

“Remember and Give Thanks” (1 Chronicles 16:7–18)(11.20.22)

1 Chronicles 16:7–18 (NIV84) *David’s Psalm of Thanks*

⁷That day David first committed to Asaph and his associates this psalm of thanks to the Lord:

⁸ Give thanks to the Lord, call on 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,

¹³ O descendants of Israel his servant,
O sons of Jacob, his chosen ones.

¹⁴ He is the Lord our God;

his judgments are in all the earth.

¹⁵ He remembers his covenant forever,
the word he commanded, for a thousand
generations,

¹⁶ the covenant he made with Abraham,
the oath he swore to Isaac.

¹⁷ He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant:

¹⁸ "To you I will give the land of Canaan
as the portion you will inherit."

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: **"Remember and Give Thanks"**

INTRODUCTION:

I have been reading the book, *Choosing Gratitude: Your Journey to Joy* by Nancy Leigh DeMoss. The fifth chapter is "Of Whiners and Worshipers." The basic premise of that chapter is most people tend to be one or the other – whiners or worshipers. She shares a funny fictional story as an illustration:

“Two old friends who happened upon each other at the store one day. One of the men was obviously in a foul, depressed mood, not even able to work up a weak smile to celebrate this chance encounter with a face and voice from his past.

“What’s the trouble, buddy?” the other man asked.

“Oh, let me tell you, my uncle died three weeks ago and left me \$40,000.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, then the week after that, a cousin I hardly even knew died and left me \$85,000. Then last week, one of my great-aunts passed away and left me a quarter of a million dollars.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me?” his friend exclaimed. “Then why the long face?”

“This week ...*nothing!*”

Clearly, this disgruntled person is a whiner.

BODY:

Today’s scripture is a song of celebration. In fact, it is titled David’s Psalm of Thanks. What is “that day” referenced in the 7th verse? King David has brought the Ark of the Covenant back into Jerusalem and he danced in joy before it. The Ark

of the Covenant is the Mercy Seat of God; it contains the stone tablets of The Ten Commandments; it represents the presence of God.

So David wrote a psalm or song and gave it to the chief musician, Asaph. We see his name several times in the book of Psalms and he is likely the author of some of the psalms. Praising God with words and music is **instrumental** to glorifying our LORD.

Give thanks to the Lord is a common refrain:

Psalm 107:1 (NIV84)

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Psalm 100:4 (NIV84)

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV84)

give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

These are just three examples of many. The LORD knows us better than we know ourselves. There are many reasons for us to give thanks continually. "British pastor John Henry Jowett once said, "Every virtue divorced from thankfulness is maimed and limps along the spiritual road.""

David's psalm of thanks connects our grateful hearts to making God known among the nations. Most English translations say "make known his deeds among the peoples." Jesus' parting words before His ascension conveys a similar command. Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV84)

¹⁹ "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Yes, we are to make the Name of God known; and yet, too often we are hesitant to mention the name of Jesus. We give this a fancy name called evangelism because an evangelist is a messenger of good news. We have the good news of Jesus, the gospel. Not only do we have Jesus' command, but the desire to share Jesus with others should overflow from our grateful hearts.

In our joy, we are to sing and praise. We are to speak about his wonderful acts, or tell of his wondrous works! Or talk ye of all his wondrous

works. All manner of our discourse should bring glory to our God and Savior. In the telling, we are remembering. We remember the historic acts of God and we remember our personal experience of God.

“Remember” is a key word in the book of Deuteronomy:

“*Remember* that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand” (5:15).

“*Remember* what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt” (7:18).

“*Remember* the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness” (8:2).

“Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ You shall *remember* the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth” (8:17–18).

Hundreds of years ago, Thomas à Kempis worried about our tendency to overlook the small gifts on the way to wanting more, and urged those who longed to grow in Christ-likeness, “Be thankful for the smallest blessing, and you will deserve to receive greater. Value the least gifts no less than

the greatest, and simple graces as especial favors. If you remember **the dignity of the Giver**, no gift will seem small or mean, for nothing can be valueless that is given by the Most High God.”

Isn't remembering a key element of celebrating holidays? Last week, we celebrated Veterans Day, remembering and recognizing their service. This week, we remember that first Pilgrim Thanksgiving. But more than that, we remember to count all our blessings and give thanks to the Giver of all good gifts. And, next Sunday, the season of Advent begins. We remember Christ's birth and look forward to His Second Coming.

