gray to actual white. I didn't know they made shirts that way. And I got to thinking the other day as I was studying and praying about this, why is it?

Why is it that I am consistently thankful to Judith? I got to tell you, for one reason, it is because of who she is, but another is because of the relationship we have. And so, if you're sitting here this morning, and the fact of the matter is this, you do not have a very thankful spirit. Part of the problem really is your relationship. Let's just cut to the chase. That's where it's at. Part of the problem is your relationship. And in relationship to this matter of thanksgiving, I do want you to understand that the Bible has a lot to say about it. It's filled with examples. This passage that I read there in Psalm 69, verse 30, I will praise the name of God with a song. I will magnify Him with thanksgiving, is just one of many, many verses that have to do with the matter of thanksgiving.

When we think about the matter of thanks, I do want you to understand that it really is a central feature of our faith. In fact, it is one of the things that is a marker of where you are. Let's try it this way. So, how are you doing in your walk? Well, I read the Bible.

Eleven minutes. I pray over a list that has 15 items on it. I remember our missionaries once a month. You know how we tend to be very compartmentalized with how we're doing at our walk. Am I right or wrong? How are you doing in your relationship with Christ? I am incredibly thankful. Well, let's think about this a little bit more. Actually, in the Old Testament, there were some sacrifices that were required. Does anybody have an idea what kind of sacrifices were required? Sin sacrifices. You sin, you sacrifice. Thanksgiving sacrifices were not obligations. Let me have you look just for a moment. Turn back, if you would, to Leviticus. You are there in Psalms. But go back to Leviticus chapter 7, verse 12 and 13. If, what does if mean?

Not an obligation. If you do this, if he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the thanksgiving sacrifice unleavened loaves mixed with oil, unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and loaves of fine flour. The issue that I draw attention to here is that in the Old Testament, there were thanksgiving offerings. Giving thanks was a part of corporate worship. It's something that was actually woven into the order of service. People came together, and one of the things that they did was they offered thanks to God. You're there in Psalm 69. I want you to turn over to Psalm 95, verse 2.

[12 : 58] Let me begin there in verse 1. O come, let us sing to the Lord. Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving. Let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise.

What do you think? This passage is telling us one of the characteristics of the true worship of people who know Christ.

Not only was it a characteristic of corporate worship, but there were actually individuals who were appointed with the formal responsibility of offering songs of thanksgiving.

John, we will sing three thanksgiving songs. That's David appointed people to sing songs of thanksgiving.

Nehemiah appointed specific named individuals in the Old Testament. Your responsibility is to have thanksgiving songs.

[14 : 05] They could be recognized as that. There were songs that expressed thanks specifically. It's interesting also to see that giving thanks to God was a command in some portions of the text.

Over in Psalm 50, verse 14, it says, You, you, offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Here's what you should do. I want you to understand, moving into the New Testament, recognizing this continuing theme, we see that in the New Testament, thanksgiving is to be the lifestyle of the believer.

It is the lifestyle of the believer. You're there in Psalms, but I want you to turn now, if you will, to Colossians chapter 2. It is the lifestyle of the believer.

Hey, what is it that really characterizes you to the neighbors that you have? I hope you don't tell me it's your hairstyle. Colossians chapter 2, verse 6 and 7.

[15:18] What's abounding mean?

Abounding means it just happens all the time. How many of you have been around people that are abounding with enthusiasm over their first grandchild? You ever been there? I mean, you try to avoid them in the lobby because you're showing the same pictures.

They forgot they showed you last week and the week before and the week before. Hey, I have one, finally. Here it is. They're abounding with enthusiasm for that particular thing they're really interested in.

Here's the Bible telling us, hey, listen, guys. The characteristic of the believer is to be abounding, abounding in thanksgiving. Abounding means that it's happening all the time.

It's part of who you are. It's the lifestyle of the believer. Furthermore, I want you to understand that thanksgiving is also woven in and inseparable from our prayer life.

[16:33] By the way, how important is a prayer life for a believer? Answer is what? It's essential. In fact, I got to tell you, you don't get to start being a believer apart from prayer.

Am I right? How do you come to Christ? You just think deep thoughts. No. Hey, I am a sinner who has been destroyed by my own heart and sinfulness.

