

**Refuge City Church**  
**“Praiseworthy”: Why we praise (1 Thessalonians 5:18)**  
**November 21, 2021**

### **Introduction**

- Looking back upon the previous year has always provided me a sense of gratefulness to God for all He has done for me.
  - **1 Chronicles 16:11-12**, “Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually! Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles and the judgments he uttered,”
  - Think about what ‘continuity’ brings to your life...
- At one time, our own government took it upon themselves to do the same.
  - “Whereas it becomes us humbly to approach the throne of Almighty God, with gratitude and praise for the wonders which his goodness has wrought in conducting our forefathers to this western world...” [United States Congress, 1779]
  - “...with devout reverence and affectionate gratitude, to acknowledge our many and great obligations to Almighty God and to implore Him to continue and confirm the blessings we experience.” [George Washington, 1795]
  - “The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God...They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens.” [A Thanksgiving Proclamation, Abraham Lincoln, 1863]
- We set aside special events or holidays and take one day to thank our Creator for His unwavering faithfulness and mercies.
  - What are we doing the rest of the year?

### **Greater Gratitude**

**1 Thessalonians 5:18**, “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

- Last week we talked about *Who* we praise, as God is the source of all we have.
- **The Ultimate Revelation:** that we are a sinful people, unworthy to be in the presence of God, in need of salvation!
  - Although we are told He is unapproachable, we are given the task multiple times throughout scripture that we are to seek Him with everything we’ve got!
- **The Beauty Of It All**

- We serve a God in whose presence we cannot bear to contain. He is thunder, lightning, fire, earth-quaking power in unapproachable light.
- Yet, He gave us His only Son who reassures us that He is the only Way to everlasting life. That if we know Jesus, we know the Father who sent Him. In the presence of Jesus, we find all we are and all we need.

## WHY do we praise?

- It's typical for humanity to ask, "What's in it for me?"
- Can we receive anything by our worship of God?!

### 1. [last week] We praise Him because of Who He is.

#### 2. He saved our life!

- **Romans 5:6-11**, "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— **but God** shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."
- We can not, and will not do it ourselves.
  - We *can not* because we're not capable (physically or morally).
  - We *will not* because our sinful nature beckons us to ungodly treasure.
  - We're blind and deaf to the things of God, don't understand them in our sin, and therefore incapable to locate them on our own.
  - We are ungodly... wretched, opposed to God, full of sin.
  - We are not righteous. Not good.
  - We are His enemies.
- **But God** so loved the world! [John 3:16]
  - Therein lies the power of God's love. He sees us as we are, desires us to be healed, and offers us reconciliation [to be restored, to be re-made in harmony with who He is].
  - So Jesus [all-powerful; fully God; without sin] died for us. He took our place so we wouldn't have to be recipients of God's wrath.

### 3. What He wants to give us access to!

#### • Peace with God.

- **Romans 5:1**, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." [we are no longer enemies, but welcomed into His family; **James 4:4**, "...whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."]
- **Psalms 4:4**, "In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."

#### • Grace of God

- **Romans 5:2a**, “Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand...”
- **Hope in God**
  - **Romans 5:2b-5a**, “...and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame...”
  - **QUOTE:** “...the fact that we have peace with God and a relationship with Him, with assurance of standing acceptable in His presence, enables us to view present difficulties with joy [and hope].” [Dr. Thomas Constable]
- **The Spirit of God**
  - **Romans 5:5b**, “...because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”
  - **John 16:7**, “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.”
  - God’s Spirit who guides us, speaks to us, and teaches us. The very presence of God in us!
- **Everlasting Life with God**
  - **Romans 6:23**, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
  - **1 John 5:10-12**, “Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

### **How do we develop this greater sense of gratitude in us?**

- **QUOTE:** “A practicing Christian must above all be one who practices the perpetual return of the soul into the inner sanctuary, who brings the world into its Light and rejudges it, who bring the Light into the world with all its turmoil and its faithfulness and re-creates it. [Thomas Kelly, *A Testament of Devotion*]
- **Psalm 42:1**, “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.”
- **Psalm 84:2**, “My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.”
- **5 steps to develop greater gratitude**
  - I. Decide/Desire**
    - It’s like claiming you have a favorite movie, and only watching the first 10 minutes.
    - It’s like needing surgery, and simply thanking the doctor for his medical advice but doing nothing with it.
    - It’s like wanting to lose weight and thinking happy thoughts that you’ll start on Monday.

- Developing a greater sense of who God is, and all that He wants to give you is the greatest decision you can make. But you've got to desire it, long for it, because without it, you're nothing!
- 2. Take the time**
    - You don't have the time? Yes you do. You're choosing others things that you believe are more valuable to you. [re-evaluating priorities]
    - You can't make time? It's not yours to make. God has already given it to you.
    - You have to *take* the time. You have to own your calendar. Make the changes today!
  - 3. Worship regularly**
    - The more you surround yourself with likeminded individuals, the better chance you have of creating a heart of gratitude.
    - You don't have to do it alone.
    - Attend church, bible studies, and activities with your church family as regularly as you can.
    - "Bad company corrupt good morals." The reverse applies as well.
      - **Proverbs 13:20**, "Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm."
  - 4. Listen attentively**
    - Commit to hearing the voice of God.
    - The more you read His Word, the more clear His voice becomes.
    - Find your 'desolate place'.
      - **Luke 5:16**, "...he would withdraw to desolate places and pray."
  - 5. Act obediently**
    - Go and do.
    - Anyone considering a life-altering change of career for the mission field, or seminary?
    - Can you still act obediently in what God is having you do right now?
    - Look for opportunities to live out His call on your life, speak His truth and promises to others, serve your community.
  - 6. Repeat**
    - **Romans 8:31-32**, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"

## CONCLUSION

- The challenge to us all is that we continually spend time in reflection on what the Lord has done for us.
- He has provided so much for us, and promises to do so, as long as we seek Him.
- We belong to and serve an amazing, awe-inspiring God. Let's live every day with that in mind!