What does King David mean when he says glory in his holy name? He means that we are to boast about the LORD. When our spouse or our children, or our grandchildren, have a success or achieve a milestone, we want to share it with other people. Why not for our Heavenly Father?

David tells us to look to the Lord and twice to seek God. Wait a second, I am already a Christian. I found God already. If you are satisfied in that, you have missed the point of a relationship with your Creator. Seek His face always – continuously. This is Christian living. From that, our hearts will be joy filled. Basically, that is the whole point of Nancy

DeMoss' book, *Choosing Gratitude: Your Journey to Joy*.

AND, here's the kicker. If your heart is joy filled with love and gratitude to God, you will be a phenomenal evangelist! Your smile will speak volumes. The twinkle in your eye will be an invitation. The pep in your step will cause others to want to join you on your journey of joy. The gospel will be attractive. No elegant words or sophisticated education could possibly be as effective as a Christian filled with gratitude and rejoicing. You see, rejoicing is not just a static state of joy within you. Rejoicing is a dynamic demonstration of love.

Part of our praise, glorifying, and boasting of God includes remembering God's character. God is gracious, which is evidenced by his wonderful acts. The LORD has strength and IS a source of strength. The mighty arm of God has often brought victory. Of course, God is holy. So holy is God that twice in scripture the angels praise Him with the song Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD God Almighty. Our God is a God of miracles. Depending on how you define miracles, there are well over 100 recorded in the Bible. Some say as many as 163 and even more.

God is our judge. His judgments are all laid out in our Bibles. The Bible is God's holy inspired word that established the standards by which we live. We are to remember the judgments of God. They are given to us for our own good, for this life, and eternal life.

Without starting a whole new sermon, let me share what The Baker Encyclopedia says in its conclusion about judgment. "The concept of judgment covers the entire history of the human race—from the fall to the last day. God as a just God who sees a decisive difference between good and evil has no choice but to carry out judgment upon all people in their daily lives and especially at life's conclusion.

God in his grace has sent his Son to suffer the judgment we deserved, and in his mercy delays the final day of judgment so that we can come to repentance by faith in Jesus Christ (2 Pt 3:9). The great concepts of creation, justice, law, salvation, and atonement reach their final climax in the divine judgment of the last day."

King David reminds the people of Israel that they are The Chosen People of God who ratified it by covenant. It is a perpetual covenant with "a thousand generations" meaning it is their destiny. While theologians may debate the exact nature of a covenant, here are the basics: "A sacred kinship

bond between two parties, ratified by swearing an oath. God's covenants are prominent in every period of salvation history. Divine covenants reveal the saving plan of God for establishing communion with Israel and the nations, ultimately fulfilled by the death and resurrection of Christ."

Yes, the LORD made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and, He also made a covenant with King David. The LORD promised King David that He would establish a king and kingdom from David's dynasty that would reign forever. The Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of that covenant.

Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords. When he comes again, He will establish the kingdom of God in all of its fullness. To help us **remember** this sacred covenant, today is Christ the King or Reign of Christ Day on the Christian Calendar. It is the last Sunday of the Christian Year, with Advent being the first Sunday of the year. It is perfectly appropriate that the culmination of the Christian year recognizes Christ as King.

AND, as Canaan, The Promised Land, was the inheritance of Israel, "God's eternal kingdom became the promised inheritance of all the redeemed [meaning Christians]. Hebrews 9:15 (NIV84) For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may

receive **the promised eternal inheritance**—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.”

Nancy Demoss shares the story of a missionary who was remembers and is grateful. This story aligns with our scripture in describing what God’s people are called to be. It is true and illustrates remembering, giving thanks, and making God known to all peoples.

“In 1973, when the Presbyterian Church in America was just forming, the fledgling denomination had only two missionaries. One of them, a man named Dick Dye, was laboring hard in the Mexican mission field of Acapulco, with little to show for his efforts, and little money to keep him there much longer. The strain was starting to wear on him, as day after day he struggled with the endless demands, the toll on his body, soul, and spirit, and an uncertain future. He had every reason to question God’s purpose for having him there—and every reason to moan about it to anyone who would listen to him.

