

Foundation for Real Gratitude

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[0:00] Take your Bibles and open them to Chronicles, 1 Chronicles, not Corinthians, but Chronicles.

! I always have to say that because sometimes Chronicles, Corinthians are so close to one another, people will turn to Corinthians and I'll be reading and they'll be looking, what is that?

So it's Chronicles, Chronicles. And speaking of confusions, I think I shared with you that the subject of my class for these master students this past week was spiritual formation.

And I've discovered that it's impossible to preach about spiritual formation, especially in relation to prayer and meditation and so forth.

It's impossible to do that without referring to the Psalms. I mean, the Psalms are just rich, you know, of course, on that subject. Well, there's only one problem. In the Russian Bible, they have a different number of numbering for Psalms.

[1:10] And so I'm constantly, you know, saying this Psalm, that Psalm. And the translator will say, now, that's not the right Psalm or that's not the right verse. And not only do they have a different numbering for the Psalms, but in our Psalms, of course, you know, in the Bible, there are introductions to the Psalms written by and written for this reason and so forth.

Well, they number those as verses. And so then when you get to your verse four, it's actually there, verse five. And so there's confusion. So hopefully there's no confusion this morning.

First Chronicles chapter 29. And I'm going to take as our text this morning verses nine through 18. Verses nine through 18.

Now, we're not going to read it yet. I'm just giving you a little time, giving you a little time to find it and be prepared. And I'll read it here in just a moment. But I want to give a bit of an introduction or maybe a background to the text and give you a kind of disclaimer on the front end.

The background for the text, the context, if you will, in which we find this text is not really the context of my sermon, the subject of my sermon.

[2:27] I'm not taking the verses out of context, but I'm going to make a particular application for the verses that I'm going to read here in just a moment.

But to be faithful to the text, I want to make sure that I give you the context. OK, and the context is very good. The occasion that this passage finds itself in, in the life of Israel, is important for us.

And so let me give you a little bit of the background. David is king, but he is nearing the end of his reign, nearing the end of his life, actually.

And so King David is giving some instructions, some counsel as well to his son, Solomon, who is now king of Israel.

And giving him some instructions and some encouragement. And at the same time, he is instructing both Solomon and the people of Israel concerning the building of a house for God.

[3:38] Up to this time, the worship center, as we would call them today, the place of worship was a tent, essentially a tent, the tabernacle.

And you will recall, I'm sure, if you know some of the history, the biblical history of David's life. He had had a desire to build a permanent, substantial house for God.

Something that would be worthy of him and so forth. And God did not allow him to do that in his lifetime. And for reasons that we don't need to get into this morning.

But he did allow Solomon, his son, to build a permanent house, the temple. And indeed, it was magnificent, the temple that Solomon built, which, of course, does not exist today.

And so, David is giving Solomon instructions about that. And though David was not involved in actually building the temple, he was involved as a good king.

[4:46] And I guess we would, in our terms, we would call it raising the funds for it. Not funds as in money that they would need to use to spend to build it, to hire some contractor.

But the resources, gold and silver and other precious metals and very precious stones. And all of the various materials and resources that were needed to build a proper temple for God.

For God. And so, David is giving Solomon instructions about that. And he's encouraging him. In fact, I might have you kind of look there in the previous chapter in verse 20.

In chapter 28 and verse 20, the Bible says, Then David said to his son Solomon, Be strong and courageous and act. Alright?

Be active. Do not fear nor be dismayed. For the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until all the work for the serving of the house of the Lord is finished.

[5:52] So be courageous and act. Work. Get this job done. Be a good leader. And so forth. So it's a point of encouragement. But he also gives some encouragement and instructions to the congregation of God's people.

Israel. And we see that in verse 1 of chapter 29. If you would look there very quickly. Then King David said to the entire assembly, My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is still young. Kind of interesting that he would say that. Just remember, my son is young. And he was, indeed, young. He's young and inexperienced in the work.

And the work is great. Alright? So he's giving, you know, some instructions to God's people. You know, go easy on my son for a little while. He's young. He's inexperienced for this work.

And the work is great. And so be patient with him. And, you know, this, I think, would be a very typical kind of instruction that an outgoing king would give in behalf of the incoming king.

[6:59] Especially in the sense that he is his son. I could even see a pastor doing that, of course. You know, maybe a retiring pastor. And he's encouraging the congregation. There's a man coming.

