

INTRO

For the longest time, I've wanted us to experience on a Sunday morning what we have experienced often in our weds night worship/prayer services.

This is not our usual way to conducting a Sunday service, but our elders and I feel that it is appropriate. We usually preach the Bible, sing worship songs, pray, take communion and give. Many of those aspects will be in our service today as well, but just a little different. I would call this a Thanksgiving, prayer, worship service.

The way we set it up today gives us a chance to practice Bible rather than JUST hearing – which we need; AND which we love to do. As a matter of fact, we start a new series on Romans March 3 as we take the book verse by verse to study and apply it.

Today will be made up of 4 parts that we each get a chance to consider and practice. Thanksgiving, Examination, Reflection, and Resolve. Each of these we will look at from the Scriptures and take some time to practice and sing some songs. This is a way you can pray on your own or with your spouse, family or group. So, I hope you get to experience, learn, and practice a prayerful and worshipful time with the Lord today – take it into your time with him next week.

1. Thanksgiving

Did you know God has a perfect sense of smell? Now, I'm speaking in human terms about a holy and transcendent God, but in God's perfection, He's able to smell perfectly. And there is no greater smell to God than gratitude – thanksgiving.

We read in Leviticus that the smoke from the burning sacrifice would ascend toward heaven as a soothing, fragrant aroma to the Lord. God has a great sense of smell and nothing smells so sweet to him as the gratitude of his people.

In the book of Leviticus God gave specific instructions on the proper way to offer sacrifices, whether peace offerings or sin offerings or whatever. This included what the Bible calls the "thank offering," that is, sacrifices that were an expression of gratitude to God for his mercy and his many blessings. Like so many other offerings, the remains of the thank offering were to be burned.

Psalms 100 is all about giving thanks!

Psalms 100:1–5 (ESV) *1 Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! 2 Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! 3 Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter his gates with*

thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! 5 For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

There is immense practical, sin-killing power in joyful, heartfelt gratitude. Gratitude protects us from sinful *presumption* or acting as if we are owed the gracious blessings God provides. Gratitude also guards our hearts from selfish *pride*, or living as if we are ultimately responsible for whatever good we accomplish (see 1 Cor. 4:7). But most of all, gratitude deflects all glory and praise to God alone. It turns our eyes and attention away from self to the Savior, to him from whom all good gifts ultimately come (cf. James 1:17).

Practice thanking Him through prayer and/or journaling

Thank the church for their kindness, presence, and love to our family during a hard trial. YOU ARE THE BEST. If I weren't a pastor here at GB, I would want to attend no other church than this one. Thank you – we love you

Let's fill this auditorium with the sweet-smelling aroma of gratitude to God

Song - 10,000 reasons

2. Examination

Psalm 139:1–6 (ESV) **1** O LORD, you have searched me and known me! **2** You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. **3** You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. **4** Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. **5** You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. **6** Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

Psalm 139:23–24 (ESV) **23** Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! **24** And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

“Lord expose things in me that aren't of you.” Pray and/or journal

Song - Through the valley

Song – Raised to Life

3. Reflection (and confession)

Rom 8:5-8 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

1Jn 1:9-10 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Where do I need to repent, to turn, to have His power change me? Confess.

This is also preparing our hearts for communion as well.

Song - Great are you Lord

Song - Great I am

Communion

4. Resolve (and the gospel)

Psalm 62:6 He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

1Cor 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*

Lamentations 3:22–24 (ESV) 22 *The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24* *“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”*

“What am I resolved to do from here? And How does the gospel empower me?”

Song - You never let go

Benediction

Remind people they can do this kind of prayer throughout their week, (take a listen to the spiritual growth sermon in Forward 1/14/24)

Heb 12:1-2 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

DISCUSSION FOR GROUPS:

Either practice this way of prayer together – (each person thank God, take time to pray for him to expose darkness, time for confession for those who are willing to, ask the Lord for resolve to joyfully follow Him.)

Or ask questions

1. What are some things that you are thankful for?
2. What would it look like to pray this way each day?
3. How can we pray for one another?