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Sermon 437 - Deuteronomy 8:10-18

## *Remember the Lord*

There was a new movie released about Winnie the Pooh called, “Goodbye Christopher Robin.” I didn’t see it not sure if it’s any good, but I am familiar with the popular characters. And one character that sticks out in my mind is Tigger. Tigger is known for being happy and literally up. The quote that epitomizes Tigger is, “The wonderful thing about Tiggers, is Tiggers are wonderful things” Another very memorable character is Eeyore. Who seems to be Tigger’s antithesis. Look at the phrase that epitomizes Eeyore, “Could be worse, not sure how, but it could be.” So you have the constant happy, bouncing around, happy go lucky. And you have Eeyore who doesn’t know what the bright side looks like, and hasn’t spent much time there. This Thanksgiving I was wondering which one do you relate to more. Tigger or Eeyore? Which are you know for being? Or perhaps more revealing what would others say about you? Are you looking on the bright side, or have you found yourself more like Eeyore?

And because we are in church a follow up to that question is what would God have us be? Now I’m not sure we need to use the exact quote as Tigger did, but perhaps we look for the positive. For he reminded us through the words of Paul to the Thessalonian Christians, “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 thess 5:8) In how many circumstances. He can’t really mean that right. I mean what about when the bank calls saying I have insufficient funds. What about the day when they started it, and I wouldn’t be down, but they made me like that. What about when we are sick or our children are. All circumstances?

My wife has been walking with the Lord for sometime, and one of the things that I thank God for. And I will never forget the truth she taught me this past year. We were going through the passion account of Jesus, particularly the night before Jesus was going to be betrayed and deserted by his closest friends, before he would suffer in so many different ways culminating in the cross. He was in the upper room celebrating the passover with the disciples, and instituting what we call the Lord’s Supper. And they are words we hear so often, but don’t always pause to consider how they should affect this discussion. Do you know them, “And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22:19) Really, the night before your crucifixion. Should be saying I don’t see how it can get worse than what I’m facing. Nope, gave thanks.

So give thanks this thanksgiving. Jesus did it, you should do it. Stop being Eeyore and start being Tigger. Amen, seen you next week. And I realize that isn’t incredibly helpful. It’s kind of like telling some who spilled their guts over what they’re worried about. And you’re like I know - now stop worrying. It’s like telling a tired person, stop being so tired. Or a hungry person, stop with the hunger. No, I think we can do better than just telling you to give thanks.

Let’s spend some time remembering why we can give thanks. And why can you be thankful. For the iPhone 10? Xbox X. The deals you’re going to get on Black Friday. You can be thankful because Chicago sports teams are doing well. ‘Cause you have the car you want. It

could break down. NO. Rather could you turn to the person next to you and announce the title today. Tell them. Remember the Lord. For with God in the picture there is much to be thankful for. With God in the picture all the other blessings are appropriated. Because of God we can give thanks today and every day.

So let's get into our Scripture for today. It comes from the book of Deuteronomy when Moses was reminding the people through the Lord where he was going to bring them. They were on a journey to the promised land, a land of bounty and blessing. A place where their fortunes were going to be restored. And he gives them the directions ahead of time for when they make it. Remember the Lord. Let's read. Let's talk about these words today.

I don't know about you but I'm looking forward to the Thanksgiving meal. Yes. And I'm a bit curious about your favorite foods. For instance for how many is the favorite turkey, the favorite the bread, the potatoes, the stuffing, the pumpkin pie - sweet potato pie? I spent many Thanksgivings at my grandmothers and I think I've always been a stuffing guy, and she didn't use stove top. No her own included cranberries, celery, parts of bread, raisins even. So now we host and I get to make stuffing, and I pull out all the stops. Get a loaf of sourdough bread and let it sit, cook it just right. Chicken broth, maple sausage, dried cranberries, celery. And oh it is good. I think what I love is this is a meal that no one skimps on anything, we deep fry the turkey, add caramel to the sweet potatoes, and sausage to the stuffing.

When I look at the blessings the Lord was going to give to the nation of Israel - he was not skimping. Canaan was a beautiful land he'd picked for them. Earlier in the chapter it said this about what he would give, "the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing." (8:7-9) In my personal Bible study I'm in the book of Ezekiel where it says, "a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands." (Ezekiel 20:15) So where is the most beautiful land, not Bora Bora, not sunny Florida. No but the land God was giving to his people. So why should they be thankful? Why should we? The first takeaway is this. *Remember the Lord because He does not skimp.* He's like Grandma making the Thanksgiving meal. Pulling out all the stops.