And he's going to be serving you. And just remember, he's a young guy. And inexperienced. And the work is great. Alright? So he's giving them instruction. And then an offering is taken.

Big offering. Not money. You know, dollars and cents and so forth. But materials are collected for the building of the temple. And it's interesting that as king, David had raised, apparently had raised enormous amounts of resources.

Again, gold and silver and so forth for the building of the temple. And also, David personally gave evidently a huge amount of the resources from his own personal treasure house.

And we read about that in verse 3 of chapter 29. He said, Moreover, in my delight in the house of my God, the treasure I have of gold and silver, I give to the house of my God.

[8:17] Over and above all that I have, my... Where is it? Yeah.

Already provided. I don't know why the print seems small. Maybe blurry-eyed or something. I can't read English. I can't read Ukrainian or Russian.

But at least I think I can. I've given already. I have already provided for the holy temple. So here's David. He's a great king.

Good king. Loves the Lord. The desire of his heart was to build a house for God. And God didn't allow him to do that directly. But he was involved in that indirectly.

And he led the congregation to give. And every household gave. And he gave personally. A huge amount apparently gave sacrificially for the building of the temple.

[9:12] Now that's the background for the text that we're going to be looking at. And again, you know, I want to tell you that the intent, my intent this morning, the application this morning is not that, you know, I'm announcing that we're going to start some new major capital fundraising campaign.

That's not it at all. So don't be expecting that. We're not going to be doing that. However, I guess I would say to you that we could. We could use this as an application there.

And though we're not entering into some big building program, we do have one to pay off. All right. May I remind you of that? As a good pastor, I need to remind you of that. But that's not the application here.

And so let's read the text. And then I'll make the application. And it pertains to the season in which we're in, as you probably have expected. Thanksgiving, fast approaching.

That is that particular day that we set aside for Thanksgiving is fast approaching. And I want to speak to your hearts on that subject from this text. All right. So let me read it to you, starting with verse 9 of chapter 29.

[10:26] And I'll read all the way through. Well, we'll stop at verse 19 or 18, rather. Well, I'll go all the way to 19. All right. Let me read it. So David blessed the Lord.

No, verse 9. Then the people rejoiced because they had offered so willingly, for they made their offering to the Lord with a whole heart, a perfect heart.

And King David also rejoiced greatly. And so David blessed the Lord. And now we have kind of David's prayer. Really, it's a psalm. We could classify this as a psalm.

Not sure if they sang it. They may have sung it. But here is his psalm or prayer. So David blessed the Lord in the sight of all the assembly. And David said, Blessed are you, O Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and on the earth. Yours.

[11:34] Yours is the dominion, O Lord. And you exalt yourself as head over all. Both riches and honor come from you. And you rule over all. And in your hand is power and might.

And it lies in your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone. Now, therefore, our Lord, our God, we thank you and bless your glorious name.

But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generously as this? For all things come from you and from your hand we have given you.

For we are sojourners before you and tenants, strangers, literally strangers as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow and there is no hope.

That is, there's no more than this. No more. This is just temporary is literally what he's saying. Verse 16, O Lord, our God, all this abundance that we have provided to build you a house for your holy name.

[12:37] It is from your hand and all is yours. Since I know, O my God, that you try the heart and delight in uprightness. I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all these things.

So now with joy I have seen your people who are present here make their offering willingly to you. The Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our fathers, preserve this forever in the intentions of the heart of your people and direct their heart to you and give to my son Solomon a perfect heart to keep your commandments, your testimonies, and your statutes and to do them all and to build the temple for which I have made provision.

All right. Very significant text. Interesting text. And as I've said, the immediate application of this passage would, of course, come out of the occasion.

The occasion for this psalm, this prayer. The occasion being David leading his people, encouraging his people, and encouraging the new king to carry out this task to build a house for God, for his name.

And yet, we can apply this in another way. And this is the application I want to make for us today.

This is a prayer, really a marvelous praise of the king, King David's, and it pertains to thanksgiving.

[14:16] To thanksgiving. The application that I want to make out of this text pertains to our purposeful offerings, not of money necessarily in this case, in this sense, but our perfect, purposeful offerings of gratitude, of thanksgiving to the Lord.

So I believe that these verses help us form a foundation for genuine praise. I mean the very foundation. Now, there are a lot of things that we thank God for, specifically.

And we could, each of us, make a long list. And when we gather together with families, our thoughts, you know, are directed toward our thanksgivings to the Lord for our home, for our family, for His provision, and a host of other things.

