

Series: Extremely Thankful with Holy Intentions

Title: God the Greatest Gift

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-13

Opening Thoughts

The past few weeks here at Bethany I, as a pastor, have been able to truly enjoy the people of God. I have watched the word of God work in the lives of the people. There have been both small and large observations. One that is quite obvious is the giving attitude toward others. Near \$4,000.000 raised for Jenna Bodiford and her family, near \$2,500.00 to Honor Larry Lynch and his family with a home going service, over \$250.00 to help Ms. Susan with traveling expense to go say good bye to her father in Michigan. There is also the joy of watching a large effort in a small town. Dozens of people mobilized to host a fall festival where several hundred people were blessed. Then there are the behind the scenes people that sit up for life groups, work in the office sending out letters, emailing invites to our thanksgiving tailgate, and doing many other things for the glory of God. And finally, there are the little things. The sound of fellowship in the foyer overshadowed with Wesley's loud "welcome to Bethany" accompanied with a unique laugh. The knowledge of fellowship outside the church, the new faces that come to life groups and church, new believers, scheduled baptisms, along with shared joys, meals, concerns, and pains. It hums of holy life together. The glory in it all is breathtaking. God's goodness is radiating through you, His people! Did you notice that the big and small things are all Giant things? Are you over joyed and extremely thankful for your God and Church? I certainly am and I want to encourage you to embrace the reality of life here at Bethany Baptist Church. I encourage attendance to worship on Sunday Mornings, evenings, and life groups on Wednesday. Life together in God's Word and worship toward Him. I want you to cherish correctly God and His good gifts. It would be a crying shame for any of us to miss opportunities to be uniquely blessed by God

What is the point in Embracing God and His Gifts:

Now the question has come to my mind “why is it important to embrace God and His good gifts now”? The answer is two-fold

- 1) It tremendously affects your worship toward God and our worship needs to be affected greatly! How do we worship here at Bethany?
 - a. We assemble together
 - b. We sing together
 - c. We pray together
 - d. We give together
 - e. We hear God’s word together
 - f. We respond together

Notice each aspect of worship begins with “we”, ends in “together”, and has an action lodged between. We then need to be affected to do all the things of worship more together! And I am very aware worship will become red hot when we become “Extremely thankful with Holy intentions”.

- 2) It directs our intentions. It is too easy to have intentions that are not bathed in holiness and honor to God. It is normal to put on ideas of morality and forget the Holy God of worship, but when We reach an “Extreme” level of thankfulness to God much about our mission changes from the inside out. Embracing God and His good gifts gives us Holy intentions in our marriage, with our children, amongst our friends, at the work place, in school, our town, and in our finances. Every area of my life has been

affected by Embracing God and His Good gifts, because my intentions have changed in every area by God!

The Purpose behind the Message

The message begins with its title: “Extreme Thankfulness with Holy intentions”. The purpose of such a title is to encourage each Christian to place their thankfulness in the right place for the right reasons. We have been blessed so greatly with the good gifts of God that we can lose sight on where our praise should be placed. Thanking God for the right reasons leads to a right life. This series will guide our minds toward “Extreme Thankfulness with Holy intentions” which will encourage godly living in all phases of life.

What has God given His people that encourages Extreme Thankfulness with Holy intentions?

- I. Himself (Ephesians 4:5)- Extreme thankfulness with Holy intentions begins to blossom in a person’s life when they “come to God and believe that HE IS” (Hebrews 6:11)! God is the grand prize and provocation to be extremely thankful with holy intentions. Once we come to God we discover more about Him as we read His Word, pray, and worship with other believers. Each time we obey God we learn more about who He is.
 - i. **What motivated the Psalmists to Write, Sing, Pray, and Worship?** I am currently writing devotions through the book of Psalms. Did you know it is the longest book in your bible? Did you know that it is a book of songs? Do you see why, as a pastor, I believe it important to sing? If God placed such an emphasis on song and worship shouldn’t a proclaimer of His truth do the same? That is why we place emphasis on you singing with others and not just others singing to you. What provoked the writers in the book of Psalms to write as passionately as they did? The answer is

