

A Thanksgiving Assignment **1 Chronicles 16:7-22**

Pray

Three Things...

Good morning! Happy Thanksgiving Week. If you are new here, my name is Dan Burleson. I am one of the Associate Pastors here at Cornerstone. And we always tell our guests three things...

First, we are grateful that you are with us. You are God's gift to us in this time we that we have together. So, thank you again for worshipping with us.

Second, you are in a place where the ground is level. Which means no one is any higher, better, or more significant than anyone else. The ground at the foot of the cross is level ground and we are sinners who need a Savior and Jesus is that Savior. And while your salvation is a personal matter, God never designed for it to be a private matter. He wants us to live as brothers and sisters in the family of God.

Which leads to the Third thing we need to tell you... we love you enough to speak the truth to you. That's truth with a capital "T". The truth from God's Word. The truth about Jesus. His Person. His Works. And His Words... How He can transform your life from the inside out. He is the Cornerstone of our faith.

Introduction

John Marc will continue his series in Ephesians in two weeks. This morning we are going to look at 1 Chronicles 16:7-22. If you have your Bibles this morning, please find 1 Chronicles 16:7-22. I know what you are thinking. Dan, you usually preach from Psalms. Yes. Why? Well...practically speaking...there are 150 Psalms in the Bible which

gives me lots of choices to pick from...especially when I am preaching a stand-alone sermon. Another reason is that we see the importance of the Psalms in Jesus's life. He often referred to various Psalms. Imagine as you read through the Psalms in a devotional manner that Jesus studied and meditated on the same material. Another reason to look at the Psalms is that it teaches us a lot about God. He is holy, just, faithful, forgiving, and glorious. But the Psalms also guide us through our own Christian lives. I love the Psalms.

This morning we are going to look at 1 Chronicles 16. And within 1 Chronicles 16 we find verses 8-22 are almost identical to Psalm 105:1-15. So...even though we are looking at 1 Chronicles 16 this morning, we are looking at a Psalm. And we are going to look at that Psalm in just a minute, but first we need to look at some history.

History

1 Chronicles is a book of history most likely recorded by Ezra. The books of 1 & 2 Chronicles cover most of the same information we see in 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings. It covers the history of Israel from Adam to the Babylonian Captivity.

Chronicles was written for a very specific group of people. It was written for the Jews who came back from the 70-year Babylonian captivity. At that time, Israel was nothing like it used to be under David or Solomon. After the captivity, they came back to a city in ruins. They had no protection. They had no wall. They had no temple. Even though they were back in the promised land, they were a small, weak, uninfluential, vulnerable and plain people. They didn't have a Jewish king. They had a Persian governor. Chronicles was written to encourage them of God's faithfulness. One pastor said, "God's faithfulness in the past is the foundation and the basis for our trust in His faithfulness in the future."

1 Chronicles 16 is a highlight in the history of Israel. During the time of Saul, an evil king, the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the

presence of God, was away from Jerusalem. When David became king, one of the first things he wanted to do was to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. 1 Chronicles 16:1 says, *“And they brought in the ark of God and placed it inside the tent which David had pitched for it, and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God.”* This was an important day which called for a big celebration. They had a huge meal and lots of music celebrating. Then 1 Chronicles 16:7 says, *“Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the LORD.”* This was a day of thanksgiving. The Ark, representing the presence of God, is back with them. Look at verse 7 again... *“Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the Lord.”* This is a Thanksgiving Assignment.

In Biblical Counseling, we give a lot of assignments. We assign our counselee to read, study or even memorize various passages of Scripture. Why? Because God’s Word changes lives. If a person wants to change and grow as a believer, then he needs to be in God’s Word. He needs to do what God says. The assignments we give to our counsees are what we look at when we have our counseling meetings. And it is amazing what God does when people do what His Word says to do. We are getting ready to offer all our Level 1 and Level 2 Classes over three weekends in the new year. We are calling it Fundamentals of Biblical Counseling Seminars. You can go to our website to learn more or to register. In the seminars, you will learn the importance of homework assignments.

