

“I Will Bless the Lord While I Live”

Psalm 63:1-5

Sunday, November 25, 2018

Introduction: One of my favorite Psalms is Psalm 63. David wrote the Psalm during a very dark time in his life. He had been driven by his son Absalom from the sanctuary in Jerusalem which was the center of his life into the desert near the Dead Sea. In the Psalm, there are seven words that David wrote that I want to do this morning. We see the seven words in verse 4.

There are things that I am thankful for that while I am alive I need to share publicly what I would normally only share privately.

1. I am thankful that I was saved when I was seven years old.

- My mother took me to church every Sunday as a little boy.
- My Sunday School teacher taught me Bible stories and inspired me to memorize Bible verses.
- One Sunday morning in church when I was seven years old I felt that God wanted me to become a Christian. The following Saturday the pastor came to our home and told me how to become a Christian. On that Saturday morning, I prayed and asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins and come into my heart and make me a Christian.

Illustration: Last Sunday night a mother and father came to Jon with their eight-year-old daughter after the service and Jon explained to her how to become a Christian and she prayed and asked Jesus to make her a Christian. Had that family not been in church last Sunday night that precious child would not have been saved last Sunday night.

Application: The importance of parents having their children in church is beyond words.

T.S. Fast forward twenty years.

2. I am thankful that at age 27 I discovered God's plan for my life.

- I knew verses like Jeremiah 29:11.
- I had heard sermons about God having a plan for people.
- I grew up in church and not until I was 27 years old had I thought about what God's plan was for my life.
- I was saved at seven, faithful in church, Dottie and I taught a young married Sunday School class, Dottie sang in the choir, we both tithed.

Illustration: One Sunday night after church, the assistant pastor of our church and his wife who were about our age came to our home. That night at our kitchen table he said to me, "I don't think you know how to know God's plan for your life." He then picked up my Bible and said, "Show me in your Bible how to know God's plan for your life." I did not have a clue. He then turned to Psalm 37:4.

Application: Let me ask you. Do you know God's plan for your life? Good question. We will come back to it shortly.

T.S. Fast forward 50 years. I was saved at age seven. I discovered God's plan for my life at age twenty-seven. I am now seventy-seven. That is a fifty-year gap. During those fifty years...

- Out of the business world
- Completed our university work—Providence Baptist Church
- Then to seminary—Travis Avenue Baptist Church
- Then three churches after seminary—all three have been good churches.
- I love all three of the churches I have been the pastor, but FBC Pasadena is my favorite church.
- I would need a sermon time to tell you the reasons this is my favorite church.

In these fifty years, I have learned to be thankful for things that I would never have thought I would be thankful for.

1. I have learned to be thankful for the patience of pulpit committees.

- The FBC Sulphur Springs asked me to be their pastor twice. The first time I did not feel it was God's will.
- Five years later the church came back to Tennessee and asked me again to be their pastor. The second time I felt it was God's will.
- The FBC Pasadena dealt with me off and on almost one and a half years and was patient until it was clear to me this was God's will for me.

Application: Look back on your life and there have been people where you have worked that have been patient with you.

2. I have learned to be thankful for unanswered prayers.

- Being thankful for answered prayers is one thing.
- But being thankful for unanswered prayers is another thing.

Illustration: When I was about six months from graduating from seminary, I began to pray seriously about the church I would pastor. I had two prayer requests.

1. That God would not send me to a church that needed to build buildings.
2. My second request was that God would not send me to a First Baptist Church.

Illustration: God did not answer either requests. I am thankful for those two unanswered prayers.

3. I have learned to be thankful for closed doors.

- We are thankful for open doors, but we need to also be thankful for closed doors.

Illustration: One door that God closed devastated me at the time. (To hear this story, listen to the sermon on the church web page www.fbp.org).

- FBC S.A.

Conclusion: Let me ask you this morning: “Do you know God’s plan for your life?” You can! The Bible is very clear about this.

1. It is God’s will for you to be saved.

- The Bible says, “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).
- The Bible says, “God desires all me to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

Application: If you only knew John 3:16 you would know that it is God’s will for you to be saved.

2. Once you are saved, your sanctification is the will of God (1 Thess. 4:3).

- “For this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thess. 4:3).
- The word sanctification simply means “to be set apart.”
- What that means is progressively to become more like Jesus.

Application: We all have bad days. Don’t look at just some bad days in your Christian life. Look at the whole of your life. Ask yourself if you are more like Jesus today than you were a year ago.

3. It is God’s will that you give thanks.

- The Bible says, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:18).
- The word “everything” is what makes this hard, but that is the will of God.

Invitation: This morning you can bless God while you live.

1. By being saved.
2. By progressing in your Christian life.

If you are not saved, this morning trust Jesus. If you are saved, do the things that will help you progress in your Christian life.