God and His revelation about Himself. Throughout the Psalms the Person of God is described as Mighty Creator, Strong Fortress, Judge, Forgiver, King, Shepherd, Warrior, Sacrifice, and Provider. The writers tap into the details of God's strength, beauty, kindness, strictness, and creation. Belief in God equals songs to and about God resonating from the tongues of those who Believe that He IS! When God is described to people that love Him they become Extremely Thankful with Holy Intentions. *How has God revealed Himself to His Church that provokes them to be Extremely Thankful with Holy intentions thus transforming their lives daily?*

- ii. **As Unified**- Let us from this point forward unpacking the value of Ephesians 4:6. Paul says that there is "One God". Paul begins to describe God and His program to invoke obedience to Ephesians 4:1-3. Here Paul calls church members to "walk worthy", "forbearing one another", "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit" and please take note that these are difficult things to do. Paul knowing this brings us to the reasoning for his charge, and that is "God is unified". God the Father, Son, and Spirit are so unified they are ONE. We as church members are to work continually to be what God desires us to be one to another and the only way for us to do this is to Be Extremely Thankful with Holy Intentions that God is One! Looking at God as One as scripture describes Him releases the kind of extreme thankfulness that will make the church one. Thankfulness for God being One leads to the continual work of the church to be one.
- iii. **As Father of All**- Extreme thankfulness comes from God being Father of all. Once enemies of God by our sinful nature we are now children of

God. How is such a transition possible? God gave Jesus as a propitiation for our sin. Jesus came to be the Just one given for the unjust ones. One-man Adam brought sin into the World and death to all men. Jesus came as One Man to bring life to all men who would believe. God did not become our Father by happen chance, but He divinely selected each of us by the sacrifice of His Son. Such expressed love is meant to cause each church member to become extremely thankful that God became our Father at a great cost to Him. The verse implies that believers are not alone or isolated. The word “all” expresses a complete count. This means we not only have a Father, but we have a full family. We will discuss the great gift of a gospel family next week. Marvel with me that God brings us to Him and each other. Are you extremely thankful for God’s Fatherhood being expressed toward you?

iv. **As Above all things**- God is unified, Father, Ruler of all things, and He is our most sacred gift! He who rules over the known world has given Himself to us. When we believe that this truth Extreme overflowing thankfulness comes from our heart the Holy intentions. When the reality of God’s Rule is embraced thankfulness for the hardest of circumstances becomes real. There is no power higher than our God and He is our greatest gift. What does God rule over?

1. 7.5 billion people
2. 400 billion stars in our Galaxy
3. More than 170 billion galaxies
4. Possibility of infinite universes

Not to mention every single atom and rock on every planet. God rules over the seen and unseen. We are more than star dust. We are creatures with emotions and thoughts. The human brain is the most complex object in the universe and God rules over it. Man is God's most precious and complex design. He is only worthy to rule over us and He does so with wisdom and care.

v. **As Working in the Life of all that are His-** God is vastly supreme, but He is not disconnected from His people. God is High and Lofty, but He is not hands off in the lives of lowly creatures like ourselves. He is working on us and in us to be molded to His perfect image and to perform His will (Philippians 1:6; 2:13). Salvation, sanctification, and glorification is not a hands-off work. Our experience with God is personal. When we view all our success and blessings as the work of God's hands and not our own a strong sense of humility and glory floods our hearts for our enjoyment.

vi. **As the Glue that Holds Us Together-** God clues each person to Himself and makes us all together. He is in each person working , ruling , and holding so that we may grow up together in Christ. The friendships I share here at Bethany Baptist church only exist with God. My marriage to a beautiful Christian woman happened through God. This week I sat and talked to every life group leader individual and sat at Al and Debbie's house for a wonder breakfast with other Christians. This Never would have happened without God being the glue that holds us together. Look around at your friends and family and thank God that you are connected to them by His Grace. He holds us together which means we will never fall apart.

The Greatest Gift Appreciated

Are you extremely thankful toward God for the gift of Himself to you? Are you overwhelmed with of God is? If we are a people that appreciates God we must ask “how can we show appreciation to God”? The answer is so simple and biblical. It is something promoted here every Sunday we gather. We come together in His name, we pray together in His Name, We Give together in His name, we sing together in His name, and we go together in His name. Let us do all these things before we leave this place.