So David gave an assignment to Asaph. The assignment was to give thanks to the Lord. And this thanksgiving was in the form of a Psalm that all the people of Israel sang as Asaph, the chief musician, led.

It is my prayer that as we look at this Psalm, this morning that we would be prompted to praise God. So let’s look at 1 Chronicles 16:8-22 together.

1 Chronicles 16:8–22 (NASB95) — *8 Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples. 9 Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; Speak of all His wonders. 10 Glory in His holy name; Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad. 11 Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face continually. 12 Remember His wonderful deeds which He has done, His marvels and the judgments from His mouth, 13 O seed of Israel His servant, Sons of Jacob, His chosen ones! 14 He is the LORD our God; His judgments are in all the earth. 15 Remember His covenant forever, The word which He commanded to a thousand generations, 16 The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac. 17 He also confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an everlasting covenant, 18 Saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan, As the portion of your inheritance.” 19 When they were only a few in number, Very few, and strangers in it, 20 And they wandered about from nation to nation, And from one kingdom to another people, 21 He permitted no man to oppress them, And He reproved kings for their sakes, saying, 22 “Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm.”*

In our passage this morning, we see that David gives Asaph and the other Levites a Psalm of Thanksgiving. This Psalm prompts the people to praise their God. Our outline has three main points...

- I. Command to Praise vs 8-14**
- II. Command to Remember vs 15-22**
- III. Homework – A Thanksgiving Assignment – Part 1**

Look back at verse 8-12. I want you to notice that there are ten commands given to praise. There are several different verbs given which shows there are a variety of ways that God’s people might worship Him. One commentator writes...

The Object of praise: The Lord (Yahweh) is the object of praise and worship, because of all the wondrous works He has performed. God’s deeds reveal His being.

The subject of praise: God’s own people are the subjects addressed by the ten commands. They are the ones with whom he has made His covenant, for whom He has performed marvelous deeds, and to whom He has fulfilled His promises.

The goal of praise: The goal is threefold: “praise magnifies the Lord,” “praise intensifies an appreciation of” His redeeming work, and “praise witnesses to” the unbeliever. – The Expositors Bible Commentary.

So the assignment has been given to give thanks to the Lord. To praise the Lord.

A. Verbal Praise

And the psalm gives ten commands to praise. In verses 8-9 we see five commands to praise “verbally.” In verses 10-12 We see commands to praise God in a more reflective way.

First, “Give thanks to the Lord” in verse 8. Thanksgiving is so important. The Bible gives several commands to give thanks to the Lord. Why? Because God is good and His love endures forever (Psalm 106:1; 107:1; 118:1; 1 Chronicles 16:34). Another reason is because it is God’s will for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 says, *16 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.* I love verses in the Bible that tell me what God’s will is for me. What great verses from 1 Thessalonians. If you haven’t already memorized them, you might want to memorize these three verses. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

As I studied for this sermon, I came across an article about giving thanks that really caused me to think.

I want to read to you from that article by Dr. Albert Mohler. The Article is titled, Thanksgiving as a Theological Act: What Does it Mean to Give Thanks?

He writes, “Thanksgiving is a deeply theological act, rightly understood. As a matter of fact, thankfulness is a theology in microcosm — a key to understanding what we really believe about God, ourselves, and the world we experience.

A haunting question is this: How do atheists observe Thanksgiving? I can easily understand what an atheist or agnostic would think of fellow human beings and feel led to express thankfulness and gratitude to all those who, both directly and indirectly, have contributed to their lives. But what about the blessings that cannot be ascribed to human agency? Those are both more numerous and more significant, ranging from the universe we experience to the gift of life itself.

Can one really be thankful without being thankful to someone? It makes no sense to express thankfulness to a purely naturalistic system. The late Stephen Jay Gould, an atheist and one of the foremost paleontologists and evolutionists of his day, described human life as “but a tiny, late-arising twig on life’s enormously arborescent bush.” Gould was a clear-headed evolutionist who took the theory of evolution to its ultimate conclusion — human life is merely an accident, though a very happy accident for us. Within that worldview, how does thankfulness work?