But what I want to talk about from this text is really a foundation for real gratitude, real thanksgiving. In fact, it is a perspective that we need to have, that this text helps us have.

A perspective on some very important issues. And it is this perspective on these important issues, dealing with God, who God is, who we are, who He expects of us, to deal with those perspectives.

[15:35] And those things form an incredible foundation for real gratitude, real thanksgiving.

David said, or David literally blessed the Lord. This is how verse 9 begins. He blessed Him. And we could translate it, and indeed I think maybe some translations, some versions do this.

We could translate praise Him. Praise Him. It's involved in praise. It says He blessed the Lord in the sight of all the assembly. And then it says there in verse 10 that David said, blessed are you.

Or again, literally, praises to you, O Lord God of Israel. So essentially, David is performing a role, the role of worship leader.

This is a worship service. And for our purposes this morning, it's a thanksgiving service. A thanksgiving service. And it gives us a perspective that will form for us a foundation for thanksgiving, for gratitude.

[16:44] Now let me give you four perspectives that come right out of this text. Some by way of implication, some are given explicitly in the text.

And though the occasion is different, again, the occasion is different, the application can apply for us today. Four perspectives. And they're really very simple. I mean, really. Very logical. And each of us could sit down and spend a little bit of time even without a commentary. I didn't use a commentary for this one. I didn't have one with me. But we could, on our own, look at this psalm, this praise and prayer of David's, and we could come up with these four things, I think, pretty easily. But I'm the preacher this morning, so I'm going to give them to you. Okay? Here's the first perspective. And that is the right perspective on who you are in God's grand plan. Who you are, and I could extend that to who we are as God's people, in relation to God's grand plan.

[18:02] That is, that God has included us in His plan. I mean, it's a huge plan. It's something bigger than ourselves, certainly individually. It's something actually bigger, much bigger, infinitely bigger than even our church.

And collectively, something bigger, collectively and ultimately, something bigger than, than all of the churches around this planet. Something big.

And God has included you in that. If you name the name of Christ, if you're a born-again believer here this morning, you are part of something really big.

And this is a good perspective. Important perspective. That, again, forms the foundation for our thanksgiving. Now, what is this perspective exactly?

Well, three things. That we are God's special chosen people. We are God's special chosen people.

[19:02] See, here's the perspective. That we're part of God's grand plan. And what exactly is that perspective? Or how does that, what does that look like? Number one, we are God's special chosen people.

Glory, hallelujah. We're God's special chosen people. In verse 9, and it's implied here, and you really have to consider all that is contained in this word people.

People. People. Here in verse 9. Then the people rejoice. Not just some loosely connected group of people. Not in this sense, just some who just happened to assemble that day.

But the word people, of course, is a direct reference to the people of God. Israel. And they were the people of God, not by their own doing, or not by their own choosing, but they were the people of God.

But by God's choosing, He formed a people for Himself. Israel. And you know the whole story as that has unfolded for us in Scripture.

[20:10] We're not going to go back and look at that. But just suffice it to say, that in this verse, in verse 9, we can, by implication, realize that we are part of something really big.

Now, we're not Israel. We're the church. We're the church. We are God's chosen people in Christ. Have you ever really stopped to consider just how significant that is? That you're not just simply a lover of God and not just simply a member of this church, not just simply a follower of Christ, not just simply one who desires to live out the precepts of God's Word, His law, and I hope all those things apply to you.

But we're part of something infinitely larger than anything we could dream of. Now, part of that we can see here in this life.

And this big thing God has chosen us for. But we are His chosen people. What a foundational truth for gratitude, for thanksgiving.

[21:37] This is a perspective on who we are in God's grand plan. Let me give you a second thing. Not only are we God's special chosen people, that's a perspective on who we are in God's grand plan.

But secondly, we are part of God's great kingdom work on this earth. It is so vitally important that God's people, and I mean in reference to the local body of Christ like this church.

We're God's people that God has assembled for this local body. It's incredibly important that as God's people, we see, we have this kind of perspective of who we are in God's plan.

We see that we're part of God's great kingdom work that encompasses all people in all nations all around the world.

It's important we see that. The Bible says in verse 9 that they offered so willingly. Willingly.

[22:52] And I glean from that this application. The people of Israel, God's chosen people for that time. God's not through with Israel, by the way.

