

Text: Psalm 118:24

Theme: For Such a Time As This...

November 11, 2018

Why are you in this place and this time? Why are you alive today? Why do you live in Taylor or Price county and not Door county? I believe there's a single word answer to all those questions, a one-word answer that is provided today by our text. We are in this place for such a time as this for one reason - to rejoice. Today, as we set aside time for focusing on thanksgiving, we focus on our theme: For Such a Time As This.

I. God has placed each one of us here for such a time as this to do what He created us to do - to rejoice. A. Sadly, we are hesitant to fulfill our purpose. 1. We are slow to rejoice because we are ungrateful. Never has there been a generation like this generation, a generation so unthankful, so ungrateful, a generation who believes they can do it all without the assistance of anyone, including God. Sadly, we live in that generation; we are that generation; we do as that generation does. We'd like to think that they do it and we don't because they aren't Christians and we are, but when you draw the line in the sand, we all fall into the category of ungrateful.

2. We are also slow to rejoice because we fail to see God at work. Along with being the ungrateful generation, we are also the generation who can't see the forest for the trees, who can't see God's work because we're too busy praising ourselves for our work. Someone always wants the credit; someone always wants the honor; someone always wants the fame. In the process of wanting, God's work, the work that made everything we do possible, is ignored. We put on our blinders like the Amish have on their horses and we pretend that we're making things happen, that great things happen because of "we" when in actuality all those great things happen because of Thee.

3. We are slow to rejoice because we simply forget that this day is a gift. Who is more appreciative of each new day, the Peruvian family who lives on potatoes and rice or one of our families with cupboards filled to overflowing? Who is more likely to believe that today is a gift, the person in the hospital recuperating from bypass surgery or our teenagers who think they are invincible? Too often, we fail to rejoice each day because we forget that each day is given as a gift. It's given for the purpose of rejoicing. Each day that we allow to slip by without rejoicing in that day, is a gift that we failed to unwrap, a gift we tossed in the garbage without ever knowing what was inside.

B. Since we are in this place for such a time as this, how do we rejoice in this moment? 1. Because God set us in this place, we rejoice by replacing complaints with compliments. Imagine what would happen if compliments were the only words that could be spoken for an entire day. Would you notice the difference at Kwik Trip, at work? Because we are here for such a time as this, we make it our goal to compliment where compliments are due and to bite our tongue when we want to complain. Our text doesn't stutter when it says, "We will rejoice and be glad in it." The more we replace complaints with appropriate compliments, the more we will do what we are here to do.

2. We rejoice by believing that every good and perfect gift is from God. We already know it's true, but knowing and believing are two different things. When we believe every gift is from God, we unwrap it as a gift; we value it as a gift. As we

unwrap it, we do so with the excitement of a little child. As we pull it out of the box, we praise our God in the same way a little child gives his or her Mom or Dad a hug. How different would our days be if we began each day by saying and believing, "This is the day that the Lord has made." We can do it; God is waiting for us to do it. He's waiting to see the joy on our faces when we regard every day as a gift from God.

3. We rejoice by choosing to rejoice even when life doesn't make sense. Life doesn't make sense - that's a frequent reality. But what can we do when life doesn't make sense? Because we realize we are here for such a time as this, we can be an example to others by looking for reasons to rejoice, for ways to remain positive, for opportunities to praise our God, for moments in the midst of our confusion to announce to ourselves that God is still in control. It takes someone of great faith to rejoice when life doesn't make sense. You can be that someone as you remember that you are here for such a time as this.

4. We rejoice by reflecting on the cross. Life here is tough. It's unjust, unfair, unpredictable, uninspiring, and on our list could go. Surrounded by a world that doesn't naturally lead to rejoicing, we turn our focus to the cross. For Jesus, the cross was tough. It was unjust and unfair. Yet as we focus on that cross today and realize we are alive for this moment, we rejoice because Christ took our place, because He rescued us from hell, and gave us eternity with Him in heaven. When everything around us looks bleak, the cross says, "Look this way. Look and reflect. I died so that you could be here for such a time as this. Live life beneath the cross and you will really live!"

5. We rejoice by being grateful for the little things. More, bigger, better... that's our country's motto, a motto many claim as their life motto. We can have the most toys on the last day, but I'd rather have the crown of life. Having spent time in Peru, I've seen a side of life that many never experience which is unfortunate because once you experience it, once you live among them in their poverty, once you eat watery potato soup for dinner, supper, and breakfast for days at a time and still see smiles on their faces, you realize that being grateful for the little things will prompt rejoicing in every moment of our abundance-filled lives here in this country.

6. We rejoice by living for such a time as this. God has a question for you this morning, a question whose response will identify why you are living. That question is, "Are you living for the moment or merely marking time?" Marking time promotes negativity and enough gloom and doom to give people a reason to want to leave this world. But living for the moment promotes excitement, enthusiasm, eagerness to serve, and hearts overflowing with rejoicing. You are in this place for such a time as this to live this moment to the fullest, to make the most of every opportunity. When we choose to live for this moment, God will bless this moment and that combination will create an incredible life on this side of heaven.

7. So I ask you again, "Why are you here? Why are you in this place at this time? Why are you living for such a time as this? You know the answer, the correct answer. Choose it. Reflect it and watch what God does next. Amen.