

Text: Isaiah 12:1-6

Theme: Today Is the Day

November 23, 2017

How many of you have a mental list of things you are going to do someday or dreams of how life will be someday? We like to think about someday because it's a great distraction from the not-so-great days of the present. As Isaiah pens the words of our text, he begins with the words, "In that day," but the day he was envisioning has already arrived for us because Christ has arrived. So, as we consider his words on this Thanksgiving Day, we focus on the present as we say, "Today is the day."

I. Today is a day to give thanks. 1. As Isaiah encourages us, today is the day to give thanks by calling on His name. As we call on His name, what are we doing? We're acknowledging that He is God and weren't not, that He is in control of this world, not us, that He has all power. Calling on God's name is our way of saying, "Lord, this is all Yours. You created it and You preserve it. I'm calling on You to give You thanks for Your work in the past and to pray for Your active involvement in my life in the future." Today and every day that follows is the right time to call on God, to express our thanks by appreciating Him, by claiming Him as Lord of our lives.

2. Today, we give thanks by rejoicing in His forgiveness. Isaiah writes, "Although You were angry with me, Your anger has turned away." Have you ever been angry, ever flew off the handle? Multiply your worst moment by a hundred and then take a moment to consider what it would be like if God were angry at you. Wouldn't our minds always be on high alert, afraid of what God might do in His anger?

Thankfully, God doesn't do what God could do. Instead of anger, God calmly says, "Although you deserve nothing from Me, I, purely out of grace, choose to forgive you, to erase that event from My memory." What great motivation to say, "Today is the day to give thanks!"

3. Today, we give thanks by acknowledging God as the source of our salvation. Suppose salvation depended on you, was earned by your deeds or by the life you lived. Would you have any security? Would anything be absolute? Would eternity even be a possibility? Today we give thanks because our salvation is absolute, secure, guaranteed because it comes from God. We know the words, "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is a gift of God, not by works." It's all in that one verse! There is our proof, our security, our comfort. Because of God's grace, because of His gift of salvation, we give thanks today and every day.

4. Today, we give thanks because God is our strength. Isaiah pens the words, "The Lord, the Lord, (repeated intentionally for emphasis,) is my strength. How strong are you? Could you benchpress more than anyone else in the state? Could you win the Strong Man Competition? Even if you could, you're still a ten-pound weakling compared to the power of God. When life is unraveling, who supplies strength? When heartache crashes in, who gives us the power to take the next step? When life doesn't make sense, where is the strength to expect a better day tomorrow? Isaiah says that the Lord is our strength and that's a good reason to give thanks.

5. Today, we give thanks by displaying total trust. "I will trust and not be afraid." That's a power-filled statement when you study it. Not only will we not do

the one; we will also do the other. What's fear? It's an emotion; it's a mental creation that has no concrete basis for existence. As we say, "no" to fear, as we mentally tell ourselves, "I have no reason to fear because God is here," fear scatters. Trust has the power to displace fear. Now, the words of Jesus make perfect sense as He says so often, "Fear not," for when fear is replaced with trust, when trust is our first move, we find God at our side and yet another reason to give thanks.

6. Today, we give thanks by acknowledging the presence of God among us. "Shout aloud... for great in the Holy One of Israel among you." We hear it at Christmas, but it's not just a Christmas term - Immanuel, God with us. When you have your great days, your average days, your challenging days, your most difficult days, where is God? Right beside you offering you everything He offers you 24/7/365. In our moments of weakness, when our brain has a "senior moment" as we call them, God has not moved. It's against the very nature of God to move. Knowing God is always with us, always at our side makes it a good day to give thanks.

7. We give thanks by being joy-filled. What's the opposite of joy-filled? Bitterness, anger, payback, revenge, grudges. You can pick the word, but anything less than joy-filled is joy-empty and no matter the day or the moment, we have no justified reason to be joy-empty. God loves you, sent His Son to save you, promises you eternal life in heaven, walks beside you, gives you strength when you have none, instills an eternal hope in your heart, forgives and forgets as many times as necessary every day. With all that being true, we have no room for joy-empty, but only room for thanksgiving, for joy-filled hearts even while we live in a joyless world.

8. Today, we give thanks by appreciating His comfort. "Although You were angry with me, Your anger has turned away and You comforted me." When a child falls and skins their knee, what do his parents offer? When they wake up from a bad dream or have a bad day at school, what do the parents offer? When life picks on us, when we fall flat on our face in our foolishness, when we face what we wish were a bad dream, when it seems like the world is against us, when we have a bad day followed by five more bad days, what does God offer? No matter how you describe your life, your day, or this moment, God does what God does best - He comforts you.

9. Today, we give thanks by offering Him our praise. It's all over in our text, "I will praise You." "Sing to the Lord, for He has done glorious things." "Shout aloud and sing for joy." It seems obvious because it should be. Because of all God has done and continues to do, our response is praise, is joy, is singing. In the Old Testament worship life, singing comprised the majority of their worship. As you think about that, how many of those old priests could sing on key? Worship is not God's choir practice. It's our opportunity to express what's in our heart. God gave us the ability to sing because singing is a marvelous way to express our thankfulness.

10. Some day you may do some of those things on your bucket list of future plans. But thanksgiving? It can't wait. Do it today; do it in some way because today is the day! Amen.