

Remnant Life Church
11.23.25
Giving Thanks...Always
Psalm 103:1-6

Thursday is Thanksgiving Day 2025

- This day of thanks is celebrated not only in this country but in least 5 others around the world
- The roots of Thanksgiving Day (at least in the way that we recognize it)...
 - Can be traced back to the time of the Protestant Reformation in the early 1500s
 - The day was designated - much in the same way that the festivals of the OT were established - to coincide with the seasons of harvest
 - These were held throughout Europe and then subsequently brought to the New World
- The event that came to be known as “The First Thanksgiving” was held in October of 1621 after the first settlement of pilgrims survived the harsh New England winter and reaped the harvest of their first crops
 - The feast lasted for three days not just 1 big dinner
 - Those attending
 - The 51 survivors of that first winter out of the 102 who made the voyage
 - 90 Native Americans many of whom directly helped the pilgrims settle into the new land
- The First National Proclamation of Thanksgiving was given by the Continental Congress in 1777.
 - The first draft was written and submitted by Samuel Adams.
 - He did this, not in Philadelphia since the British occupied the national capital during that time
 - The capital had been moved to another Pennsylvania town 102 miles west of Philadelphia
 - And so for 9 months between late October 1777 and late June 1778 the new nation’s capital was located just a little over 20 miles south of where are gathered this morning in York
- George Washington on October 3, 1789, presented a proclamation for the first national Thanksgiving Day designated by the government of the United States
 - Listen to the words spoken by the first President on why the proclamation was being made...
 - *"...that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions, to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually, to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws..."*
 - It certainly should grieve our hearts to acknowledge how far we have fallen away today from the meaning and power of those words

- Thanksgiving became a federal holiday, to be observed every year, in a proclamation made by Abraham Lincoln to be held, originally, on the final Thursday of each November although that was later amended to the 4th Thursday
 - It is interesting to note that this federal declaration was made in 1863 – right in the middle of the Civil War
 - Another reminder that we are to be thankful even in the midst of great conflict
- And it was 62 years ago, that the tradition of the President “pardoning” a turkey to spare his life was instituted by President Kennedy
 - That date was Nov 19, 1963 – just 3 days before he would arrive in Dallas
- And so Thursday will once again be a day of the “4 F’s” – family, food, fellowship, and football
 - BTW, there will be three NFL games played on Thursday, back-to-back-to back, beginning at 1:00, then 4:30, with the final game beginning at 8:30
 - If you choose to do so, you can plant yourself in front of the TV and watch close to 12 straight hours of football
 - And if you don’t get enough on Thursday there is another game on Friday beginning at 3:30

But in all seriousness are we grateful?

- Are you one who can find satisfaction with their lives or there is there always more that needs to be obtained?
- Much has been written about greed -
 - John F. Kennedy wrote in 1961 regarding the on-going negotiations in the Berlin Treaty - *We cannot negotiate with people who say what's mine is mine and what's yours is negotiable.*
 - Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher wrote, *He who is not contented with what he has, would not be contented with what he would like to have.* - Socrates
 - Billy Graham was quoted as saying, *Envy and greed always – always – exact a terrible price. I have never met an envious or greedy person who was at peace.*
- But Graham also said this...
 - *Envy and greed starve on a steady diet of thanksgiving.*
- I wonder how many of us this morning are truly grateful or have we come to the place of taking so much for granted?
- Consider these facts...
 - If you got up this morning enjoying a higher degree of health than sickness, you are more blessed than the nearly 173,000 people around the world who will not live out the day
 - If you recognize the blessing of meeting here this morning without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or even death... you are more blessed than 3 billion other people who must live daily under that very threat
 - If you have food in your house, clothes on your back, a roof over your head at night with a place to sleep...you are better cared for than well over half of the world’s population

