

Thanksgiving Day, USA

November 27, 2025



Praising God and being thankful is the highest form of worship both here on earth and there in eternity. Just so ingratitude is the most shameful vice and the greatest dishonoring of God; and yet the world is full, full, full to the very heavens of these vices.

—Martin Luther—

On Psalm 118:1

PROCLAMATION POINTS

The following are some thoughts and questions to be used for a text study on the weekly lessons, or for jump-starting the imagination of the preacher and hearer in preparing for the proclamation event.

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

When Israel made it to the Promised Land, God instructed them to participate in two rituals: 1) The offering of the first fruits of the land in the first year they arrived; 2) A tenth of their harvest in the third year. The first ritual was an offering for the transition between being a nomadic people and the second was an offering that signified they were a settled community. In both cases they were giving back to God what God had first given to them. They were also making a confession of faith about what God had done for them as a people.

- *To whom was the first offering to be given? What about the second offering? Why do you suppose there was a difference?*
- *In what way is the portion of what we give as offering in worship just a small part of what God has given to us first? Why is that important for us to recognize?*

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise, sang the psalmist, and serve him with a glad heart. The Lord is our God and he made us — we are the sheep of his pasture.

This psalm reminds us of our relationship with the Lord. We are precious to him, and he will look after us and protect us from harm. We belong to him and him alone.

- *How does a sense of belonging to the Lord impact your desire to serve him?*

The psalmist commends us to “Enter his gates with thanksgiving.” This includes singing, prayer, and praising the Lord with our words and deeds.

- *In what ways is our culture good or bad at expressing gratitude? Is the church any different in this respect?*

Philippians 4:4-9

As Paul ended his letter to the Christians in Philippi, he urged them to focus on all things positive and uplifting, including anything good they might have learned from his witness to them. His friends in Philippi had been generous to him and he thanked them for their gift.

- *Why does St. Paul urge those who follow Christ to be grateful, joyful, and thankful no matter what is going on around us? In what ways did he model that for the church in his own life?*

Further, Paul said, “Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.” (v.5) We don’t often talk about “reasonableness” in our world today, though perhaps we ought to. It is a

wonderful character trait, to be considered reasonable. The word in Greek is επιεικής (epi-ay-kays) which has a depth of meaning that goes beyond simply being a reasonable person. It indicates a graciousness and gentleness, a willingness to hang in there in trying times.

- *How do you see followers of Jesus exhibiting the qualities that are included in the adjective επιεικής?*
- *How might believers in Christ change the tenor of difficult conversations by simply being reasonable and gentle?*

John 6:25-35

The crowd seemed to be confused that Jesus was no longer there in their midst, having watched one boat launch from the shore without Jesus in it. Not to be dissuaded from their search, the people got into their own boats and headed toward Capernaum. There they found Jesus and questioned him about how he had arrived there.

Jesus knew they weren’t looking for him for the sake of meeting him and learning from him, but for the singular purpose of what he might do for them. He fed them on the mountain the day before. Jesus chided them for seeking food that perishes. Even the miraculous manna in the wilderness rotted and could not be stored; what Jesus wanted to give was more than mere food for the stomach.

- *Why doesn’t Jesus answer the crowd’s question about how he got to the other side without going with his friends? Can we ever know what exactly Jesus is up to? How does that show the importance of faith?*
- *Why do we often worry more about what satisfies us physically than about our life in relationship to Christ? How does this story help us understand our most basic human need?*

It seems in this conversation with the crowds that they are unimpressed with Jesus’ one time giving of bread to eat. God gave manna daily for forty years; this event was one meal. They missed the point that Jesus is God — the God that not only “gave” the manna (past tense) but the God who “gives” (present tense) himself for eternal salvation. Jesus, the Bread of Life, is the one who satisfies all needs and desires, and lasts for all time.

- *How does the Bread of Life sustain us in the here and now, as well as in eternity? Which one do we often fail to think about?*
- *In John’s Gospel, how are the two images of Christ as the living “Word of God” (John 1) and Jesus as the living “Bread from Heaven” (John 6) related to each other? By what means does God “feed” our faith?*