TITLE: The Worship of Thanksgiving!

TEXT: 1st Thess. 5:16-18;Heb.11:25-29;

Rev. 21:1-5; Lk. 17:20-21; Jn. 14:15-20;

Isa. 35:5-6; Mt. 11:2-5, Jn. 3:16

INTRODUCTION: The worship of God can take many forms in our life... When we gather together in His name, like we are doing here this morning, it is a form of our worship of God. We worship God as we lift up His name in prayer...We worship God when we lift up our voices to Him is songs of praise...We worship God when we diligently study His Word...

And as we obey what His Word says it is an act of Worship to Him......

This morning I want to center in on another very important act of our worship of God...the act of our thanksgiving.

**1The 5:16 (NIV) Be joyful always;**

**17 pray continually;**

**18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus**.

Gods will for us as Christians is that we be joyful always, that we pray continually, and that we give thanks, be thankful in all circumstances!

So then, are we to be thankful for all the trials and tribulations that we may go through in this life?

Are we to be thankful for broken bones, sickness, the loss of a loved one?

Notice that it doesn't say--"be thankful for all circumstances but be thankful in all circumstances!"

Example: Several years ago I broke my left arm up pretty badly, a double compound fracture that required me to go through 11-12 surgeries over 5 years.

Am I thankful for breaking my arm and all the pain and suffering that was involved? No, I may look dumb but I'm really not!

But even though I was not thankful to God for the circumstance I was very thankful to God in the circumstance..

You see, time after time, God’s grace was abundantly poured out to me during that time....

At times when the pain was very severe I thank God for giving man the ability to come up with drugs that would help ease that pain.

I thank God for gifting my surgeon with the God given abilities that he had when it came to reconstructing and repairing my arm..

I thank God that in my fear of surgery that time after time God gave me the comfort, courage and peace that I so desperately needed at the time.

I thank God for His faithfulness to His word that oftentimes can only be made a reality in our lives when we go through times of trial and tribulation..

I am thankful that when God said that He will never leave us or forsake us that He meant it! That He is not just a God who is there for the good times but He is a God who is there for us all the time.

The book of Hebrews is a book of contrast....

The contrast between Judaism and how God dealt with His people in the Old Testament, and with Christianity, and how God deals with His people today. The contrast between the Abrahamic covenant, the animal sacrificial system, and the new covenant that was secured for us by the blood of Christ.....Our one sacrifice for sin that was made once for all..."By one sacrifice, the sacrifice of Himself, Jesus has made perfect forever all those who are being made holy through a life changing relationship with Him.

It is in this book, the book of Hebrews, that we find these words.....

**Hebr 12:25 (NIV) See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?**

**26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."**

**27 The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken--that is, created things--so that what cannot be shaken may remain.**

**28 Therefore, since we are receiving a \*kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,**

**29 for our "God is a consuming fire."**

Scripture starts out here with a contrast...

**See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?**

He who warned them on earth is referring to God speaking to the people through Moses and the Mosaic law..

The one who warns us from heaven is Jesus.. He who ascended to heaven and speaks to us directly through His Holy Spirit...

When God spoke through Moses and the people refused to listen and were judged because of it, how much more will we be judged if we ignore the one who speaks to us directly from Heaven?

God spoke to the Israelites through Moses and the Prophets---- God speaks directly to us, the Church today, through the Holy Spirit that He has placed within us.

And if God Judged them when they refused to listen when He had to talk through a middle man, how much more will He judge us when we refuse to listen, when he speaks to us directly..

**26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."**

**27 The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken--that is, created things--so that what cannot be shaken may remain.**

When God spoke from Mount Sinai, when God gave Moses the law, Scripture says that the earth literally shook.

Scripture tells us of a coming time when God will not only shake the earth but the Heavens as well.

This shaking will result in a doing away with of all created things, whether on earth or in Heaven...

It is what John describes when he writes in:

**Reve 21:1 (NIV) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.**

**2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.**

**3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.**

**4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."**

**5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"**

This is speaking about the consummation of the Kingdom of God. What we as Christians have to look forward to.

Back to Hebrews 12:28----

**28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,**

Church, we are going to receive a Kingdom that cannot be shaken!

Everything created; everything of this earth is perishable. And all of it will one day pass away.

All of the things that we place so much value on today will perish.

You value your home, your car, your sofa, your TV, your job, your bank account, your IRA......

They are all perishable; they will all one day pass away.....

Might have some bad news for you----If you manage to hold on to them until you die, you will not be able to take them with you when you leave!

Scripture assures us that as when we came into this world so shall we leave it!

We didn't even come into this world with the clothes on our back---That is the same way we will leave it…

But for the Christian, that is OK!

Because---**we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken!** A Kingdom that can never be destroyed but one that will endure forever.

So**, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.**

To really be thankful for this Kingdom that we are receiving we need to understand just what this kingdom is and what it is all about..