I need forgiveness for my sins. Will you please? You pray. Thanksgiving is woven, woven, and is inseparable in our prayer life.

A couple passages to kind of hammer that point home. You're there in Colossians 2, but look over, if you will, at Colossians 4, verse 2. Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

Now, that's an interesting combination, and because of the significance of the combination, I want you to turn back. You're there in Colossians. Just skip back a couple books to Philippians.

[17:39] One book. Philippians 4, verse 6. Philippians 4, verse 6. Do not be anxious about everything. How many of you are anxiety specialists?

You know, you don't have to warm up. You're right up to speed immediately, and you can kind of circle the drain without any practice. Oh, here we go. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, what?

Look at that. Look at that. With thanksgiving, the let your requests be made known unto God. Now, how does prayer and thanksgiving go together? Here's how our prayers usually are.

I mean, I'm not talking about you, but I'm talking about me. You know, it's like, oh, Lord, I'm really having a problem with this. I really need you to do something about it. You know, are you aware of this problem going on? I've been thinking about this a lot, and I'm not sure you're picking up on this.

You guys don't pray that way. I understand. But my point is what? You're not doing the other part of it. Lord, I'm having a problem here.

[18 : 44] This is a mess. But you know what? I'm really glad you're on the throne. And you know what? I haven't figured out how this is going to work out, but I know how the story ends, so I really don't need to be overworked about the detail.

Is that right? But I've got to tell you, if we were biblical in our prayer life, Thanksgiving would be integrated in more often than it is.

And so I want to challenge you to kind of think carefully about the matter of where Thanksgiving is in your prayers. Well, let's go beyond that. Let's talk about not only is it woven into our prayer life, but Thanksgiving is to flavor our conversations.

Stop just for a moment. Replay the audio on the last dozen conversations you've had.

Think about it. Thanksgiving is to flavor our conversations. And so you're thinking to yourself, can you prove that, Pastor? Or are you just kind of making this up? Well, let's go to Ephesians 5, verse 4.

[20 : 03] I want you to look at the passage. I don't want you to take my word for it. Ephesians 5, verse 4. Let there be no filthiness, no foolish talk, nor crude joking. We're pretty good with that for the most part, right?

Smile. Yeah, you are. Okay. Okay. No filthiness, no foolish talk, no crude joking, which is out of place. But instead, let there be Thanksgiving.

Is that the way it is with you? I like being around him. Most of the time when we talk, he's thankful. How many of you have been around people that are just incessantly down?

I mean, which one of the Peanuts individuals was it that just pigpen? Remember pigpen? No matter where he went, there was a cloud of dust. I mean, there are some people that kind of carry an aura.

I mean, you know what I mean? They carry an aura of just depressive, moody thinking. And they're always unhappy. You know, sometimes you have to talk to him, but you know how it's going to go, right?

[21 : 24] Here's what the Bible says to all of us. Let me read it again. Let there be no filthiness, no foolish talk, no crude joking, which is out of place, but instead, let there be Thanksgiving.

Now, I know some of you are going to give a temporary run at this in the church dinner. I know Pastor said this. Hey, I'm really thankful for pie. Stretch it out a little bit beyond the meal, okay?

Will you please? But here, point, it's to be a part of our conversation. Another point in relationship to this is Thanksgiving is to be part of our eternal worship.

One of the things I'll never forget, forget who was the one that made the comment, but well placed said that what we're doing here is just warm up for the main event, right? Isn't that true? When we get together to worship, and I enjoy our time together, I'm blessed by it.

I don't know if you ever noticed I kind of turn around sometimes. I just want to see your faces. And I just enjoy listening to our fellowship as we're together. But this place is not the main event.

[22 : 37] It's warm-ups. The day is coming when we're going to enjoy the very presence of Christ. We're going to enjoy eternity forever, and we will worship Him and delight in Him, and we will be absolutely fully satisfied.

We'll be thankful. So think with me just for a moment. Turn in your Bible back to Revelation chapter 11. Revelation chapter 11, verse 17.

Begin there in verse 16. And the 24 elders who sat on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.

Now, just a little sidebar here, because I suppose it's going to happen. There are different perspectives on the issue of what we have to say about God.

For one, we can praise Him. For another, we can thank Him. And I don't want to overly complicate life. But as a general rule, we thank God for things He's done, and we praise God for who He is.

