

Children's Moment

November 29, 2015

Title: Thankfulness

Theme: Thankfulness for God's blessings

Object: Coloring Sheet and Word Search

Scripture: "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations."
(Psalm 100:4-5)

Do you enjoy working puzzles? I do, I especially enjoy word puzzles and I have a word search puzzle this morning. At the end of the children's moment this morning, I will give each of you a coloring sheet or one of these puzzles so that you can find all of the words that are hidden in there. The title of the puzzle is "My Thanksgiving List." It is a list of the top ten things for which I am thankful. Your top ten list might be different from mine, but here is my Thanksgiving Top Ten List.

10. My house – there are many people in this world today who have no place to live. Many of them sleep on park benches and under bridges.

9. Food - we always have plenty to eat at our house. Many people don't. There are people all over the world who are hungry and lack enough to eat. If you look you will see those who are hungry here where we live.

8. Clothes – I never have to worry about whether there will be clothes in my closet for me to put on each day. Many people only have the clothes that they are wearing.

7. Health – I am thankful that I am blessed with good health. Many people have serious illnesses, which keeps them from enjoying life.

6. My country – I am thankful that I live in a country where I enjoy great freedom. In many countries you don't have much freedom. In some countries you can be put in prison, or even put to death, for telling others about Jesus.

5. Teachers – I am thankful for my parents and the teachers that I have had in school and in church that have taught me the things I needed to know to live with the skills I need and Jesus to guide me.

4. Friends – I am thankful for my many friends. For my brothers and sisters in Christ. In times of trouble, I have always had friends who were there to help me.

3. Family – I am thankful for my family. God has given me a wonderful wife and daughters, sons-in-law and grandchildren whom I love very much.

2. Parents – I am thankful that God blessed me with wonderful parents who loved and cared for me.

1. Jesus – Jesus is number one on the list of things for which I am thankful. No one ever loved me like Jesus. He loved me so much that He was willing to die on a cross so that I can have everlasting life. Thank you, Jesus.

Well, that is my top ten list. I have been given much. The Bible says that God blesses us and gives us much so that we may show our thanks by sharing it with others. I hope that this Thanksgiving and Christmas season, we will share what God has given us with those who do not have as much as we do.

Dear Lord, thank you for all of Your rich blessings. Help us to share what You have given us with those who are less fortunate than we are. Let us especially share the gift of Your Son, Jesus. Amen.

On Judgment Day, God may ask those who have read John's letter and did not believe, "Why? Why, did you not believe?" God may say to them, "Did I not give John words of truth? Were these words not consistent with history and the breath of the Bible? Did John's letter not touch your heart, reveal the truth of your sin and help you see the reality of your desperate need for Jesus?" For those who do not believe what God has revealed through John and the holy Scripture of the Bible there is only one answer and it is given by Jesus, when He said, "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed." (John 3:20) For those who hear these words and believe they see Jesus as the "Light" of God given to mankind so they may be saved from their sins. For those who believe, Jesus gave them His promise, "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." (John 3:21) To be wrought of God one must come to believe in the "Light" of God, which is Jesus Christ.

My beloved, please stand and hear the words of truth and life given to John by God, so we can come into the "Light." As we begin our study, please open your Bibles to 1st John chapter 1, verses 1 to 4. Brother David will read from God's holy Word and pray for our time spent this morning in the light of His Word.

Please be seated.

John begins this epistle or letter in a straightforward approach. There is no customary introduction as found in most letters contained in the Bible. There is no

greeting from the writer to his readers. It is unlike the letters of Paul, Peter and James. John begins immediately with the issue at hand.

In verse 1 John writes, “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life —” John is laying the foundation saying, what I am writing I have heard from God incarnate, Jesus Christ. What I am writing of, I have seen with my own eyes, for I lived with and saw Jesus. I looked upon Jesus as we lived together and I had the privilege of touching Jesus, the “Word of Life.” So, you can believe what I am about to share with you in this letter. Written in this letter are the basic facts you need to know and understand about Jesus. There are many false teachings floating around and some sound appealing, but they are not right and lead to death. I am sharing with you the true “Word of Life” as given by God.

