

# THANKSGIVING AT ALL TIMES

## SERMON OUTLINE

### Introduction

- Lincoln's 1863 Thanksgiving Proclamation (See handout.)

*Ephesians 5:20 – ... give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Romans 8:28 (NLT) – ... we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

### Timeless God-facts that lead to thanksgiving anytime:

#### 1. God will meet me where I am.

*Luke 17:12 – ... as (Jesus) entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance...*

*Luke 17:16 – ... (the healed man) fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.*

*Luke 15:8 (NIV84) – (Jesus) "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?"*

#### 2. God will answer my prayers.

*Luke 17:13 – ... (ten lepers) lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."*

*Luke 11:9 (NLT) – (Jesus) ... "I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you."*

#### 3. God will bless my obedience.

*Luke 17:14 – ... as (the lepers) went they were cleansed.*

*James 1:25 (NLT) – "...if you do what it (the law) says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it."*

#### 4. God wants to restore my relationships.

*Luke 17:14 – (Jesus said) ... "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed.*

*Romans 12:18 (NIV84) – If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

*Mark 5:19 (NIV84) – (The formerly demon-possessed man begged to stay with Jesus.) 19 But he (Jesus) refused, and said to him, 'Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.'*

#### 5. God has the power and the will to save me.

*John 17:14 – ...when (Jesus) saw (the lepers) he said to them, "Go..."*

*Genesis 1:1,3 (NLT) – In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... 3 God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. (See John 1:1-3.)*

*Luke 17:11 (NLT) – Jesus continued on toward Jerusalem...*

*Luke 18:31 – Taking the twelve disciples aside, Jesus said, "Listen, we're going up to Jerusalem, where all the predictions of the prophets concerning the Son of Man will come true.*

*John 6:51 (NIV84) – (Jesus) "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

*2 Cor. 5:19 (NLT) – God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.*

### Purposeful reflecting...

- Ask the Lord to speak, then spend five minutes in silence. (Use a timer!) Notice what you notice (maybe take notes).

#### Experience

- Review the five timeless "God-facts" from the message. Which one do you find the most encouraging right now? What personal need does it address in your life?

- When have you been most grateful for God's willingness to meet you where you were? What happened? How did you feel as a result? What did you do?

#### Transform

- Are any of these "God-facts" hard for you to believe for some reason? Which one(s)? Why do you think that's the case? Take a moment to speak to God honestly about this, telling Him what you think would help you move forward in faith.
- If there is some relationship God wants you to restore, ask Him for the grace to pursue that reconciliation, trusting He will give it to you. Tell the other party this is something God has urged to do, remembering that He only expects you to do your part (Rom. 12:18) and that a good outcome takes two.

#### Share

- Can you think of someone who would benefit from hearing about how any of these God-facts have played out in your life? Ask God for the right opportunity to tell that person about your experience and look for God to open the door.
- Thanksgiving Day sharing experiment: If you're spending Thanksgiving with family and/or friends, read Lincoln's proclamation to the group before your meal. Then invite everybody to share things they're grateful for in spite of the country's tense divisions right now. (You might want to urge them to steer clear of politics for the day and focus instead on our many blessings.)