[23 : 55] But there are also times in Scripture where, because of who God is, it's pretty hard to separate from what He's doing or has done. Does that make sense? I mean, it's a little bit like, go back to that very simplistic illustration of my relationship with Judith.

You know, I thank her all the time for lots of things. But it's not just, you know what, I don't care about you. I'm just really happy about laundry. It's just too complex.

And so I don't get wrapped up about, well, you should have thanked Him in that case. You shouldn't have praised Him. Oh, that should have been praised. That's not thanks. Give it a rake. Here it is.

Read it. Man, I, is that the way it is for you? That the Spirit, now I got to say, I want you to think about this.

Ask yourself the question, the last five conversations I've had, was there anything in them that had anything to do with thankfulness?

[25 : 20] Thanksgiving is more than a holiday. It's the lifestyle and mindset of the believer in sweet communion and relationship with the Lord Jesus.

You got that, right? Well, let me take it a little further and say that Thanksgiving really is a reflection of our view of God. Let's start by reminding ourselves of where we all were prior to our conversion.

And I want you to turn in your Bibles to Romans 1. How did it used to be? How did it used to be before we were saved? We all started in the same place. Romans 1, verse 23 says this.

Just a second. Verse 21. For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, nor give Him what? What's it say?

Romans 1. You can scratch a line through the 23. That's my typo error. It's 21. 321. They didn't thank Him. That's where we were prior to our conversion.

[26 : 32] We were unthankful people most of the time, except for occasions. We weren't thankful. We started out that way.

For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. And so here's a little pop quiz that it's unexpected, but I think it'll be beneficial.

Let's just ask a couple questions. I want you to ask them. I want you to write them down. I want you to think about these. How often do I thank God in my prayer life? How often do I thank God in my prayer life?

How often do I do that? Second, how often do others who know me hear me thank God?

How often do those who know me hear me thank God? Third, when was the last time someone commented on my joy and spirit of thankfulness?

[28 : 01] When was the last time someone commented on my joy and spirit of thankfulness? Listen to me.

A genuinely thankful spirit is very unusual. It is atypical in an unbelieving world. Am I right or wrong? How many of you?

Where you work? Most of you work. Do you work around people that are just usually pretty thankful? I mean, you know, come in Monday. It's a woohoo, Monday. It's I'm here.

I'm happy. You know, how many are going to have that happen on Monday? Maybe not. Tuesday? They're better, right? And by Friday, they're on top of it.

They're so full of exuberant thankfulness that it's infectious. Everybody wants to be thankful. Is that that way? Come back again.

[29 : 01] When was the last time? When was the last time someone else commented on your spirit and thankfulness? Now, listen, we can bend over backwards to be good witnesses.

We can roll out all kinds of things to show kindness, and I'm in favor of that. But if you want people to ask you a reason for the hope that lies within you, you cannot be a grumpy, unhappy person.

And all God's people said, it just doesn't work. You know, people are looking at the way you live your life, and they're thinking, you know, that may get them to heaven, but it sure doesn't look like fun.

Right? I got to tell you, I love, I love being around unbelievers because for the most part, you don't have to listen very long before they share with you that the wheels are coming off.

I mean, you don't have to tell me your deep, dark secrets. You just have to be willing to listen with a heart, and it comes out. They are blown away.

[30 : 39] The unbelieving world is blown away by genuine, persistent thankfulness. Isn't that right? Right? So thankfulness is really a reflection of our view of God.

Let me come to the last point here. Thankfulness makes much of God. You wonder, why do you start with Psalm 69 and then just not stay there? Well, change of plans. I'll do that next week when we get back into John, but I just wanted to kind of give you something to hold on to, but we're coming back to it.

Psalm 69, verse 30. I will magnify him with thanksgiving. I will magnify him with thanksgiving. Question.

Can I make God bigger? There is a sense in which, no. No. You know, God's not up there in heaven wringing his hands, saying, you know, I need 17 more people to really help me with how big I need to be today.

How many of you have ever been around people that have come to you and said, I'm really having a real deep problem, and I need 20 people to pray for me? I mean, is 20 better than one good man?

[31 : 48] I mean, you know what it says? The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man. One can get it done. Now, don't dismiss this and go off the page on me, but here's my point.