Christ Our Life –Exists Eternally With The Father

John states clearly that Jesus has existed eternally with the Father. There is no beginning; the Father and the Son have always existed. We find this in verse 2, “... the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us —”

Notice that Christ is simply called "the Life". "The life was made manifest." It was Christ who was made manifest. Christ is God who appeared in human form. Spiritual life comes from believing in Christ alone. This is clarified by what John writes in chapter 5 of this letter, “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.” (1 John 5:11-12) So, here we see that the Son of God, Jesus Christ,

eternally exists with the Father. Spiritual life comes from God the Father through Jesus the Son. When we have fellowship with Jesus, we share in the true purpose of life. Question 1 of the Westminster Catechism asks, “**What is the chief end of man?**” The answer is, “**Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.**” Ask yourself these questions. How is your life glorifying God? How are you enjoying God?

We take note that verse 2 says this true spiritual life is eternal. “**The life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life.**” This is a clear explanation of verse 1, “**What was from the beginning...**” “**From the beginning**” means, **Christ Our Life**, was there when creation began. He is eternal. He has no beginning. He has no end. He is not part of creation. In the beginning He is the source of creation. All life comes from Him. He is the source and head of the wellspring and not part of the flowing river of history. John said it better than I, “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.**” (John 1:1-4) So the most fundamental assertion of John’s text is that **Christ Our Life** has eternally existed with the Father. Everything else flows from this. We would do well to meditate often and deeply on the majestic reality that Christ has existed without beginning from all eternity past and will continue through eternity future.

Verse 2 makes clear, “**The life was manifested.**” John is saying the eternal Christ became visible. He appeared. How Jesus appeared is made clear in verse 1, “**What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and**

[touched with our hands ...](#)” John knows Christ because he physically and spiritually experienced Jesus for three years.

Christ Our Life – Manifest In The Flesh

The fact that John claims to have physically touched what was from the beginning, namely, Jesus, plainly points here to the incarnation of Jesus. This eternal Christ was with the Father from the beginning and indeed is God in Spirit and is also God in the flesh. He became a man and also remained God.

Here is a great stumbling block to salvation. People have stumbled over it from the days of John until our own day. This is one of the reasons John wrote his letters to the church. As John wrote in his second letter, [“For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.”](#) (2 John 7) Believing that Jesus was both fully man and fully God is essential to ones salvation. All else is deception and deception is from the evil one.

Many are willing to believe in Christ if He remains a spiritual reality. But when we preach that Christ became a specific man, at a specific time, in a specific place, delivering specific commands and dying on a specific cross exposing the specific sins of our specific lives, then the preaching of Christ ceases to be acceptable for many.

I don't think it is so much the mystery of a divine and human nature in a person that causes most people to stumble over the doctrine of the incarnation. The stumbling block is that if this doctrine, inspired by God and written by John is true, every single person in the world must obey this one specific Jewish Man. Everything He says is to be embraced and lived out. Everything He did is perfect. The specificity of His work

and words flow out into history in the form of a specific inspired book, the Bible (written in the specific languages of Greek and Hebrew). This Bible claims universal authority over every other book that has ever been written. This specificity removes ones ability to find other solutions and to look to self for answers. This is truth, not legalism.

The stumbling block of the incarnation—is God becoming a specific man. He strips away every pretense of men who desire to be their own god. We can no longer do as we desire or as the world desires. We must do what this one specific Jesus wants us to do. We can no longer think we are self-sufficient, because this one specific God-Man says everyone is sick with sin and must come to Him for healing. We can no longer depend on our own wisdom to find life’s way, because this one specific God-Man who lived 2000 years in the Middle East says, **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”** (John 14:6)

When God becomes a specific Jesus, men cease to be the measure of all things, and this Jesus, becomes the measure of all things. This is simply intolerable to the rebellious heart of men and women. God is straightforward - it is His way or eternal death. It is demanding and Jesus becomes the controlling purpose to our lives. Jesus dominates our lives! He is the King who rules with unquestioned authority over our lives! Jesus is absolute in our lives! Men ask, “Where is our free will? Are we not the pinnacle of all animals? Do we not possess a mind to make our own decisions, set our own course and have the ability to change the world? Who does this Jesus think He is!?” Frankly the answer is simple; it is a one-word answer, “GOD!” Jesus is God!