The Apostle Paul points to a central insight about thankfulness when he instructs the Christians in Rome about the reality and consequences of unbelief. After making clear that God has revealed himself to all humanity through the created order, Paul asserts that we are all without excuse when it comes to our responsibility to know and worship the Creator.

He wrote:

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even

though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. . . [Romans 1:20-22].

This remarkable passage has at its center an indictment of thanklessness. They did not honor Him as God or give thanks. Paul wants us to understand that the refusal to honor God and give thanks is a raw form of the primal sin. Theologians have long debated the foundational sin — and answers have ranged from lust to pride. Nevertheless, it would seem that being unthankful, refusing to recognize God as the source of all good things, is very close to the essence of the primal sin. What explains the rebellion of Adam and Eve in the Garden? A lack of proper thankfulness was at the core of their sin. God gave them unspeakable riches and abundance, but forbade them the fruit of one tree. A proper thankfulness would have led our first parents to avoid that fruit at all costs, and to obey the Lord’s command. Taken further, this first sin was also a lack of thankfulness in that the decision to eat the forbidden fruit indicated a lack of thankfulness that took the form of an assertion that we creatures — not the Creator — know what is best for us and intend the best for us.

They did not honor Him as God or give thanks. Clearly, honoring God as God leads us naturally into thankfulness. To honor Him as God is to honor His limitless love, His benevolence and care, His provision and uncountable gifts. To fail in thankfulness is to fail to honor God — and this is the biblical description of fallen and sinful humanity. We are a thankless lot.

Sinners saved by the grace and mercy of God know a thankfulness that exceeds any merely human thankfulness. How do we express thankfulness for the provision the Father has made for us in Christ, the riches that are made ours in Him, and the unspeakable gift of the surpassing grace of God? As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “*Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift*” [2 Corinthians 9:15].

So, observe a wonderful Thanksgiving — but realize that a proper Christian Thanksgiving is a deeply theological act that requires an active mind as well as a thankful heart. We need to think deeply, widely, carefully, and faithfully about the countless reasons for our thankfulness to God.”

Brothers and sisters, let us be the first to verbally and thoughtfully offer thanks to God.

Second, “Call upon His name” is also found in verse 8. What does it mean to call upon His name? A person’s name symbolizes all that one is and does. To God and the people of Israel, God’s names were important because they revealed aspects of who God was in Himself, in His actions within Himself, and in relation to His creation. In the context of our text this morning, to call upon the name of the Lord is to approach Him in thanksgiving, worship, and petition and in so doing proclaim the name of God. This is a summons for all believers to lift their hearts and voices and magnify God’s name in praise and adoration. The second command for us this morning is to call upon His name.

Third, “Make known His deeds” is also found in verse 8. And notice that it says, “among the peoples.” How do we make God’s deeds known to others? Well, first we need to know what His deeds are. In our passage this morning, the Israelites are celebrating all that God has done in history. God did so much in Genesis alone for the Israelites. And the command is to let people know what He has done. How about in your life? What has God done? We can all share what the Bible says God has done in OT and NT history as we read His Word. We can all share what God has done in our own lives as well. Cornerstone’s purpose is to know Christ and to make Him known. How did you come to know Christ? Let people know what Christ has done and how Christ changed your life.

Fourth, “Sing praises to Him” is the command given in verse 9. “*Sing to Him, sing praises to Him.*” God wants us to sing praises to

Him. This morning we have already sung three great songs praising God. And when we close the service we are going to sing one more. As you sing, focus on God—on who He is and what He has done. Think about the words to the song. We are often distracted when we sing. But remember who you are singing to. Colossians 3:16–17 says, *16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.* Let us be people who sing praises to Him with thankfulness in our hearts to God.

