Series: Gifts that Keep on Giving

November 25, 2018

Message 1:

**The Gift of Praise**

Psalm 34:1-10

*Guests - Handout designed with you in mind - Info and notes especially for you - won’t call or visit -*

*Next Steps*

*Generosity*

*Notes on Handout and in YouVersion App*

**Intro:** David was a man like us … tempted … went through extremely difficult times -

We’re told he wrote this psalm during a time he pretended to be insane in front of the King of the Philistines … running from Saul … the only way to survive …

Psalm 34:1-10 - I will praise the Lord at all times.

I will constantly speak his praises.

I will boast only in the Lord;

let all who are helpless take heart.

Come, let us tell of the Lord’s greatness;

let us exalt his name together.

I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me.

He freed me from all my fears.

Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy;

no shadow of shame will darken their faces.

In my desperation I prayed, and the Lord listened;

he saved me from all my troubles.

For the angel of the Lord is a guard;

he surrounds and defends all who fear him.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!

Fear the Lord, you his godly people,

for those who fear him will have all they need.

Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry,

but those who trust in the Lord will lack no good thing.

Someone said one preacher used verse 3 to catch a wife!

Psalm 34:3 - Come, let us tell of the Lord’s greatness;

let us exalt his name together.

But that verse is referring to more than just two people!

David is bound and determined he is going to have a praise service! He is going to have a Worship Night …. ***First Wednesday …***

He is going to bring a gift to God no matter how hard it gets …

We have so many excuses for not praising … not worshiping … not giving …

David would have none of it! Everyday was Thanksgiving Day … every season was the Season of Giving …

He knew the Gift of Praise was a Gift that would keep on giving and a gift that would bring him a great return!

He is saying that this is going to be a fixed habit with him from now on -

Psalm 9:1-2 - I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart;

I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done.

I will be filled with joy because of you.

I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.

Notice - I will - I will - I will -

It is a matter of decision and determination - so it is with us - we must decide we are going to praise … nothing is going to stop us … we are going to be givers … nothing is going to stop us!

Why is this written down? For us! Right here in 2018!

**Big Idea: The Holy Spirit is telling us to give the gift of praise!**

With our mouths - songs - presence - finances - David tells us WHY and David tells us WHAT -

**> Why we give the gift of praise:**

* Not because circumstances are perfect -

David’s were not …

“Praise the Lord anyway!” Can you do that? There is not a single life where everything goes great all the time!

Welcome to the human race! We have to learn to overcome - and when we are in relationship with Jesus we have the presence and power of the Holy Spirit who gives us the ability to overcome!

The New Testament agrees with David on this matter of praising God no matter what our circumstances -

1st Thessalonians 5:19 - Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

If we wait until things are perfect to bring the gift of praise - to give our gifts of song … time … talent … treasure … we will be waiting forever!

Psalm 34:1 - I will praise the Lord at all times.

I will constantly speak his praises.

* When we get the difficult doctor’s report
* When we get bad news at work
* When we’re told there will be no more work
* When our kid brings home bad news from school …
* When our spouse doesn’t understand us
* When we face everything life has to throw at us -

We will be a people who praise God - because His goodness overwhelms any difficulty - and praising Him lifts our spirits up into heavenly places!

Linda Rice - Tunkhannock, PA

She was in her car - driving down the street - stopped at an intersection - the light turned green - she proceeded to turn left down through the intersection -

When she was in the middle of the intersection she noticed a truck coming down the hill to the intersection - obviously not going to stop -

She could do nothing but brace herself and that truck hit her broadside - pushed her up against a telephone pole, and mangled that automobile completely.

She was pinned inside of the car - one leg severed and bleeding profusely - the other badly crushed. She did not know, she said, “whether I was dead or alive.”

People gathered around … She was not far from her church - She asked for her pastor - In a few minutes Pastor Earl Cowden was looking through the crumbled wreckage of Linda’s care. Somehow he made his way in through the wreckage next to Linda - with gasoline dripping - could hear it on the ground - he put his hand on her face and said, “Linda, we are going to sing!”

Pastor Cowden began to sing, “What a friend we have in Jesus…”

They worked feverishly for over an hour and for over an hour Pastor Cowden led Linda in singing … What a Friend …

She never lost consciousness. She remained calm. She affirmed and praised God constantly and tried to affirm and calm her friends around her.

Her physician was concerned and worried because of her positive attitude …

Their evaluation: She’s not accepting her condition. They were very upset.

After a while, they realized that Linda’s attitude, behavior and remarkable recovery resulted from her belief that she could make something good come from any situation no matter how bad, if she praised God!

The physician said that!

She knew the magnitude of her loss, but she was thankful to God for what she had left and she lived out her thanks by praising Him!

That’s what the physician said! She lived out her thanks by praising Him!

Psalm 34:1 -

Can you do that? Are you doing that? Are you willing to make a determination that you will do that?

Why does David give the gift of praise? Not because circumstances are perfect -

And - not because of his own goodness or greatness.