There's an aspect to which you and I can't make God bigger. But the text says you magnify God with thanksgiving. How is it that we magnify God?

Well, it helps to understand that what the word means is that we amplify, we draw further attention to, we make much of him.

And so you stop and realize that he is indeed glorious. He is worthy of all adoration and praise. And when we admit that and we say that, what we do is we help people see who he is.

We lift him up in the eyes of broken and hurting people, and we let them know there is hope and there is joy in God and in Christ.

[32 : 53] I got to tell you, I'm hesitant to do this, but I will. One of the things that I really enjoy about ministry is being around people that are hurting.

And the main reason I like being around people that are hurting is because I know the one who can make a difference. I know the one.

Talking with a guy yesterday, he'd spent the night outside. And as I was talking with him, he came out, here's a guy that has a brother that lives here in town in Columbus.

If I had the choice to choose between staying in my brother's house and sleeping under the bridge, you know, guess what I would do? How many of you know how cold it was last night?

You went outside to let the dog out, and you came back in and you said to yourself, Oh, I'm really glad, you know. Would you stay with your brother?

[33 : 59] Has a daughter that lives in Worthington or, yeah, lives in Worthington, and the other one is in Grandview. A daughter in Worthington and a son in Grandview.

Outside. Do you know what I can say to that man? I can say I know the only person who can change your life. I love saying that.

And do you know why I can say it? It's not a line that I learned in seminary. It's something I know Jesus did for me. Yeah.

I go to bed at night thankful. And it's not my nature. Do you understand that? If Tim Kenoyer is ever on occasion a little dismissive of being a naturally depressed person, I am.

But I can tell you this. I know what it is to enjoy the power of the Spirit of God and salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. And I love talking about Him.

[35 : 16] I got to tell you that our great duty of thankfulness is not a dull obligation or a device to get a glass of water in the kitchen or a means of getting blessing.

But biblical thankfulness is seeing our God properly and saying so truthfully.

So, a practical question and I'll close with this. Is your life marked by thankfulness?

Here's what I want you to do. I want you to ask someone really close to you and say this, really be honest with me.

See, until you get the diagnosis from the physician, you probably aren't going to practice the protocol or follow the prescription, right?

[36 : 17] So, you say to someone pretty close to you, am I really a pretty thankful person? Am I a thankful person? Tell me the truth, right?

And if the person looks up at you and says, well, I'm a little hesitant to tell you, you got the idea. Oh, yeah. I like being around you.

You're always thankful. You're not grumpy. You find the neatest things to be thankful for. I mean, you know, and if you are a believer here, listen to me carefully, if you're a believer here that has much to thank Christ for and you've kind of lost your way, today's the day to repent.

And go ahead and add this to your prayer line. Lord, drive home the point that thankfulness is the characteristic of a thoughtful and appreciative believer.

And go ahead and do whatever it takes. Change me from being a self-focused, unhappy believer to one who is thankful. There are some of you here today that don't know Christ.

[37 : 34] I've got to tell you, you have no reason to be thankful at this moment. The fact of the matter is, is that you have a cloud that hangs just over your shoulder.

It's a cloud of shame and sin, of a fear of judgment. It's a cloud of impending doom and there is no remedy for that in anything you may ever do.

But Christ Jesus came into the world. Do you know why He came? To save sinners. And the Bible makes it undeniably plain and clear that the Spirit of God, first of all, works to convict us of our sin.

And I would pray that there is no need for further evidence of the nastiness of your heart. How many of you understood what I just said? You don't need anybody else or any other experience to help you understand just how dark and hopeless you are.

And when you come to the place that you understand that, here's what you do. You cry out and say, Jesus, I believe you died for my sins upon the cross.

[38 : 50] You satisfied the judgment of God. And you offer me salvation to whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord. Listen.

Don't go out of here. Don't go out of here as an unrepentant and hardened sinner who refuses the grace of God. Don't go out of here as a believer who knows better.

Because if you are a believer, He is bound and determined to help you grow to be a more, guess what? Like Jesus person. Come at it a little easier. Amen?

Let's close in prayer. John's going to come and lead us. Father God, take your word. Drive it home. Make us thankful.

Amen. John. John.