Fifth, “Speak of His wonders” is found in the second part of verse 9. This is like the third command that says, “Make known His deeds.” And this command says to speak of all His wonders. Earlier this week I was talking to Jim Bolt and Matthew Holton. I have learned that if I approach Jim Bolt with a greeting of “How are you?” I am going to hear, “Better than I deserve.” Or if I say, “Good to see you,” He will respond, “It’s good to be seen.” The beauty of these responses is that it gives an opening to speak of God. It gives you the opportunity to share why you are better than you deserve. It gives you an opportunity to tell why it’s good to be seen. Knowing that I would get one of these replies from Jim, I just approached them and said, “Well here are two of my favorite people.” Jim did not have a reply to that one. Does our speech include speaking of the wonders of God? Do we talk about God’s wonders with other believers? Do we talk about the wonders of God with our kids? With our spouse? With our family, neighbors, classmates, or coworkers? How might speaking of the all the wonders of God change our own lives, minister to others’ lives, and perhaps plant a seed in the life of one who does not know God? Let’s speak of God’s wonders.

B. Reflective Praise

Now we move from verbal praise in verses 8 & 9 to Reflective praise in verses 10 - 12. Reflective praise is that which is not necessarily verbal.

The first command in verse 10 is to “Glory in God’s Holy name.” Under verbal praise, we saw the command to “call upon God’s name.” Now we are commanded to “glory in God’s Holy name.” Pastor Steve Lawson writes that God’s Holy name is “the sum total of all His attributes.” What do you glory in? Charles Spurgeon says, “Those men who really know the Lord feel that such is the greatness of his glory, that it takes up all our faculties, absorbs all our powers, demands indeed our whole energy, and we cannot spare time, or love, or skill, or power, or thought for any other topic. Let the Lord be gloried in, and him alone, because the Lord alone is worthy to be gloried in.” What takes up all your faculties? What absorbs all your powers? What demands your whole energy? What consumes your time, love, skill, power and thoughts? Those are the things you glory in. Let’s glory in God’s holy name.

The second command of reflective praise is to “Rejoice and be glad” found in the second part of verse 10. It says, “*Let the heart of those who seek the Lord be glad.*” In verse 10b to 11, we see a triple reference to seek God. This seeking refers to a dependent and expectant attitude in worship rather than simply looking for direction in life. In the context of this verse, “seeking” refers to diligent, wholehearted searching that involves a strong desire focused on developing a relationship with the desired object. If you have a relationship with the Lord, God wants you to rejoice, or be glad. Earlier I suggested that you memorize 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 says, *16 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.* You see again what the will of God is for you. That you rejoice always. Philippians 4:4 says, “*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!*” We can rejoice because of who God is and what He has done.

The third command of reflective praise is to “seek the Lord and His strength.” Do you ever feel weak and powerless? Do you ever feel like you need God’s help? Charles Spurgeon writes, “Put yourselves under His protection. Regard Him not as a puny God, but look unto His

omnipotence, and seek to know the power of His grace. We all need strength; let us look to the strong One for it. We need infinite power to bear us safely to our eternal resting-place, let us look to the Almighty Jehovah for it.” Do you look to God for strength?

A fourth command is to “Seek His face continually” found in the second part of verse 11. What does it mean to seek God’s face? When we seek the face of God, we are seeking God’s presence. Notice that the passage says to seek His face “continually.” All the time. Make it a habit. Let’s desire to know God, to want God, to seek His presence in all circumstances every day of our lives. Let’s desire that more than anything.

A fifth command is to “Remember all that the Lord has done.” Look at verse 12. *“Remember His wonderful deeds which He has done, His marvels and the judgments from His mouth.”* In verse 8 it commands to Make known His deeds. In verse 9 it commands to speak of His wonders. Now it says to “remember” all that the Lord has done. Remember...never forget...think of...reflect on...celebrate. We are a forgetful people. He is telling the Israelites to remember His wonderful deeds, His marvels and His judgments. He is telling the Israelites to remember God’s faithfulness to them. The Israelites have seen God’s wonderful deeds. They have seen God’s marvels. And They have seen the effects of the judgments from God’s mouth. Look at the history of Israel. Remember....never forget...reflect on...celebrate.

