



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FAIRDALE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD

With Thanksgiving just a few weeks away, many of us are undoubtedly getting ready to step into the high gear of “holiday mode.” There are people to visit, meals to plan, decorations to be set up, programs to attend, and gifts to buy. Some of us may be excited and ready for this time of year. For others, the holidays may be more bittersweet and difficult. Grief, sickness, or financial stress are just a few reasons why you may not be quite as excited about the holidays as you have been in the past.

Maybe life is great and being thankful is easy this year. Maybe it feels impossible in the face of all the pain and difficulty. Either way, we are commanded to give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:18). So how do we give thanks when we don't really feel thankful?

The Psalms are an excellent place

to turn when the complexities of life feel overwhelming. Within the Psalms, there are phrases ranging all along the emotional spectrum - from “How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long...must I have sorrow in my heart all the day?” (Psalm 13:1-2) to “Therefore, my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices...in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:9 & 11). God created us and fully understands our emotional life. He sees and hears all that happens to us and knows the deepest parts of our hearts. And he has given us the Psalms to help us in all the highs and lows of life.

Psalm 136 begins, “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.” Then each line for 26 verses declares something about who God is or what he has done followed by

the phrase, “for his steadfast love endures forever.” Our thankfulness, therefore, is not based solely on our circumstances, but primarily on God and what he has done. He is the God of gods and Lord of lords (vs. 2-3). He is the almighty creator (vs. 4-9). He cares for and guides his people in all circumstances (vs 10-16). He is the sovereign king over all the world (vs. 17-22). And above all, he is our personal savior who recognizes our neediness and sent his son to rescue us from our sin when we could do nothing to save ourselves (vs. 23-24).

So regardless of your circumstances this Thanksgiving, take some time to read through this psalm (or others) and meditate on the ways that God has demonstrated his steadfast love not only in general, but to you specifically. Whether Thanksgiving is easy or difficult, may we be people who rejoice in the Lord!

A Life of Giving: Thoughts from Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Matt McBroom | Pastor

In recent years many American companies have adopted the concept of a Month of Giving. As the name suggests, a Month of Giving is a designated month during the year when these companies encourage (and often coerce) their employees to give money, volunteer time, or donate items to charitable organizations. At the end of the month, the companies will often make a big show of how much money was raised or how much time the collective employees volunteered. Sadly, once the Month of Giving is over, many of the companies and employees return to “business as usual” and their benevolence is packed away until the next year. While there is a lot that we may disagree with concerning how these annual benevolence bonanzas are conducted, I believe at their core is something that we, as Christians, can absolutely support.

The core element that I am referring to is the idea of doing good to/ for others. Paul in his letter to the Galatians encourages them to “not grow weary of doing good” and to “do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:9-10). In this command we do not see Paul calling for a specific month of giving or providing a timeframe that the Galatians are to reserve for doing good. The opposite, in fact, is implied as Paul tells the Galatians that they will reap a harvest if they “do not give up” in doing good. To put this another way, we could say that Christians are called to a Life of Giving.

We see this modeled most clearly (perfectly) in the life of our Lor

and Savior Jesus Christ. Christ discusses his life of service with the disciples during the Last Supper. A dispute had arisen among the disciples over who was to be regarded as the greatest among them and Christ responds by saying, “For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves” (Luke 22:27). Christ is making it clear to the disciples (and to us) that, although he was obviously the greatest among them, he had come and had lived his life as one of service. The disciple’s argument is foolish and Christ, as usual, illustrates that with a simple statement. The disciples should have been focused on following the example that Christ had set for them and they should have been more concerned with how they were serving others.

This should be our concern as well. Let us not only be motivated to serve others only during certain times of the year. Let us not make our service of others a reason to celebrate ourselves. Let us serve the Lord and others cheerfully and faithfully all year long and may we not grow weary of doing good to everyone and especially those who are of the household of faith.

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:9-10

BEING A CHURCH THAT PRAYS

This month, let us spend some time being thankful:

- Thank God for caring for you and providing for you every day.
- Thank God for the work of salvation that he has done for you in the work of Jesus.
- Thank God for how the Holy Spirit is growing and changing you to become more like him.
- Thank God for the people in your life that care about you and that he has given you to care for and serve.
- Thank God for your church family and those whom he has placed at FBC Fairdale to do the work of ministry alongside you.

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

*1 Thessalonians
5:18*

The Blessing of Children in Our Church

Mary Catherine Anderson | Director of Nursery

If you've been around our church long enough, you've seen the "Baby Board" in the downstairs hallway. The rate has slowed down a bit, but for a while there, it seemed like we were adding a birth announcement nearly every month. Needless to say, our nursery ministry is booming! In September, we officially transitioned to having three rooms open on Sunday mornings. We now have a baby room, a toddler room, and a preschool room. We have added a preschool class on Wednesday evenings. Each week we care for an average of 19 different children with 15 different volunteers across our various services. Psalm 127 teaches that children are a heritage and a reward from the Lord. This speaks specifically to individuals and families, but if children are good for families, I think we can also apply it more broadly and say that children are a blessing to our church.

First, children in our church help us better understand child-like faith. If you've never had the opportunity to talk to a newly baptized 8 or 9 year old about what it means to follow Jesus, you are missing out. They may not understand the depths of the trinity or the incarnation (and really, do ANY of us?), but they will unashamedly declare that Jesus died to save them from their sins. They know that God loves them and that He sent Jesus to live a perfect life, die on the cross, and be raised from the dead so that they can have a relationship with Him. How often do we need to be reminded of these basics?

Jesus teaches his followers in Matthew 18 that they must "turn and become like children" (v. 3) to enter the kingdom of heaven and that those who humble themselves like children will be great in the kingdom of heaven. Children understand how little power or ability they have to do anything on their own and instinctively trust their parents to care for them and give them what they need. How much would we benefit from regularly imitating this same humility and recognizing our dependence on our heavenly Father?

Secondly, children in our church point to spiritually growing adults. In most instances, children are here only because their parents or other adults in their lives bring them. These adults understand the importance of not neglecting to meet with one another (Hebrews 10:25). Attending church is a priority for these families. Even when getting little people ready and out the door on a Sunday morning feels like an impossible task, so many adults in our church make sure that they and their children are here on a regular basis. This also points to adults who understand the importance of teaching their children about the Lord. They know God's command for parents to bring up their children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4) and they seek to obey. Bringing them to church is only a part of that process, but it is a central part.

Finally, children in our church give us more opportunities to love like Jesus. In Matthew 19, people were bringing children to Jesus so that he could lay hands on them and pray for them. The disciples rebuked these people, but Jesus then corrected the disciples and invited the little children to come to him. Welcoming children into our church with love and prayer demonstrates to them how Jesus cares for them. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, children are entirely dependent on the adults in their lives to provide for them. When we have children in our lives, we very often make sacrifices to care for them. This sacrificial love is just one example of how we can demonstrate God's great love by laying down our lives for others (John 15:13).

If you haven't done so recently, take some time to thank God for the blessing of children in our church. Reach out to families and tell them what an encouragement their presence is at church. Pray that God would change these young hearts for his glory.