He's going to take up His relationship, His dealing with them one day again. But God's people, Israel, were part of something big. That's what's going on here.

Something huge. It was to build a house for God. Now that's a pretty huge thing, isn't it? They weren't just building some church, you know, that might be located on the corner of such and such avenue, you know, and then there's another one similar to it on the next corner and in the Midwest and especially in the South, we have a church on every corner.

I was asked that question, by the way, one of my students, how many churches are in your community? And I couldn't even tell him. I didn't have any idea. I wasn't real sure just how many Southern Baptist churches there were in Bartlesville.

There were a bunch of them. And then beyond that, there are other flavors of Baptists and there are Methodists and Wesleyan and Lutheran and Catholic and various Pentecostals.

[24:06] And I was trying to explain that and they were just, you know, just dumbfounded that there would be so many churches in a community of 36,000, 38,000 people. I'm not talking, he's not talking here, I'm not talking about Israel just building a church building.

They were building a house for God. Now, no house can contain God, of course. But in their view, they were building a house for worship, the worship of the one true God in all the ways that He had prescribed in the Old Testament.

And so, they were doing something really big. And these people were caught up in that. I mean, they really were. They had glad hearts and they were excited to give and to give them themselves and to give of their gratitude to God because God had included them, not only chosen them, but included them in a huge work, something bigger than themselves.

Indeed, it was bigger than themselves. I mean, not only the tabernacle, but also the temple was a foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who had one day come.

Every part of that temple that they were giving toward to build was a presentation of God's redemptive plan in Christ, a foreshadowing of that.

[25:22] It was a huge deal. Now, bring that to us today. God's people today, the church, were part of something really big, huge.

Not the building of a church building, though God leads His people to do that. And we've done that here. And other churches like us all around the world, really, have built houses of prayer, churches. But it's bigger than that. It's His kingdom. His kingdom. That one day, He will come, the Lord will come and rule on this earth.

And one day, we'll be one big church in heaven. And we're called to be a part of it.

It's an incredible thing that God would include us in that plan to build His kingdom. Whether it's here in Bartles, those certainly here.

[26:35] Or at the prison in Hominy. Or through the Open Bible Baptist Church in Colorado Springs.

Or through our giving on the state level to help and support ministries, evangelistic ministries, and caregiving ministries right here in the state of Oklahoma.

Or whether it's through our Annie Armstrong offering that we take every Easter time to help support missionaries, over 5,000 of them, in North America.

Or Lottie Moon that's coming up and we support well over 5,000 missionaries all around the world.

Or whether we are giving and supporting and helping with other ministries that are some parachurch ministries.

See, it's a big work. Huge work. And God has included us in that. This is the right perspective, see. That forms a foundation for our gratitude as a people.

[27:44] You can't read these verses here in 1 Chronicles 29 without getting caught up in the excitement that these people had to be a part of this thing.

This big thing. Build a house for God. And so they gave. And they gave their thanksgivings to Him that they would be included in that. And I would add a third thing under this right perspective that you are in God's...

part of God's grand plan. And that is that God has given us a heart that is perfect toward Him. That is, in the sense that God has, by His grace, and through our regeneration, our salvation, God has granted us a heart that can be perfect toward Him.

Verse 9 says, they made their offering to the Lord with what kind of heart? A whole heart. A perfect heart.

A heart that was perfect toward Him. So here's the perspective. Perspective number one. We'll move on to number two. It's a right perspective of who you are in God's grand plan.

[28 : 59] And it's incredible. And the more we know of it, the more we can get excited about it and the more we're in awe of it. And especially if you have the opportunity to go to another country other than America and see God's plan unfolding and being accomplished through people who don't even speak our language, through people whose context of life is almost totally different than ours.

And yet it's the same work there as here. And even in some of those countries where Christianity is illegal, like many of the countries in the Middle East and China and many of the still somewhat communist nations and other nations like that where Christianity is not legal.

And you can go there and you can discover that God's plan is being accomplished there too. But then when we bring that all home right here into our perspective and that's to realize that we're a part of that plan too.

Huge plan. What a perspective. And what a foundation for thanksgiving. Gratitude. Second, here's the second perspective. The right perspective.

And it gets more lofty in this sense. Not only the right perspective on who you are in God's grand plan, but second, the right perspective on who God is.

[30 : 33] Who God is. Now that's a big subject. I mean to somehow try to consider all that's involved in who God is.