Then verse 13 says, *“O seed of Israel His servant, Sons of Jacob, His chosen ones!* The Psalmist is saying, “remember Israel...you have been chosen by God. You are His chosen ones! Never forget. Celebrate.
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Verse 14 says, *“He is the Lord our God; His judgments are in all the earth.”* Again, don’t forget. He is the Lord our God. The Psalmist is reminding Israel that the Lord is OUR God. That statement alone is something to thank God for. And then verse 14 goes on to say that *“His*

judgments are in all the earth.” What the Psalmist is saying is that all men are answerable to God. We are going to see how God’s judgments have been issued in verses 21 and 22. What comforting words. These are words that cause thanksgiving. These are words that show we can trust God. He is faithful. These are words that show we should obey God. He is God.

II. Command to Remember Vs 15 - 22

The last command we just looked at under reflective praise was to remember God’s wonderful deeds, His marvels, and His judgments. Verses 13 & 14 remind the Israelites that they have been chosen by the God who judges the whole world. But verses 15 to 18 remind the Israelites to Remember God’s Covenant.

A. God’s Covenant

Look at verses 15 to 18.... *“Remember His covenant forever, The word which He commanded to a thousand generations, The covenant which He made with Abraham and His oath to Isaac. He also confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an everlasting covenant, Saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan, As the portion of your inheritance.”* “To remember” here is more than just recalling something that happened. It is to act upon what is remembered. This covenant is the Abrahamic Covenant. The covenant is introduced in Genesis 12:1-3. The covenant is made in Genesis 15:18-21. It is reaffirmed in Genesis 17:1-21. The covenant is renewed with Isaac in Genesis 26:2-6 and then with Jacob in Genesis 28:10-17.

The Psalmist is saying don’t forget. God made a covenant promise that is everlasting. Thank Him for that. It is true. Act upon what you remember. Again, Israel, you were chosen by God to receive a covenant. So remember His covenant, but also remember God’s faithfulness.

B. God’s Faithfulness

Look at verses 19-22... *“When they were only a few in number, Very few, and strangers in it, And they wandered about from nation to nation, And from one kingdom to another people, He permitted no man to oppress them And He reproved kings for their sakes, saying, “Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm.”*”

Again, the Psalmist wants the Israelites to remember that they were chosen by God, that God gave them a Covenant promise and that He has been and continues to be faithful to His chosen ones since the beginning.

Verses 19 – 22 describe the condition of the Israelites when there were only a few of them and they had no settled residence in Canaan but wandered from place to place. You can read about their history in Genesis 12-35. The Psalmist is reminding the Israelites of their ancestors. There were just a few of them. They were a tiny group. They had no permanent residence, so they wandered from country to country.

Verses 21-22 seem to refer to the incidents with the king of Egypt in Genesis 12:10-20 and with Abimelech, King of Gerar in Genesis 20:1-8. Both incidents involved Sarah, Abraham’s wife. But verses 21-22 make these incidents more general. Pastor Steve Lawson writes, “The Lord struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues when Abraham’s wife Sarai was taken into his quarters (Genesis 12:17). God later rebuked Abimelech, king of Gerar (Genesis 20:3-7), to protect Abraham. *“Do not touch my anointed ones”* is what God spoke to foreign kings on behalf of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were called prophets of God, a title indicating they were anointed with the Spirit’s power to speak as God’s messengers to men.”

Israel, you have much to be thankful for. Remember God’s Covenant and remember God’s faithfulness. It may not have been easy to get from where you started to where you are. But remember that God is faithful. Give thanks to Him in all circumstances. The Psalmist was reminding the Israelites of all these things on a very special day. The ark was back,

the enemies had been subdued. David was the new king. All seemed well.

III. Homework – A Thanksgiving Assignment – Part 1

I love how this passage begins in verse 7. “Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the Lord.” So...here is your assignment this week. And it is fitting because this week is Thanksgiving. Look at your outline in your bulletin. **Instructions:** Take time to remember all that God has done in you and through you and for you this past year. Next read 1 Chronicles 16:8-12 every day this week. Look at the lists of Verbal Praise and Reflective Praise that were taken from these verses. As David assigned Asaph to thank God, your assignment is to choose two ways each day from the lists given that you will offer thanksgiving to God.

Let’s pray:

Benediction:

Philippians 4:4–8 (NASB95) — 4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.