

November 24, 2019 – Elmont Baptist Church

Text: Psalm 16:11; Ephesians 5:3-4

Message Series: Be Thankful

Week 4: Pleasure Pursuing Gratitude

Introduction:

1. In case you didn't realize it, Thanksgiving is close. Like 4 days away kind of close.
2. For most, even those who are in Christ, Thanksgiving comes and goes without us giving it the attention it deserves.
3. Yes, we should be thankful all the time, but there are certain times where our minds should instruct our hearts to really focus in on a particular discipline or celebration of the faith.
4. We began by saying that Thanksgiving is a great time to reflect on what it means to be thankful and work hard to discern if our gratitude is God-glorifying or closer to idolatry by wanting God's blessings but not wanting Him.
5. Then we looked at using gratitude as a Sin-Crushing weapon that God has given us in our battle against the enemy and our flesh.
6. Last week saw through a couple of texts that gratitude is an indicator of our spiritual health, and when gratitude starts to be absent from our lives, we can be sure that things will likely get worse.
7. So we finish up today by looking to the Scriptures for instruction and asking the Spirit to empower us to Be Thankful.
8. When you hear the word pleasure in church or in a sermon, it is most often preceded by a "do not" or followed up with a warning.
9. Like most things in our lives we drive in the ditches when it comes to pleasure or happiness and holiness or Christlikeness. It's either teaching that seems to tell us to indulge or ones that tell us that holiness and happiness are at opposite ends of the spectrum and we better choose holiness.

10. We often think of pleasure as the great problem that will tempt us away from following Jesus, but the reality is that we don't have a pleasure problem, we most often have a treasure problem.
11. We are much more comfortable in conservative churches talking about suffering and sacrifice than we are enjoyment and pleasure. One sounds holy and the other worldly.
12. We often think we have to choose holiness or happiness, but the goal is not to get you to choose holiness over happiness, but rather happiness through holiness rather than through evil means.
13. The hope today is that we better understand that holiness is ultimately about having complete happiness in God.

Read Ephesians 5:3-4 & Psalm 16:11

These verses tell us something about our God and His desire for us and something about how we try to settle for far less than His best. So if we look into the text we see...

We Practice Pleasure Pursuing Gratitude as we...

1. Seek & Notice Everyday Pleasures

- a. **Seek holy pleasures**
- b. **Notice gracious gifts**

- i. Our texts today combine to tell us an important truth. In Ephesians 5:3-4 we see that we are wired to seek pleasure giving sources and will do that sinfully all too often. And in Psalm 16:11 we understand that it is God's desire to lead you to find ultimate pleasure in Him alone
- ii. Once we realize that all we do is driven by pleasure, a desire to be satisfied, then we can start to evaluate am I seeking happiness by evil means or holy means.
- iii. That as author Jon Bloom said, "Pleasure is the measure of our treasure."
- iv. So one thing we can very quickly do is notice the grace of God in everyday things and enjoy them.

- v. None of us are at a shortage of good and holy things that have the potential to bring a smile to our faces.
- vi. And enjoying these things is not wrong even if no one got saved while you did. It can be a walk on a perfect day, or a nicer meal than chick-fil-a, or the crackle of a fire, or the purchase of new car that others think is too much.
- vii. It can be the enjoyment of relationships that are life-giving or engaging in a hobby you enjoy.
- viii. The questions we ask in these things are “Am I seeking my glory or God’s glory? Do these pleasures terminate on me or cause me to be thankful and grateful for who God is and what He does?”
- ix. And when we answer that question well, it will lead us to...

2. Thank & Want God as the Source

a. Know He is forever happy

b. Thank Him daily for good gifts

c. He alone will forever make you happy

- i. It’s one thing to thank God, it’s quite another to want Him.
- ii. Our view of God will impact and determine our view of eternity and what is right in life now.
- iii. If we see Him as harsh and overbearing, then we will think we have to toe the line and by no means earn grace, but still pretty much earn grace.
- iv. If we’re convinced that God is against us because of our actions more than eternally for us because of Christ’s actions, then we will struggle to view Him biblically.
- v. It is absolutely true that He hates sin because it robs Him of glory and ultimately destroys us, and it’s true that He disciplines us in love, but He is not always just this side of losing His temper with you every moment of your existence.
- vi. God is forever a joyful and happy God. In 1 Timothy 1:11 Paul refers to God as “the blessed (or happy) God”.

- vii. In Zephaniah 3:17 we have a picture of God singing over His people.
- viii. God's desire is that you are satisfied. Satisfied in Him alone and not settling for anything less because, as Matthew 6:21 says, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
- ix. Happiness in God doesn't happen by chasing the desires of our flesh and does happen even through suffering and trials, but it's not as though others, who have no desire for Jesus, are escaping trials. It's that your God, who is eternally for you, will take them and draw you closer to Himself through them.
- x. This is how you can thank Him "in all circumstances" and "for all things" as the Scriptures instruct us to. Because He is good for you no matter what.
- xi. Next week begins Advent and it's a word that means "arrival of a notable person, thing, or event". It's a Christian celebration of Christ's first coming to help us anticipate His return.
- xii. The struggle I see is that not many Christ-followers are looking forward to Christ's return. We're pretty enamored with the pleasures we find here and not too convinced that God alone is the ultimate satisfaction of our souls.
- xiii. Again this isn't a pleasure problem, it's a treasure problem.

Closing

1. What are the pleasures and enjoyments that you thank God for often?
2. Does your view of God align with the Scriptures – that He is eternally happy?
3. Let's pray and then confess to the Lord the honest condition of our heart and mind today knowing we have a gracious God who is for you, not against you.