His nature. His character. His worth. His works. And on and on we could go. And even those are very broad categories.

But what does the psalm here, and I'm still calling this a psalm, and I think it really is. It's in the form of a psalm. This prayer. This praise. What does it tell us?

Well, starting with verse 10, David shares with us some particular attributes of God or who God is. And there are four of them. Let me give them to you. First, His possession of all things. God is the owner, possessor of all things.

[31 : 39] All things. We need to make sure we have that perspective, especially when it pertains to the things we call our own. Look at what He says in verse 10.

For thus says the Lord, excuse me, where did I get, how did I get over to Jeremiah? I promise you maybe by next Sunday I will get operating on all cylinders.

Alright? Let's look at verse 10. So David blessed the Lord in the sight of all the assembly. And David said, Blessed are You, O Lord, God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty.

Indeed, everything that is in the heavens and the earth is Yours.

It's all His. Not only the things that He deserves in regard to our response to Him, glory, honor, majesty, and He gets all of that.

[32 : 45] Whether you deprive Him of it in your own individual life or not, God will get all glory, all majesty, all honor. Even Jesus said, you know, when He was coming into Jerusalem for His triumphal entry and there were many people gathered and they were putting down the palm branches and probably parts of their garment and they were singing Hosanna to the King.

And you remember the Pharisees got bent out of joint and they said, You tell them to stop that. And what did Jesus say? He said, if they stop, if they hold their peace, even the rocks will praise, will glorify Me.

And so, here's the idea, here's the perspective that it all belongs to Him. It's all His. Everything you have is His.

And so, when we come together, you know, like this morning and a little bit later, we have our, quote, Thanksgiving meal together and hopefully our thoughts are toward gratitude to God.

Or on Thursday, when you gather with family and you have Thanksgiving or many other times, when you're thanking Him for all that He's done in your life and all that you have, just remember this perspective.

[34:04] It's all His. It's all His. All of it. And so, when you feel compelled to give a part, maybe it's a tenth of all that God gives you your tithe and don't give that begrudgingly.

Don't give that, well, I just don't know if I can afford that. Remember, the tenth is His, but then so is the ninety percent. It's all His. It's all His.

And everything on this planet belongs to Him. And your house belongs to Him. And that car you drive around belongs to Him. Maybe you want a new one, but that new one, if He's gracious to give it to you, that belongs to Him.

All of it belongs to Him. Your praises are rightfully His. And He owns those things, so you'd better give them to Him.

You'd better. Don't withhold those. They're His. The gratitude of your heart belongs to Him because everything you would be thanking Him for is His. His possession of all things.

[35:07] That's the right perspective of who God is. Second, His position above all things. You know that your pastor is a slave to alliteration.

I've resisted using some alliteration in this sermon, but, you know, alliteration doesn't translate very well in Russian. And so here I am trying to preach with an alliteration and thinking that I'm really smart with my words that all begin with P and whatever.

and that is totally lost on the Ukrainian audience or congregation. But I'm going to use it here because it's not lost on you, I hope. It's a memory device.

So remember His possessions. His possession of all things. This is the right perspective of who God is. His position above all things. And this just very naturally flows from the text.

It doesn't take anybody with hardly any amount of training or all you need is a little consciousness and a desire to look closely at the Word and you see that it clearly states His position above all things.

[36:14] Verse 11, the latter part of it, He says, Yours is the dominion. The dominion, O Lord. That is Your kingdom.

You are rightful ruler over all things. Your dominion in heaven and on earth. Your dominion, O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.

Both riches and honor come from You and You rule over all. Every believer certainly ought to have this perspective of who God is.

He's king. Ruler. Absolute authority over your life and everything that pertains to your life and all that you own and have and aspire to do and would hope to give Him and do for Him and every even little thing that we would think so insignificant that maybe God doesn't bother Himself with those things or doesn't care about those things.

They're all under His rule. Our lives are under His authority. this is the right perspective. Builds a foundation for real gratitude, real thanksgiving, even before we get to some of the specific things we want to thank God for.

[37:40] His possession over all things, His position above all things, His power greater than all things, greater than any government, greater than any authority, even though God has placed us under various authorities in the context of our lives and we need to submit to those authorities.

It's the same as submitting to Him. But all authorities, whether they be benevolent or malevolent, they're both benevolent and malevolent in this world.

Most of them are malevolent. He has power over all of those. He says in verse 12, about midway through the verse, and in your hand is power and might.