But Dick Dye was not the kind of man to keep his head down. And on occasion when his gaze would lift toward the mountains surrounding Acapulco, he could see at a distance—high above the city—a huge cross visible from just about everywhere. For a

God-centered man who knew there was more to his missionary work than measurable results and positive prayer-letter statistics, the sight of that cross was what kept him going some days.

Remembering who he was serving, **remembering** why he was there, **remembering** to be grateful even with so much to be dismayed about—he was enabled to put one foot in front of the other, praising God as he plodded on month after month.

One day, Dick decided to drive up into the mountains to see if he could locate this massive cross, see if he could get a better look at it. When he finally got there, he found that the cross was affixed to a large hotel.

And [he] found again that it's hard for God-centered people to keep from being others-centered, as well.

Wheeling into the parking lot and walking up to the front desk, Dick asked to speak to the manager. "Do you have an appointment?" the receptionist asked.

"No, ma'am, I just want to tell him something."

"What do you want to tell him?"

"Uh, well, I just ... want to tell him 'thank you.'"

When Dick was finally received into the manager's office, when he told him how inspirational and encouraging the cross on this hotel had been to him while lonely and discouraged down in the city, the man lowered his head to his desk and began to sob.

After several awkward minutes, when at last he was able to compose himself, he whispered through choking tears, "That cross has been up there for years, and all I've ever heard about it is criticism. You're the first person who's ever come to me and said, 'Thank you for having that cross there.'"

"Well," Dick said, trying to explain his natural inclination for being drawn to it, "see, I'm a missionary in the city, so ..."

"Where does your church meet?" the man interrupted.

"Actually, we don't meet anywhere. I mean ... we don't have a place to meet."

"Come with me," the manager said, walking him toward a beautiful chapel on the hotel property. Standing inside, he said to Dick, "We have church here at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. every Sunday. But from now on, at 10:00 a.m., it's yours. You can begin services here next week."

Within a matter of years—from this surprising beginning—God raised up four Mexican congregations under the oversight of Presbyterian missionary Dick Dye. And it all started with a simple thank you—and with two men who were both as God-centered as they were others-centered.

Let us not be like the ungrateful man in the first story that inherited three gifts but failed to give thanks. Let us be like Dick Dye who remembered, gave thanks, and shared the Good News of Jesus. I have one more example for you.

CONCLUSION:

“True story. A church group from New Bern, North Carolina, had traveled to the Caribbean on a mission trip. As you probably know, the conditions at the posh, luxury resorts are a far cry from the impoverished way of life endured by many others on these tropical islands.

During this particular ministry trip, their host took them to visit a leper colony on the island of Tobago. And while there, they held a worship service in the campus chapel. As you can imagine, the sight of emaciated lepers filing into their seats on the bare pews bore deeply into the minds and memories of each visitor to this unaccustomed scene.

But no memory left its mark like this one:

When the pastor announced, "We have time for one more hymn. Does anyone have a favorite?" he noticed a lone patient seated awkwardly on the back row, facing away from the front. At this final call for hymn requests, with great effort, the woman slowly turned her body in the pastor's direction.

"Body" would perhaps be a generous description of what remained of hers. No nose. No lips. Just bare teeth, askew within a chalky skull. She raised her bony nub of an arm (no hand) to see if she might be called on to appeal for her favorite song to be sung. Her teeth moved to the croaky rhythm of her voice as she said, "Could we sing 'Count Your Many Blessings'?"

The pastor stumbled out of the pulpit, out the door, and into the adjoining yard, tears of holy conviction raining down his face. One of the traveling party rushed to fill his place, beginning to sing the familiar song in this unfamiliar place, arguably the most "unblessed" of any spot in the universe.

A friend hustled outside, put his arm around the sobbing pastor, and consolingly said, "I'll bet you'll never be able to sing that song again, will you?"

“Yeah, I’ll sing it,” the pastor answered, “but never the same way, ever again.”

Leave it to a grotesquely deformed leper to remind us that grateful people are characterized by grateful words, while ungrateful people are given to griping, complaining, murmuring, whining.”

My friends, while you celebrate Thanksgiving this week, remember what Jesus has done for you; give thanks for what Jesus has done for you; and...tell someone.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.