How do I know. Because I remember what he gave us. He didn't give stuffing with sausage or sweet potatoes with caramel. He gave his one and only Son. And Jesus is proof that when it comes to the heart of God, he spares nothing and pulls out all the stops. And with the Son he gave came so many wonderful gifts. The gift of forgiveness, the gift of peace, the promise of a land that is the most beautiful of all. A land filled with all the best things, which have been prepared and will not be taken away from those who believe. Which no eye has seen, nor ear has heard, but which every soul longs for - to taste that banquet which awaits us. We have heaven to look forward to.

Now this is ours whether you have had a banner financial year or not. These extravagant riches are yours. But have you ever experienced anything else in life that convinced you that God does not skimp. The lesson talks about this in v. 10, "When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord for the good land he has given you." So it's not talking about spiritual but physical blessings.

I remember being in grade school, and I had a paper route. And I earned enough money to buy a golf membership at the Beaver Dam Country Club. Just for the summers, Mondays - Fridays 'til noon. But do you know how I felt, being able to play golf in the summer 6th, 7th grade. Chumming it up with all those who had to retire to play golf as much as I did. Do you have something like that. An experience, a first car. Look what our lesson references, "when you build fine houses and settle down."(15) Anyone ever had a chance to do that? I'd like that color please, one step up from builder grade please. See he gave us Jesus because he's an extravagant giver, but every now and then shows his extravagance in earthly ways as well. *Remember the Lord because He doesn't skimp.*

Oh but earthly blessings can be tricky can't they. Sometimes we hold on to tight to things that are temporary. I was studying for this and came across the quote that said, "Temporal prosperity is a blessing, but if it is not regarded as such it becomes a curse." Key on the word temporary. Jesus too taught us that we should remember where our true treasure is - in heaven. Because on this earth rust and moths destroy, and thieves can steal.

Earthly versus spiritual blessings reminds me of the show Let's Make a Deal. Ever see this with Wayne Brady. You can trade one thing for another in hopes that you get something better. I saw one gentlemen who could either take \$500 or have whatever is behind door number 1. And he was so adamant about what he could have right now \$500, he didn't want to see. But waiting behind door number 1 was a trip to Aruba for the total of \$7000. He was given a second shot at it, take \$500 or what's behind door number 2. He took the \$500, but behind door number 2 was a brand new car Nissan Versa valued at \$17,000.

I wonder if this is not sometimes the picture of us with earthly versus spiritual blessings. We're pursuing the earthly gain, the better house, car, or paycheck, not realizing the bigger prize is out there. What I would like to remind you is that he is that bigger prize. It helps us to put in place all the other gifts. *Remember that the Lord is the prize, and all other prizes are only meant to point us to him.* When we experience the warmth of someone's love to drop and say - this is what your love is like. Experience the beauty of nature - this is what your glory is like. Experience the good of food - this is how good you are. Yes, taste and see that the Lord is good. And you consider the Promised Land that was something, but it was to point them to something greater still. The greater prize of a promises Savior who would come from that nation and be born in that land.

But the real struggle is that we forget. We forget what we have came from his hands. We forget we are what we are because of him. Considering forgetting what we are like and how we got here. I consider celebrities from back in the day, people like Justin Timberlake and Ryan Gosling, Christina Aguilera. And does anyone remember were they all started. The Mickey Mouse Club. And I wonder if there is an agent who says I got you to where you are. Or consider this guy. Justin Bieber and what he used to look like. He's come a ways. But you go back and you remember.

What we're children of God before the Lord came? They were slaves, they were captive to the Egyptians. They didn't have freedom or the opportunities that lay before them. What we're you before the Lord came? Paul says to Christians in Corinth and to us we were sinners, we were evil doers with sexual sin, greed, drunkenness, slanderers and swindlers. And then

“11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:11)

And we stand here today as forgiven children of God saying, by the grace of God I am what I am. And you have the right to say that even if you are new today, if you’ve never heard the message of Jesus. We are and were wrongdoers, but by the grace of Jesus Christ he made us different. Washed through baptism as we celebrate for Jonathan Bowen. Sanctified through the Spirit, and declared not guilty because of Jesus. You have the right to say I too am different by the grace of God. I know what I was and what I am now, and boy do I look better because of Jesus.