And it lies in your hand, that is, it's within your power, to make great and to strengthen everyone.

And the implication being it's within His power to make low as well.

to bring, raise nations and bring nations down. That's an important perspective for our own nation.

[39:04] Ought to compel us to pray more for our nation. God has all power. Power greater than all things. And then we add a fourth and we need to move on.

His praiseworthiness over and above all things. He's worthy of praise above all things. Verse 13, Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name.

Your glorious name. This is the right perspective on who God is. And forms a foundation for our gratitude, our thankfulness. He is praiseworthy above all things.

So perspective number one, the right perspective of who you are in God's grand plan. The right perspective of who God is. And third, the right perspective of who you are before God.

Boy, how we need that perspective of who we are before God. And I don't think it is by happenstance that first we have the right perspective of who God is and then we have these words that point us to the right perspective for who we are.

[40 : 27] It always starts with God and how we know Him and understand Him before we can begin to understand who we are. And so, it's very easy to see why David very quickly in the very next verse in verse 14 would say, but who am I?

And who are my people? The answer being or the implied answer is we're no one compared to you. We're nothing compared to your greatness.

every time we come face to face whether through Scripture and I would say almost always be through Scripture or through our own meditations and thoughts of who God is and those are based on Scripture too.

But every time we come face to face with the reality of the greatness of God, God always turns that eventually inward for us to see who we are.

And so, David asked him we ought to ask who are we? It wasn't an interrogative question. He's not asking for an answer. He knows the answer. The answer is implied.

[41 : 43] Compared to you, God, we're no one and nothing. This is a perspective God wants us to have for who we are before God.

And what is this perspective? Let me just give you a few that come right from the text, I think. The perspective of who we are, I think, begins with this that we are to be humble and acknowledge that we are undeserving people.

We listen, dear people, and you know where I have been and I can't resist to have my thoughts always about this.

At least I will for the next several weeks or months, maybe longer. But you cannot, if you've never traveled to some of these other countries, you cannot begin to understand how blessed we are materially.

Incredible. And to whom much has been given, much is required. And it's difficult, I maintain, even, I mean, for us right here, difficult for us to have that perspective of ourselves that we are undeserving people.

[43 : 14] Not just in the sense of spiritually. Surely you know. Surely you would readily acknowledge that when it comes to the spiritual blessings that God has bestowed upon us, our salvation and other blessings, we are undeserving.

Do you have that perspective of yourself that all that I have from God, spiritually speaking, my relationship with Him, even the very faith I have in Him, has all come by His grace.

And by definition, for grace to be grace, it means that I am absolutely undeserving. And in reality, apart from His grace, I would never even want Him.

Never call out to Him. Never desire Him. From start to finish, God has bestowed, He has offered grace to us, to a people who are undeserving.

Humble. Undeserving. Verse 14 again, Who am I? And who are My people that we should be able to offer as generously as this?

[44 : 50] Again, in the context of this event, this occasion. He's saying the very thing that we're able to do here. You have enabled us.

And we're undeserving. Who are we that we could do this? For all things come from You and from Your hand. Your hand. We have given You. Even our worship.

In that part of our service we call the, quote, worship service. Really all of this is worship. But we're singing and praising the Lord.

And in between some of the verses we're, and hopefully you're doing this, reading the Scriptures that have been inserted in between some of the stanzas to some of our choruses.

And we are hopefully worshiping. Even that. That offering that we lift up to Him. Even that has come from His hand. Do you know that?

[45 : 52] We don't have it in and of ourselves to worship God. We think we do. And when we think we do, and we are offering maybe of ourselves in some fleshly way, our worship, it's not worship.

It's vain. It's worthless. Because everything we offer to Him first comes from Him. And so this is the right perspective.

A humble. To be humble. And to acknowledge that we are undeserving people. There's another perspective in this regard. As we see ourselves for who we are before God.

To fully realize, here's the second thing, to fully realize that we are strangers in this world. We're just sojourners. We're aliens as it's translated in the New American Standard.

Verse 15, For we are sojourners before you. And tenants. We're just renters. In a sense here.

[46:58] We've kind of set up a tent. And we're not... This is not our home. In fact, we're not even in the most real sense, we're not even citizens of this great nation.

Some of us have taken some consolation in that after our last presidential election. We're not citizens here. Our citizenship is in heaven.

We're not looking to here. We're looking there. To a city whose foundation is God. And so, we're to realize that we're just strangers here.

