11/29/15 Give God the gift of thankfulness this Christmas

* Intro
  + We are finishing up our series of Praise and Thanksgiving this week
  + Next week we will begin a new series called "A Different Kind of Christmas"
  + This has been a great series as we have looked at different aspects of Praise
    1. Praise Him in the Storm
       - 4 things= 1-share feelings with God, 2-recall what He has done, 3-praise for past faithfulness, 4- Trust future faithfulness
    2. Worship through Praise and Thanksgiving  
       - Joyful noise= Hebrew is "rua", Sing, ok to be excited and raise hands and say amen, Worship him in spirit and truth and we are free to do that
    3. Praising through prayer
       - Give thanks, calling on His name, MAKE Known his deeds- healing, miracles Greatest miracle is someone to know that the Lord loves them
  + In Today's sermon we are going to bridge the two series

Psalm 116:12-19 12 What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me? 13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and **call** on the name of the Lord, 14 I will pay my **vows** to the Lord in the presence of all his people. 15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. 16 O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant. You have loosed my bonds. 17 I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord. 18 I will pay my **vows** to the Lord in the presence of all his people, 19 in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. **Praise the Lord!**

* The Psalmist asks the question "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?
  + "What can I give to God for all the things he does for me?"
* As followers of Christ we know that the Lord blesses and gives us numerous things
* He asks the question and then proceeds to answer himself
  + How many of you do that?
  + I do that all the time
* I think the psalmist gives us three things that we can do to repay the Lord for all the benefits

1. Prayer
   * v. 13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord
   * again in v. 17 . . . . . . . . . . .and call on the name of the Lord
   * Mentioned last week Gen. 4:26b At that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord.
     + That's how the first followers of God were recognized= they prayed
   * Four things to have in prayer
   * Daniel 2:1-23  
     + Faith
       - Believe that God will do what he says he will do
       - v. 16 And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.
       - Requested a meeting BEFORE given the vision of the dream
     + Know power of
       - Daniel when Nebuchadnezzar wanted dream told and interpreted
       - Asked friends to pray
       - v. 17&18 17 Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions,18 and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.
     + Combine prayer with Action
       - Went to Nebuchadnezzar and spoke
       - Later on in Chapter he tells Nebuchadnezzar the dream and interprets it
       - Goes to him, knowing that the Lord has answered his prayer
     + Recognize God's voice
       - God spoke to him in vision, v. 19 Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night.
       - Completely certain
       - Praise and thank him in advance, v. 20-23 “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,

to whom belong wisdom and might. 21 He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; 22 he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. 23 To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king’s matter.”

1. Praise
   * We have defined it= Giving glory to God for who he is
     + Who he is?
     + Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End, First and Last
     + Through him everything is and everything was created
     + The reason we are and the reason we have the things we do
     + Psalm 136= His steadfast love endures forever
   * It is and should be our response to His gift of grace
   * v. 14 and repeated in verse 18= I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people
   * Pay vows
     + Praise is a payment to the Lord
     + We can never repay him but we can pay our vows
       - Vows become debts
       - Must pay our debts
     + Give God the glory= bounce the glory back up
   * Public
     + presence of all his people
     + v.19 in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!
     + Where?
       - House of the Lord= Church, in the presence of other believers/worshipers/saints
       - Jerusalem= City, outside of church walls, in the presence of nonbelievers
   * Repeats it= Means it is important
   * v. 19 end= Praise the Lord!
     + Text abbreviation= PTL
     + Some versions replace PTL with the word **"Hallelujah"**= One of few Hebrew words to have entered the English language and it is a call to Praise The Lord
2. Thanksgiving
   * We have defined it= giving God glory for what he has done for us
     + He has done so much, answered prayers, miracles, wonders, signs, visions
     + GRACE
       - A free gift
       - Appropriate response to a gift is thanksgiving
     + Through this series I have heard so many wonderful stories of healing and thankfulness
       - From thankful posts on Facebook
       - Healing stories like Jody's elbow
       - Healing of cancer Janet Geiger's daughter
     + Last week through our healing service= (Anyone have a healed wrist?)
     + Jean Smith told me her story. She was in her mid-sixties. She came from Cwmbran in Wales. She had been blind for sixteen years. She had a white stick, and a guide dog named Tina. An infection had eaten away at the retinas and mirrors behind her eyes – they could not be replaced. She was in constant pain.  
         
       Jean went on a local Alpha Course. They had a day away to focus on the work of the Holy Spirit. During this time, the pain left. She went to church the following Sunday to thank God. The minister anointed her with oil. As she wiped the oil away she could see the communion table. God had miraculously healed Jean.  
         
       She had not seen her husband for sixteen years. She was surprised at how white his beard was! Jean had never even seen her daughter-in-law before. Her six-and-a-half-year-old grandson used to guide her around the puddles to avoid her getting her feet wet.  
         
       He said to her, ‘Who done that Gran?’  
       She replied, ‘Jesus made me better.’  
       ‘I hope you said thank you, Gran.’  
       ‘I will never stop saying thank you,’ she answered.
   * v. 17 I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving
   * As a sacrifice
     + Psalm 50:14 Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High,
     + Be thankful and do what you say you're going to do
     + Sometimes we make promises to God
     + From the Heart

* Closing
  + Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
  + World can be divided into two groups 1) Those who acknowledge God and give thanks to him, 2) Those that don't
  + Exit this season of Thanksgiving and enter this season of Christmas we can give God the gift of thankfulness as we celebrate the gift of his Son Jesus Christ