

# Give Thanks Celebration

## 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Ben Deaver @ Tallgrass Church Central Gathering on November 18, 2018

Big Idea—Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances!

Mingle Question—What do you feel thankful for this Thanksgiving?

### Don't forget:

- Pumpkin pie
- Construction paper sheets
- Staplers
- Sharpies
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 coloring sheet
- Psalm 100:3 three-page packets
- Psalm 100:4-5 coloring sheet
- ESVs for the kids down front
- ZZ plant
- Tallgrass Community Church quilt

### Ideas:

- Read to the kids
- Have the kids read
- Coloring Sheets
  - <https://www.hopeink.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/GatesWithThanksColor.pdf>
- Dec. 2 game plan
- Pray Psalm 100
- 1 Chronicles 29—My dad sent this verse to the family on Thursday, November 15, 2018.
- Joybedience
- Read the passage wrongly
- Stack of ESVs for the kids
- WOTY and gratitude
- Stones of Remembrance

### How are we hoping our church family will be like Tallgrass?

- Deep roots
- Grows organically
- Resilient
- Reclaiming the Tallgrass Prairie
- Cultivating gratitude/thankfulness good for Tallgrass
- The ZZ Plant!

## 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 on p. 574

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- Read 1 Thessalonians wrong. “Rejoice *sometimes*... pray *when you’re in trouble*... give thanks *when you get exactly what you wanted for Christmas*...”
- Did I get that right?
- Have Kate read it.

### PRAY!

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice *when you feel like it*, <sup>17</sup> pray *when you really need it*, <sup>18</sup> give thanks *when something awesome happens*...

### <sup>16</sup> Rejoice always...

- In the Greek always means always, as in there’s never a time to not rejoice.
- Can rejoice mean *feel happy*?
- No. It’s humanly impossible to *feel happy* always. So this can’t mean *feel happy*. God is not asking us to do something that He Himself has not provided the way for us to do it.
- Illus: Let’s say I gave you a piece of paper and said, “Draw me a picture!” Could you do it? Nope. What would you need? A crayon, or pencil, or marker.
- God has given us what we need to rejoice always, to have a deep and abiding joy at all times, even if we don’t always *feel happy*.
- So how can we *rejoice always*? There’s a teeny tiny word in this passage that is the key to what God has provided for us. Can anyone guess what this word is? It’s *in*. This is the will of God *IN* Christ Jesus for you.
- Can you imagine if we read these verses and it stopped at *this is the will of God*? No way can we do that.
- But *in Christ Jesus*, now we’re talking. Now we’re cooking with gas, as they say!!!
- *In Christ Jesus* is the Gospel Connection here. Jesus rejoiced always! In Hebrews 12 it said that He endured the cross for the JOY that was set before Him.

### <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing...

- Can you imagine if we read these verses and it stopped at *this is the will of God*? How would this change these verses? No way can we do that.
- How can we pray without ceasing? Without ever stopping?
- I think this is easier to get than we might initially think. If I said to you, “Never stop loving your wife.” Would you get what I’m saying? Yes!
- What’s your relationship with your smartphone like? Do you ever cease to be on your phone? Some of y’all are working in very clear boundaries with your phone usage. Some of you...not so much. We tend to *be on our phones without ceasing*... That doesn’t mean we’re always on our phone but it does mean we are constantly and continually turning to our phone for help, for entertainment, for connectivity, for mindless scrolling, etc.
- Pray without ceasing means constantly and continually turn to the Father for help, for entertainment, for connectivity, for mindful engagement.
- So how can we *pray without ceasing*? There’s a teeny tiny word in this passage that is the key to what God has provided for us. Can anyone guess what this word is? It’s *in*. This is the will of God *IN* Christ Jesus for you.
- We can be in constant relationship with God our Father because we are *IN* Christ Jesus.
- John 1:12 says, “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

## **18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

- Now what's the connection between *pray without ceasing* and *give thanks in all circumstances*?
- Let's say you're facing an awesome circumstance. What's an example? Your team wins a game. How do you give thanks? Or who do you give thanks to? God your Father!

### **Stones of Remembrance—Stuff I'm thankful for:**

- Tallgrass Community Church
  - Ricky falling into the baptistry
- Now...let's say you're facing a really difficult circumstance. What's an example? You face a miscarriage. How do you give thanks in that type of circumstance? You have to talk to God your Father about it FIRST, before you can give thanks. This is prayer. "Father, I was really excited to have a son. I don't understand why this happened. What is going on here? How can I give thanks in THIS circumstance? Please help me. I know the world is a broken and hurting place. You say you care about all people. What about Micah Jermaine? You are still good. Help me to give thanks to you for what I do have. Thank you that one day I will meet Micah face to face."

## **Let's practice rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks TOGETHER!**

- "If you wanna go fast, go alone. But if you wanna go far....go TOGETHER!" –African proverb
- "Little by little one travels far."
- "Be humbly mindful of the root that keeps you lithe and green."
- "The heart cannot love what the mind does not know."
- We're going to turn to Psalm 100. Does anyone know an easy way to find the Psalms? Split your Bible right down the middle!

## **Have Kate read Psalm 100:1-5 on p. 287**

<sup>1</sup> Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

<sup>2</sup> Serve the LORD with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good;

his steadfast love endures forever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.

## **Pray Psalm 100 in groups of 3-5**

- Someone reads a verse. Then pray in light of that verse. For example, "Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!" We want to make a joyful noise to you because you are the LORD.
- 3-5 minutes
- If you don't want to read or pray that's ok. Just take it all in.
- If you don't believe in God but you DO want to try to pray that's great. Go ahead.
- This will help you slow down, and really think about what you can give thanks for even TONIGHT!

## Review *Do Justice*

- The Quartet of the Vulnerable
- The four mason jars—Dwell Mobile, Life Choice Ministries, Orphan Helpers, Tallgrass Church Adoption Fund
- Because we have been blessed with so much, we can do justice by helping the vulnerable.
- Because God first loved us, we exist to love God and love our neighbors.
- You can give to these four organizations this holiday season here at Tallgrass Church. You can also give to these organizations online...at any time.

## What can *YOU* give thanks for?

- I'm not asking, "What ARE you thankful for?" I'm asking, "What CAN you give thanks for?" One is recognizing what you're already feeling. The other is beginning with thinking about your circumstances and then CHOOSING to give thanks...even if you don't FEEL like it.
- We want to CULTIVATE gratitude. That means we have to work hard at it.

## Give Thanks Chain

1. What can I *choose* to give thanks for tonight?
  2. How can choosing to give thanks in all circumstances give me courage to take a scary step of faith?
- Everyone should have a piece of construction paper.
  - Please write your name on it.
  - Please write something that you can give thanks for on it.
  - Before we sing our last song together we'll connect all the links in our chain to help us cultivate gratitude as a church family.

## Our King & Kingdom

Psalm 100 speaks about entering the courts of the Temple with thanksgiving. Guess what! That Temple was torn down...and the one that was built after it was also torn down eventually. But a man came to take the place of the Temple, Jesus Christ. His Body is the Temple and it was torn down in our place and then rebuilt. We call that Resurrection. Jesus is in the process of rebuilding His Kingdom and we get to be a part of that too. I can't think of anything to give more thanks for than that this evening!

**PRAY!**