Just moving through. We are sojourners before you and tenants as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow. Like a shadow.

It's not all about here. And we make our plans and we work our plans and we have great aspirations, great goals, and we're working toward this and that and whatever it may be.

[48:07] But this is just a shadow of what is to come. In fact, in relation to what is to come, this is not even real.

Not even real. Not in the sense of what real is. So we're sojourners. That's the right perspective of who we are before God.

And I'll add a third one. To know that we have been given a purpose. That we really, you know, I hesitate to borrow the term, but purpose-driven people.

God intends for us to be purpose-driven people for His kingdom. Verse 16, O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided to build You a house for Your holy name, it is from Your hand and all is Yours.

Now again, fortifying that all things belong to God and all that came from His hand. And so what we give is something He's given us to give. But the idea here is that we're involved in this.

[49:12] We're in this purpose and in this immediate sense to build a house for God. In our sense, it is again to be a part of His, the advance of the kingdom and the growth of the kingdom.

Now we don't bring about that growth. But we are part of that purpose. And we're to be driven by that purpose. Whether the outcome of it or the specific focus of it is here or somewhere else or in all these multiple places that we want to be connected to, we are to be a purpose-driven people.

That's who we are before God. Again, this is a foundation. A foundation for real gratitude. And finally, a right perspective on what kind of heart God requires that we have.

The right perspective on what kind of heart God requires. All comes down to this. An upright heart before Him.

A right heart. Verse 17, Since I know, oh my God, that You try the heart.

[50:38] You test it. You analyze it. You prove it. That is in the sense of you are involved in finding out and revealing just what kind of heart it is.

That's what He's doing. He does that in, you know, a thousand different ways in our lives by testing us, bringing hardship into our lives sometimes, whatever it may be.

So He tries the heart. This is what He said. And delight, He delights, God delights in uprightness.

Literally, God is pleased with a heart that is perfect toward Him.

What do I mean by perfect? Do I mean perfect as in perfect, perfect? Without flaw? No, what I mean is a heart that is perfect toward Him whose desire is Him, is God.

whose desire is always the things of God. The things that please Him and honor Him. An upright heart.

[51:59] A perfect heart. A whole heart. As I shared some months ago, it could be defined this way, a heart that is pure in the sense that it is a heart that wants one thing.

And that's God. one thing. God. This is what God delights in. Alright, so then under this perspective, God requires a heart that pleases Him.

That's number one. Let's read on though. You try the heart and delight in uprightness. And then He says, I in the integrity of my heart.

Literally a heart that is perfect toward Him. And I've already mentioned this. So here are two things. Two perspectives. God requires a heart that pleases Him.

God desires and requires a heart that is perfect toward Him. and then He says, and I in the integrity, the perfection of my heart, have willingly offered all these things.

[53:15] And so here's third. God requires a heart that leads to a productive life for Him. a heart that leads, compels us, propels us, motivates us toward a life that is productive.

Productive for Him. And that includes everything that we do. Because no matter what we do, we do for His glory. This is what God desires. This is the right perspective on the kind of heart God requires.

This is a foundation for gratitude. That God requires a heart that pleases Him always. that God would desire a heart that is perfect toward Him. A heart that wants one thing and that's God and all that God would please Him.

And then God requires a heart that leads to a productive life for Him. And then one final thing and we're finished. God requires a heart that is permanently fixed on Him.

Permanently fixed on Him for His glory. Now this may sound all these things you put all these together you say well this is tall order.

[54:30] I don't think I'm up to the task. Well you're not. Let's just admit that. Not any of us are. But if these things God requires then God gives grace.

open your heart to Him. Is this your perspective on the kind of heart that God requires? That your heart would always please Him always be perfect toward Him would be leading always to a productive life for Him in every way He leads you whatever that may mean for you and that is God's will for you what He wants you to be productive about and that God requires a heart that is permanently fixed on Him.

Verse 18 lost my place again O Lord the God of Abraham can you see yourself saying this to God O Lord God of Abraham Isaac Israel our fathers preserve this forever in the intentions of the heart of your people and direct their heart to you forever that's the way it's going to be in heaven one day perfect heart and praise for Him for eternity without end we need to get started with that here now a permanent a heart that is permanently fixed on God I challenge you to find a better foundation for real gratitude real thanksgiving and then you can add on top of that every specific thing you're thankful to God for start with this foundation

Thank you.