

The Body of Christ
"Hands Full"
11/26/17

-Intro:

- The church, no matter where it meets, is not a building but a body of believers.
- As we gather here today, we understand that we are the Body of Christ.
- As we've talked about over the last several weeks.

-Ephesians 4:16 (NLT) He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

- This should be the mantra of every local church:
- Healthy and Growing and Full of Love.

-As we end our series today on the expression of the local church, I want to end it with you understanding one more important aspect of the church and of our daily lives.

-I've had an image in my head for some time now of the church, made up of individuals, marching into the presence of God on a consistent basis carrying something in our outstretched hands and laying it before Him.

- What we are presenting to Him is special to Him.
- He loves it, it honors Him, it pleases His heart, and we are commanded to give it to Him.

-Talking today about the gift of Thanksgiving.

- Our hands are always, always, always to be full of thanksgiving to God.

-This idea has been standing out to me in my personal time with the Lord as I've meditated on the Scriptures.

- God loves and desires thanksgiving from His people and from ALL people.

-Question: What can you thank God for this morning?

- Salvation?
- Sovereignty?
- Blessings? (Children, spouse, friends).
- His Character?
- His Protection and Care?

-At the same time that He delights in it, it also grieves His heart when He doesn't receive it.

-Think about your own children for one second:

- You do for them and do for them...and what little thing do you want in return?
 - "Thank you."
 - When you don't get it, what do you demand from them?
 - What are you offended by when they don't respond in the right way?

-God feels the same way.

-Romans 1:18-21 (NLT) But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness.

¹⁹ They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them.

²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

²¹ Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.

-God's judgement came upon them because they wouldn't worship Him as Creator God or even give Him thanks.

-God equates Thanksgiving as Worship.

-2 Timothy 3:1-2 (NLT) You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times.

² For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred.

-Disobedient, proud, boastful, scoffing at God...and ungrateful.

-It's a big deal to the heart of God.

-1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV) give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

-What is the will of God for believers? To give thanks.

-Listen, He hates it, and it grieves Him when He doesn't receive it.

-Let's talk about Thanksgiving for a moment because it greatly affects you and God.

-Let's talk about what it gives God.

(1) Gives God

(a) Praise

-2 Corinthians 4:14-15 (NLT) We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will also raise us with Jesus and present us to himself together with you.

¹⁵ All of this is for your benefit. And as God's grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory.

-As more and more people come to Christ and receive the Grace of the Lord, there will be great thanksgiving!

(b) Glory

-2 Corinthians 4:15 (NLT) All of this is for your benefit. And as God's grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory.

-So, what happens when great thanksgiving is given to God?

-God receives more and more GLORY.

-When we don't offer up to God thanksgiving, we ROB GOD of the great glory that is due His name!

(c) Honor

-Psalm 50:23A (NLT) But giving thanks is a sacrifice that truly honors me.

-What does God really want? The Sacrifices of rams and bulls and goats?

-No, He wants THANKSGIVING.

-Okay, what does it give us?

(2) Gives Us

(a) Him Working

-Psalm 50:14-15 (NLT) Make thankfulness your sacrifice to God, and keep the vows you made to the Most High.

Then call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory."

-Thankfulness + Obedience = God Working and Receiving Glory.

(b) His Presence

-Psalm 100:4 (NLT) Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name.

-As a child of God, Thanksgiving and Praise ushers you into the presence of God.

-We march into His presence holding thanksgiving in our hands.

-Conversely, when thanksgiving is withheld, it robs Him and Us of these things.

-How do you consistently bring to the Lord the gift of Thanksgiving? Psalm 100

-Consistently Acknowledge

-Psalm 100:3 (NLT) Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

-We are not our own, We belong to Him.

-We are not self-made, We are because God is!

-We are not self-sufficient, we are God sufficient.

-Everything we have is because of Him and WE ARE HIS.

-Consistently Appear

-Psalm 100:4 (NLT) Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name.

-You appear before Him, on a consistent basis, carrying in with you thanksgiving and praise.

-It will usher you into the presence of God.

-But you have to offer it.

-Consistently Admit

-Psalm 100:5 (NLT) For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

- Lord, You are good.
- Lord, You are full of unfailing love.
- Lord, Your faithfulness never runs out.

-He's Good, He's Loving, and He's Faithful.

-Conclusion:

-Acknowledge, Appear Before Him and Admit Often who He is and give Him the thanks that is due His name.

-Pray

-Bridge Group Questions

- (1) What stood out to you most about this week's message?
- (2) According to the Scriptures, how big of a deal does God make about Thanksgiving?
- (3) If you have children, can you recall a moment when your kids were not grateful? How about when they are?
- (4) What does thankfulness give to God and to us? How have you experienced this?
- (5) How do you consistently offer the gift of thanksgiving to God?