This will require some investigation into the subject...

We will start with a word study...

1. Kingdom**= 932 basileia {bas-il-i'-ah}**

**1) royal power, kingship, dominion, rule**

**1a) not to be confused with an actual kingdom but rather the right or authority to rule over a kingdom**

**1b) of the royal power of Jesus as the triumphant Messiah**

**1c) of the royal power and dignity conferred on Christians in the Messiah's kingdom**

**2 the territory that is subject to the rule of the King**

Now let me ask you a question--Where is it that Jesus rules and reigns from today in the life of a Christian?

(In Here!) Jesus rules and reigns from within our hearts.

This kingdom that Scripture is speaking about is the territory that is subject to the rule of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

Church, we are the kingdom of God if God dwells within us and rules within our lives! We are the territory of the King!

I think this is what Jesus tried to explain to the Pharisees one day as they were questioning Him....

**Luke 17:20 (NIV) Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation,**

**21 nor will people say, `Here it is,' or `There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you.**

Jesus is the Kingdom of God! Jesus is the Royal Power, the kingship of God. He is the dominion and the rule of God.

What Jesus was trying to impress upon the Pharisees was that the Kingdom of God was not merely an external Kingdom, although one day it will be manifest as that, but it is primarily an internal Kingdom.

A Kingdom is the territory over which a King reigns! We are that territory if we have Christ ruling in our hearts.

Jesus told the Pharisees that the Kingdom of God was among them. He was speaking about Himself..

But, later, when speaking to His disciples and trying to prepare them for His up-coming death and departure from this world, Jesus says this...

**John 14:15 (NIV) "If you love me, you will obey what I command.**

**16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--**

**17 the Spirit of truth.**

**The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.**

**18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**

**19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.**

**20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.**

Jesus is the Kingdom of God, and if we have Jesus within us then we have the Kingdom of God within us..

**Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.**

Therefore, since we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken!

**3880 paralambano {par-al-am-ban'-o}**

**1) to join to one's self-to receive**

Receiving here is in the present tense!

The present tense represents a simple statement of fact or reality viewed as occurring in actual time.

Jesus is the Kingdom, The time for receiving the Kingdom, to join one's self to Jesus, is in the present! The time to receive Jesus, receive His Kingdom is now!!

The prophet Isaiah told about the signs that would accompany the establishment of Gods Kingdom--

**Isai 35:5 (NIV) Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.**

**6 Then will the lame leap like a deer,**

**and the mute tongue shout for joy.**

When John the Baptists was is prison he sends his disciples to ask Jesus this question...

**Matt 11:2 (NIV) When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples**

**3 to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"**

**4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see:**

**5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.**

What Jesus was telling John was that the Kingdom of God, the royal power of God had come!

**Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.**

There is a time coming when Scripture says that God will shake the heavens and the earth and everything that is created will be removed, the only thing that will remain is that which cannot be shaken.

And the only thing that cannot be shaken is Gods Kingdom which is consummated in Christ and the Church.

Because of that let us always be thankful and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.

Folks, without thanksgiving, being thankful to God, it is impossible to really worship Him.

We all have much to be thankful for. Thankful for His Kingdom and the place that he has secured for us in that Kingdom.

Thankful for all the fullness of His Grace He has poured out upon our lives-- Especially the Grace of salvation.

We have all sinned against God. Scripture says that our righteousness, the righteousness of man, is as filthy rags in His sight.

If we were to get what each of us deserves for sinning against a Holy God, what we deserve is an eternity of torment in Hell for our transgressions.

But By His Grace He has provided a way for us to avert that judgment.

**Jn. 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life!**

If we can find nothing else in this life to be thankful for, we can always be thankful for that! We can always be thankful for the love of God that is revealed to us in Jesus.

Are you thankful to God this morning for the abundance of His Grace?

Are you thankful that when Jesus left this earth that he didn't leave us as orphans but he sent us a comforter to be with us in His absence--He sent us His Holy Spirit to indwell our hearts..

Are you thankful this morning that you serve a God who loves you with a love the goes beyond human definition and comprehension?

Are you thankful for the Kingdom that Jesus has made you a part of? Are you thankful to be a part of a Kingdom that cannot be shaken but will endure throughout eternity?

If so, then be thankful and so worship God!

Worship God by giving thanks to Him.

And we need to do it acceptably---with reverence and awe.

When we are truly thankful to God it is an act of worship to Him. Our thanksgiving rises up before Him as a sweet smelling fragrance.

**Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire!**

For the Christian, I believe Thanksgiving is possibly the greatest of all of our holidays in this country.

It centers us, or should center us, on God and the abundance of his Grace that he has bestowed upon our lives. But for the Christian it needs to be a day that we use as a model for every other day of the year. A day to give thanks to God and by so doing worship Him acceptably....