And then our possessions. We need to consider that this Thanksgiving. As Moses says they went from rags and are going to riches. I consider a story like that - in the movie the Blindside. And one of the scenes that sticks out to me is when Michael Orr who was taken in and shown his room. And he looks at everything including the bed, and he says, “I never had one before.” Now in that moment does he not know who it came from. He understands it’s a gift from the one who gave it and took him in. He’s going to stand next to that bed and use it with delight, but not arrogance. He’s not going around at school - you know what I did and how hard I worked for this bed. That’d be ridiculous.

But do we ever forget where it all came from? Do we ever stand next to our cars, our houses, our toys. Spouting the overtime we put in, and the hard work for those hard wood floors. Telling people the hours and the sweat equity we have in it. Rather than stand by them and say - look at this gift. Isn’t God good. But it’s not just cars, houses, and toys - we do it with people. See my Son, see my daughter let me tell you what they did they sent a rocket into space - btw, I did that. Pretty awesome right. Rather than see them as the gift of God who is at work in them. We forget all too often where it came from. And for this we need to repent.

You know sometimes I look at the spiritual landscape of our world. And I wonder at times why is that one of the most affluent nations of all time, us. Why is that there isn’t spiritual revival and continual thanksgiving for all that we’ve been given. And I think of the general spiritual malaise, and the way things have been trending. And are we in the state we are in as a country perhaps because we forgot where it all came from? We forgot the source? Because we’re not going around with our gifts and declaring look how good God is, look how good God is. Rather we go around with them, look how good I am, look how good I am. Now that is just conjecture.

So let me remind you. God is the giver, and he is the true reason for our Thanksgiving. Though we forget about him, he has yet to forget about us and still provides what we need. He has forgiven us through the work of his Son, for all the times we forgot where it came from. But now let me encourage you. *Remember the Lord for what he made you and what he gave you.* Let us forget no longer.

So how do we do that, practically speaking. Some people journal about it. Anyone every do one of those blessing journals. I’ve heard of a journal that documents each day in different years, and you can write new ones down as you remember old ones. Look today 2 years ago I bought a Prius, and my life changed forever. God is good. Another great idea I’ve read about is using note cards and a jar. And every time something good happens you write it on the note or flash card and you put it in the jar, and then at the end of the year you empty it out and remember

all of God's blessings. As a Dad you know what I try to do. I try to set up these moments of goodness where God hasn't skimmed and I can tell they are digging whatever it is. Maybe we in a pool at hotel, or they just received a present, or we had a great meal and I ask them, "Now where did this come from?" There are a lot of practical ways to implement a heart of thanks, one we know is common is mealtime prayer - but there so many other possibilities. May God inspire you to take the practical steps of making this thanks your own on a regular basis.

But before we go I wanted to point out the most interesting part of this lesson. And that is the time. Right now Moses is reconfirming the laws of God, and the promises of God, and what he will do for them. But at this point he hasn't done them. For right now they are still wandering in the desert. They have none of the good things being talked about, in the midst of the humbling lesson God was teaching. And what this is doing then is to teaching them to praise, even before it comes.

It reminds me of how the IPass works. Anyone got one of them. I think my wife and I have built a few sections of the interstate just ourselves for how much we spent. I'm waiting for my brick or sign, this section brought to you by the Blumers. But how does that work. You don't pay after you've gone through. No, you have to pre-load that IPass. It has to have money in it before you ever get to the toll.

So one final take away very practical. What if we with our praise as we do with our IPass and *Pre-load the praise*. What if we got in the habit of practicing praise before we got to the promised land. Like when you wake up in the morning, and it's the beginning of the week. God I praise you for the day you have brought me to and all the good things you have in store for me, I know you are with me this day. What if we do that with our circumstances. God I praise you for this, and I have no clue how it's going to work out because I cannot see the end of the matter, but because you are with me and for me I praise you in advance. God the Holidays and a New Year is coming and my life is always changing but I want to pause and praise you because you are going to work it out.

And why can you do that. Because he is faithful. And he won't stop being faithful. As he brought his people to the Promised Land, so he will work out his good and gracious will for us. And for this we can give thanks. So give thanks in all circumstances. Praise the Lord and remember his goodness. Amen.