The answer is in verse 2 -

Psalm 34:2 - I will boast only in the Lord…

We give the gift of praise - we give all of our gifts - because of the Lord - because of His love - because of His goodness -

Not because of our circumstances - not because we are good - not because of what we have or what we don’t have -

The boasting that brings blessings to the world is boosting in the Lord!

It’s not about us!

Psalm 115:1 - Not to us, Lord, not to us

but to your name be the glory,

because of your love and faithfulness.

Praise is weak if it is only offered in good times - The Lord is always good - so we always have reason to give gifts of praise.

**> What reasons do we have to boast?**

**- God is in control of the Universe!**

He is the one who decided that a tiny seed will develop into 2000 times its own weight in the form of a watermelon!

It would take 5000 watermelon seeds to weigh one pound - we struggle with the seeds! One seed can make a 40 pound watermelon!

Take a seed, plant it, it gets sunshine, shower, the seed took off its coat and went to work! It forms an out coat of green, an inner coat of white rind, a core of red, and inside more seeds!

What architect drew that plan?

Where did it get its pigmentation, taste, aroma?

How did it build a watermelon?

Until you explain a watermelon do not be too sure that you can set limits to the power of God! He is in control - worthy of praise - worthy of all of our gifts - praise - worship - finances - offerings of every kind!

Sometimes we say, “He doesn’t care about me! He doesn’t meet all my needs!”

He cares for the seed!

The most educated man cannot fully explain a watermelon, but the most uneducated man can enjoy a watermelon!

I don’t understand everything in the Bible - I don’t understand why everything happens the way it does - I don’t understand why God makes all the choices He makes -

But if I live up to the things I do understand, I don’t have to worry about the things I don’t understand!

He does enough to merit my praise, my worship, and all my gifts!

**- He is a God of love!**

In spite of our shortcomings -

A 16 year old girl married an 18 year old boy. In time they had 3 children - they had been married 11 years - the young lady began to wonder if she had missed something by getting married so early -

One day she was gone -

The husband came home - no messages - nothing -

Phone call -

Wife: I’m all right.

Husband: Where are you?

Wife: I can’t tell you.

Husband: I love you! Won’t you come home? The children love you! Come home!

She hung up.

Weeks passed - then another call -

Wife: I’m all right.

Husband: Where are you? We love you! Come home!

No response.

The husband hired a PI to find his wife. After several weeks he found her in a dilapidated, run down location in Des Moines, Iowa.

He quickly went - found the dirty place - walked down a dingy hall - stood outside with his knees shaking not knowing whether or not she would receive him. He finally mustered the courage to knock on the door - the door finally opened - there was a weak, aging woman - standing in the doorway - with blurred eyes - and when she saw her husband she fell into his arms and he finally said -

Why did you not come home?

She said this to him: You said you love me. Now I know you loved me. You came.

God came. He came into our mess. He came into our hurt. He came into our pain. He came into our disillusionment.

He said He loved us - He showed us - He came.

John 3:16 -

David said, “I will boast in the Lord, because even through my adultery and failure He loves me!”

We should never have to plead with someone who knows God to give the gift of praise … worship … offerings …

This is what the holiday season is all about - God CAME!

Some this season need to know what I just told you - will you let them know?

**- He is a God who guides.**

He is worthy of our gifts of praise because He gives us the direction we need in our lives.

Psalm 34:4 - I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me…

Psalm 37:23 - The Lord directs the steps of the godly.

He delights in every detail of their lives.

Proverbs 16:9 - We can make our plans,

but the Lord determines our steps.

**- He is a God who provides.**

Philippians 4:19 - And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

We are not poverty stricken! We may not have money, but we are not poverty stricken if we have God. He can do anything we believe of Him.

Birds don’t sing because they have an answer - birds sing because they have a song!

***He Will Carry You …***

*There is no problem too big*

*God cannot solve it*

*There is no mountain too tall*

*God cannot move it*

*There is no storm too dark*

*God cannot calm it*

*There is no sorrow too deep*

*He cannot soothe it*

*Oh, if He carried the weight of the world upon His shoulders*

*I know my brother that He will carry you*

*Oh, if He carried the weight of the world upon His shoulders*

*I know my sister that He will carry you*

*He said, "Come on to me all who are weary*

*And I will give you rest, rest, rest, rest”*

David didn’t praise God because of what he was, but because of what His God was!

“I don’t feel like praising God! I don’t feel like giving!”

It has nothing to do with the way you feel or what you think you have! It has everything to do with who He is!

**- God is good!**

He is the essence of good!

The gods of this world always leave us wanting -

* More money
* More sex
* More thrills
* Higher promotion at work
* Bigger house

Nothing this world has to offer is ever enough -

Psalm 34:8 - Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!

**- God is near.**

You may not think so - some argue this point - but the Bible say -

Psalm 34:7 - For the angel of the Lord is a guard;

he surrounds and defends all who fear him.

Psalm 34:18 - The Lord is close to the brokenhearted;

he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

**- God is enough.**

Praise, worship, giving, should be the most natural, uncomplicated, unhindered thing that we do!

Psalm 23:1 - The Lord is my shepherd;

I have all that I need.

Sometimes it feels like this -

Hebrews 13:15 - Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God…

But it’s always like this -

Luke 6:38 - Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.