- If you have money in the bank, in your wallet or purse, and some spare change lying around the house...you are in the top 8% of the world's population in wealth
- But you may say...wait a minute, we have this day where we are going to solely focus on giving thanks!
 - And while that is true the paradox is revealed in what we do immediately after that day of giving thanks
 - We have created a day devoted to the acquisition of things...Black Friday
 - On BF 2024, Americans spent 10.8 billion dollars on-line
 - Cyber Monday, first established in 2005
 - In 2024, saw Americans spend another 13.3 billion
 - In fact, on that Monday between 10 am and 2 pm shoppers were spending an average of 11.3 million dollars...per minute
 - Also note, these staggering numbers do not include personal shopping purchases
 - Now I have nothing against shopping for gifts for our loved ones
 - But the ever-widening divide between gratefulness and greed is never more clearly seen than, of all times, on Thanksgiving weekend
- And so what does the Bible say regarding these two polar opposite views of life – being thankful and greed?
 - While the Bible warns against greed and being greedy nearly 40 times
 - It speaks much more of the importance of giving thanks, thanksgiving, and being grateful - over 3 times more frequently
 - But one thing is unmistakable
 - To live a life dominated by gratitude is to walk in the blessings of God
 - At no time was God angered more by the Israelites than when they were ungrateful, grumbled and complained

What I want us to focus on this morning, however, are the blessings of gratitude - turn to **Psalm 103**

- This Psalm has been described as a flowing river that broadens as it goes
 - In verses **1-6** it begins with personal and individual praise
 - In verses **7-19** it expands to a focus of national praise
 - It concludes in verses **20-22** with universal praise
- We are going to focus on the praises and blessings of the individual

READ – Psalm 103:1-6

If we were to read all 22 verses, you would see that there is not one request made by David, only words of thanks to God

- There are 6 blessings that David highlights in verses **3, 4, and 5** associated with a heart of gratitude and thanks
- But before we look at those, we read in **v 2** that we must first be careful not to forget what He has done for us
 - God is never deficient in His great blessings for our lives

- It is our own ingratitude that so often hinders us from giving thanks in all things – why is that?
- Likely because, as theologian Charles Spurgeon wrote, *We often write our blessings in the sand, and we engrave our complaints in marble.*

These are the six blessings we are given as presented by David in **Psalm 103**

1. **3a** – *He forgives all your sins*
 - a. This is the at the very foundation of the hope we have in Jesus
 - b. Our sins have been forgiven and with that the penalty of death has been paid on our behalf
 - c. Our reconciliation with God is the point from which every other blessing flows
 - d. Paul writes in **Col 1:13-14**
 - i. *For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*
2. **3b** - *...and heals all your diseases*
 - a. What we must understand is that the word “healing” is not confined to the physical alone
 - i. The word heal in the original language is *Rrraw-faw*
 - ii. Yes, it is used to describe a physical healing
 - iii. But also to heal a people, a nation, or personal distress (whatever the source)
 1. Healing also means to heal our minds of things that trouble us
 2. It is to heal our hearts of emotional wounds
 3. It is healing of our souls from the arrows of the enemy designed to bring doubt regarding God’s love for us or even our salvation
 4. And it is the healing of our spirits that were once in darkness but are now cleansed from sin
 - b. The Bible often uses the word sickness for sin, and healing for salvation
 - i. Jesus brought those two things together in **Luke 5**
 - ii. Jesus not only healed the man paralyzed but told him that his sins were forgiven
 - c. The healing that God gives us is for every area of our lives
 - i. But the most important healing is of our relationship with Him through Jesus Christ
3. **4a** - *...who redeems your life from the pit*
 - a. Another word for pit is death – he has redeemed or paid the price for our death in sin
 - b. The word redeem means to exchange one thing for another
 - i. If your redeem a coupon at the store you get a discount or an item when you use the coupon
 - c. This is the word used to describe the work of God’s saving grace in our lives
 - i. We have been redeemed from death by the shed blood of Jesus
 - ii. Our lives were delivered from the sentence of death by God’s love for us