Therefore, the doctrine of the incarnation has, from the beginning, been a

benchmark of true faith and spiritual reality. John writes this clearly in chapter 4 of this letter, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.” (1 John 4:1-3) The world falls into two camps, those who believe in Jesus as the Christ incarnate and those who live in the world, which is to live in the *spirit of the antichrist*.

Only the Spirit of God can break our rebellion against the demanding truth of the incarnation and cause us to submit gladly to this one specific Jesus as our absolute sovereign. Therefore, the confession that God has come in the flesh, as Jesus Christ, is John's doctrinal test of whether we believe or not.

Christ Our Life – Fellowship With The Father

The last part of verse 3 says, “Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Fellowship or *koinonia* means a personal experience of sharing something significant in common with others. It is the pleasure of being in a group when you see eye-to-eye on what really matters. It's having similar values and responding with the same kind of affections to what really counts. It is what makes working with brothers and sisters in Christ one of the greatest delights of our life. It is what gives fellowship to the church. It is what gives foundation and structure and fruit to a Christian marriage.

So to say that you have fellowship with the Father and His Son means that you have come to share their values. You believe what they believe and love what they love. You delight to spend time together with God. You love to include God in all that you do. You cherish the thought of spending an eternity getting to know God the Father and God the Son better.

On a practical level this means we repeatedly recall into our minds memorized portions of God's Word. As the Lord speaks a word of warning or promise or guidance, we pray for His help to respond, as we should. We trust Him as we walk with Him in His light. God draws near to you through His Word. You draw near to Him in prayer. As you bathe in the power of that fellowship you live out His will. It is the most wonderful way to live your life.

The Apostle John knows that he owes the gift of spiritual fellowship to Jesus Christ. Christ came and made Himself the friend of tax collectors and sinners. Jesus offered His fellowship to any who would be willing to change their values and see things eye-to-eye with Him. You cannot have fellowship with Jesus if you do not trust His judgment. But if you do trust Jesus, you have fellowship not only with Him but also with God the Father. John writes in this letter in chapter 2, [“Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.”](#) ^{1st} John 2:23 makes clear that fellowship with God comes **only** through Jesus Christ, His Son.

As believers we are to be Jesus' ambassadors until His return. Every time someone bears witness to the truth of Jesus Christ, who He was, what He did and what He values, there exists opportunity for those who hear the testimony to stop rebelling

against the will of Christ, to accept His values, and to begin fellowship with the Father through Jesus.

Christ Our Life – Fellowship With Believers

Follow me as I read verse 3, “[What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.](#)” Or to read the verse backward, "Since our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, the only way we can cultivate fellowship with other people is by proclaiming to them what we know about the Son whom we have seen and heard."

Here at Canyon Bible we talk about priorities of ministry. Here are just three: commitment to God in worship, covenant commitment to one another in fellowship, and commitment to the world as witnesses of Jesus. Notice how clearly this verse supports the relationship between the first two. In order to experience fellowship with his readers, John tells them what he believes about Jesus Christ. In other words, there is no significant fellowship among people who do not share the same view of Jesus Christ. Shared doctrine is the basis of Christian fellowship. This is why we developed a Statement of Faith and why we are working on a Covenant of Fellowship.

When John wants to cultivate fellowship with a group of people, he writes them a letter filled with theology. When Paul wanted to prepare a missionary fellowship to support him and send him to Spain, he wrote a theological book called Romans. The deeper and stronger you want your fellowship to be, the more theology must be shared. The theology of God cultivates fellowship. This is not legalism but living the

truth as revealed by God.