- d. David also uses the word redeem here to remind the people that God redeemed or delivered them from the Egypt at the beginning of their time as a new nation
 - i. The account of Israel coming out of Egypt is found in **Exodus 12-15**
 - ii. It is written as someone being rescued from a great pit (the word David uses in **Psalm 103:4**)
 - e. But the word pit, found 16 other times in the Psalms, in the original language can also be translated as Sheol (**Ps 6:5; 16:10; 28:1; +13**)
 - i. Sheol is the realm of the dead, a grave, the place of no hope, and even hell
 - ii. David was reminding the people that God saved them from a place of seemingly no hope after over 400 years in slavery
 - f. And we, too, have been saved from the place of no hope by the redemptive power of God's love through Jesus Christ
4. **4b** - ...*and crowns you with love and compassion*
- a. To be crowned is to have something placed over you
 - b. It is also then a designation of status, position, authority – a sign of royalty
 - c. Listen to what Peter says happens to us because of God's love
 - i. **1 Peter 2:9** – *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*
 - ii. These words are being addressed to the nation and people of Israel
 - iii. But don't forget that we are grafted into that same line of people as Christians and followers of Jesus Christ
 - d. We have been given authority, in Jesus Christ, to overcome the trials, temptations, and sin of this world
 - e. How can we not live a life of gratitude for a gift that we do not deserve
5. **5a** - ...*who satisfies your desires with good things*
- a. Everyone it seems is, in some ways, searching for a fountain of youth
 - b. But I think of myself as a realist
 - i. If I stand in front of the mirror I think of and become aware of several things
 - ii. First, I ask myself who is this old man I am looking at and how did he get into my bathroom?
 - iii. I also realize I was not born with gray hair
 - iv. The condition of my eyes, ears, joints have all changed – and not for the better
 - c. And so, I think Paul explained it best
 - i. **2 Cor 4:16** – *Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.*
 - ii. The good things of God are not about possessions, never having any difficulties, or a life of ease and comfort
 - iii. It is about His presence that satisfies the very deepest desires of our hearts – to be in close fellowship and communion with Him
6. **5b** – ...*so that your youth is renewed like the eagles*
- a. The eagle is used many times as an example of a lesson or truth

- b. I taught a series on the eagle several years ago as it relates to the life of a Christian and we looked at several things that are unique to this magnificent bird
 - i. One of those is that an adult eagle, when they get older, will pluck or pull out their own feathers so that new ones can grow in their place
 - ii. This is painful but necessary for there to be growth
- c. Similarly, there are times when God will allow us to go through things in our lives that are painful
 - i. But they are necessary for our growth
 - ii. Our spiritual, emotional, and mental growth
- d. A sure sign that you are growing in the Lord is when you begin to see the difficult times as opportunities given by God for you to grow
 - i. God is very much in control of your life through the easy and the difficult times
 - ii. And everything He does is designed to strengthen your faith, renew your spirit, and help you to grow

These are the blessings that God will bring to the heart that is filled with and expressing gratitude to Him

1. He forgives you your sins
2. He heals your diseases
3. He redeems your life from the pit
4. He crowns you with love and compassion
5. He satisfies your desires with good things
6. He renews your youth like the eagles

The 4th Thursday of every November is Thanksgiving Day

- We gather with people we love, have a big meal, and enjoy all that it means and represents

But for the Christian, EVERY DAY should be Thanksgiving Day

- I call on each and every one of you to make it a point to give thanks to God every single day
- Turn your prayer time from being a time when you only present your wants and needs to God, to one of giving Him thanks and praise just as David did in **Psalm 103**

When your heart and mind's focus is on giving thanks, it will change the way you view the challenges, and you will find yourself being able to give thanks no matter what is taking place in your life.

This is what Paul is teaching us when he wrote these words in **Philippians 4:11-13**

...I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.