Fellowship With Believers Only

There are so many lessons for us learn here from John. I would like to mention three that I believe are important concerning fellowship. Right fellowship is among believers only. Let me say that again, right fellowship is among believers only!

First, the great danger of the charismatic movement around the world today, even though I acknowledge there is good in this movement; is that it often attempts to preserve fellowship among believers on the basis of a shared experience rather than on the basis of shared theology. This is not the biblical way, and will result eventually in weak theology and may result in the development of heretical theology to smooth over differences and attempt unity.

Second, this text implies that no Christian should marry an unbeliever. Deep fellowship in the things that count most is not possible where we do not share the same understanding and affection for Christ. All meaningful relationships need to be with true believers in Christ.

Third, it is a great and sad irony that as the “Christian Church” throughout the world professes to cherish the Bible, unfortunately, many churches have the reputation of trying to preserve the unity of fellowship not by exalting the great doctrines of Scripture, but by avoiding them. When John wanted to cultivate and preserve the fellowship of his readers, he got theological. When many of the “Christian Churches” in the world want to cultivate and preserve fellowship they water down theology to appeal to as many as possible. The quote “Christian Church” unquote is paying the price for this in many ways. The state of the general church is one of

great sadness. Canyon Bible is a remnant church.

God willing, we will set a different standard at Canyon Bible. We will be explicitly theological. To be consistent with the Word of God is theologically sound and is not legalistic. Believing and living consistently with the Bible is the right application of scripture and is right theology. The last thing I want to do is attract or keep members by concealing the very distinctives that fill us with passion and zeal for the glory of God. To water down biblical theology to the lowest common denominator of acceptability is the death knell of true worship and missions and morality and godly growth.

My beloved let us be like John. John wrote in verse 3, “[What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.](#)” May all who come to Canyon Bible know what we believe! How we treasure Christ! We can look people in the eye and clearly ask, “Do you believe and cherish what we believe? John wrote in his 3rd letter, “[They have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.](#)” (3 John 6) The only manner worthy of God is to live the scriptures as He has given them. Question 2 of the Westminster Catechism asks, “[What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?](#)” The answer is, “[The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.](#)” Parents you may want to consider teaching and studying the Westminster Catechism with your children. There is a total of a 107 questions and answers in the shorter catechism. It helps prepare one to answer the world of what we believe and why.

Christ Our Life – Fellowship With Christ

We finish this morning with joy of fellowship with God the Father and God the Son written of in verse 4, “[These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.](#)” God tells us through John that our joy is in fellowship with Him through His Word and in community, “[that our joy may be made complete.](#)”

First comes the tremendous joy of knowing God and experiencing fellowship with Him. But then we hunger for something more. Not that anything could be added to God, but that more of God can be experienced in the fellowship of the saints. King David understood this, “[Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in You. I said to the LORD, ‘You are my Lord; I have no good besides You.’ **As for the saints who are in the earth, they are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight.**](#)” (Psalm 16:1-3) If this were not true, the longing for fellowship would be idolatry. Our joy in God's fellowship is made complete in the joy that others have in God's fellowship. Our joy is completed in church, in fellowship with other believers.

It is not only permissible, but also necessary to first pursue your own delight in fellowship with Christ and then to pursue delight in fellowship with other believers. If you were indifferent as to whether someone finds fellowship with God or not, you would not belong to God, but to the world. God does not want our heart to be indifferent to good, but to seek good through Jesus. He wants us to delight in His good. He wants us to pursue our joy in Him, just like John did. John wrote, “[These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.](#)”

What a devastating doctrine legalism is — to teach that it is wrong for a Christian to pursue his own happiness found in Christ. This doctrine is an insult to God who

commands us to delight ourselves in the Lord and to count it all joy when we lay down our lives in order to share that delight with others. Others will be attracted to Jesus when they observe our joy in Him, in His church and in brothers and sisters who live the Scriptures with us in the community of church.

I pray that you will live each day in the fulfilled love and joy found in Christ. We have joy through Christ while living in a world that knows no eternal joy. Share the joy of Christ with others and your joy will increase.