

## New Year's Reflections – 1 Chron 16:8-13

I trust you had a good Christmas and some time to relax over the holidays; I know we did, and feel extremely blessed b/c of it  
I also trust you're eager to get into God's Word at the start of this *new* year; I know I am, and would love for you to turn with me to 1 Chron 16:8-13

Having finished our series on money, I want to take a few weeks to focus on some biblical principles regarding the *church*; Studying and embracing . . .  
The rock-solid truths about *it*, just as much as we do the ones for ourselves  
B/c God wants it too, to be built to last (**Intro**)

And part of that, is doing the right things; Discovering and following the pattern of Scripture, laid out in passages like this one; It's a pattern to practice

- The time was about 1000BC, David had just been anointed king over Israel, and they had just brought the famous Ark of the Covenant into the city  
The symbol of God's promise to bless and keep them, the place where God made his presence known, and the focal point of their worship; That was the ark

And having just placed it in the tent they made for it, David reflects a bit and tells the people what to do; Saying in v8 . . .  
[8] *Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!* [9] *Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!* [10] *Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!* [11] *Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!* [12] *Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles and the judgments he uttered,* [13] *O offspring of Israel his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones!*

It's a pattern to practice, then *and* now; The first *part* of which, is to . . .

### **Thank God for all he has done (v8a,12)**

It's the very first thing out of David's mouth in v8 – *Oh give thanks to the LORD*  
As in, thank God; Thank Yahweh  
And just to make sure we know what to thank him *for*, David says in v12 . . .  
*Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles and the judgments [or decisions] he uttered*  
You want to know what to thank God for? Pay attention to what he's done

Some of which David recounts for them, in the following verses, and then comes right back to where he started in v34 – *Oh give thanks to the LORD*  
Just like he said in v8; It's like 2 book ends, for the purpose of emphasizing our response – *thanking* God; Expressing gratitude for all he's done

Which I'm pretty sure, is a regular part of life for many of you; You thank God often  
But I'm also pretty sure it's *not* for some of you; And that as a church, we can do better  
So instead of just making this point and sending you on your way, I'd like to take a few minutes and do it – thank God right now; Together  
So that we can encourage one another with some of what God has done in our lives, and offer up a groundswell of gratitude

- That's why we have 2 mics down here

And in just a minute, I want you to come forward, line up, and thank God for one thing in your life; Just 1 sentence; “**God, thank you for . . .**”  
Saving my soul; Restoring my marriage; Protecting me from harm; Waking me up;  
Healing my son; Loving me so much; Just 1 sentence

Maybe it's the birth of a new baby you experienced this past year; Or an adoption; Or a new job; Maybe it's strength he provided each day, just to get *through* the year  
Maybe it's the love you share as a family; Or the blessing of health  
Whatever it is, come and say it; Just back and forth  
And if someone has already said yours, so be it; Say it again; How great would it be to hear of God's work in many of the *same* ways among us

So go ahead, come right now; There's a pastor at each mic to welcome you and stand with you – so just line up, and in a spirit of prayer let's thank God . . .  
For all he's done this year, one sentence at a time (Open Mic Prayer Time)

- God, thank you for our church; Thank you for saving us; Thank you for bringing us together; Thank you for the many decisions of faith this year; And the baptisms  
Thank you for providing for our needs; Thank you for blessing us with so much  
Thank you for the love we share; Thank you for the grace that abounds; Thank you for the strength to endure; Thank you for the presence of your Spirit  
Thank you for the joy of our salvation; God, thank you for all you've done\*\*\*\*\*

One of the patterns to practice as a church, is to *remember* what God has done, and *thank* him for it

2<sup>nd</sup>, is to . . .

### **Speak up about all God is doing (v8c,9b)**

[8] *Oh give thanks to the LORD* [v8]; *call upon his name* [I'll come back to that]; *make known his deeds among the peoples!* There it is  
*Make known his deeds among the peoples;* Or as it says in v9b – *tell of all his wondrous works!* Make known, and tell  
IOW speak up; Let your light *shine*; Let your voice be *heard*  
B/c people aren't going to *know* what God's doing in your life, if you don't *tell* them  
And they *certainly* won't know about his work in our *church* if you don't say anything

- If you sense God moving among us, share it  
If you see people being saved, or discipled, or cared for, or loved on – speak up  
If you're excited about what he's doing in one of our ministries – make it known  
If you're blessed by the worship, or the preaching of God's Word, or the fellowship we enjoy – say so

It's a pattern to practice, and the reason Becky and I have a Harvest sticker on our cars  
And our front door; And wear Harvest *apparel* from time to time  
It's not b/c we think we're *better* than other churches; Or that God's not at *work* in theirs; We're just over-the-top about what he's doing in *ours*  
And want everybody to know

- It's also one of the reasons we share God@Work stories with you from time to time  
B/c changed lives is the *epitome* of work worth talking about

Like the testimony of Steve and Tracy Lingle; Take a look (**Lingle God@Work video**)

- That's a God story worth talking about; And there are lots more  
And the worst thing we can do, is be silent  
If you have any encouragement in Christ, any participation in the Spirit, any joy from  
his presence – speak up

Next . . .

**Pray more for all God will do (v8b,11)**

That's the 3<sup>rd</sup> pattern to practice; Or as David says it in v8b – *Call upon his name*

And then again in v11 – *Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!*

That's prayer – calling on God, seeking him, asking for his help, and just being with him  
Not that they weren't already *doing* it in David's day; The process of bringing the ark  
into the city had been going on for months; With prayer no doubt a part of it  
What David is *advocating*, is more; In addition to all you've *been* doing in this respect,  
pray *more* for all God will do, he's saying

- And I don't know about you, but I live in a state of constant conviction about that; And  
constant desire and motivation to do it; IOW I never feel like I pray *enough*; Ever  
I pray; And love to pray; And love the Spirit's fullness that comes with it  
But I'm never satisfied that it's sufficient; I never feel like I call on God *enough*; Or as  
much as I want to; And certainly not continually

And I want to change that; And I want to change it in our church as well  
B/c I have the same feeling about *us*, as I do about myself in this respect  
I don't feel like we pray nearly *enough* as a church, and I definitely don't feel like  
enough of us *pray*

So I'm going to do some things in my *own* life to change that, which I've already started,  
and I'd like to do some things differently as a church, as well

- One of which, is praying up front before the services; Instead of a few people praying in  
a room somewhere in the *catacombs* of our building . . .  
We want it to happen right here, up front; We want to take our pre-service prayer out of  
the closet, and into the open  
With the hope that more of you will participate

We just started it this weekend, with one of our elders leading it; And they'll continue to  
do so from now on; 15 minutes before the service  
We're going to put a **slide on the screen**, inviting you to come down front, circle up,  
and pray; Not chit-chat, not look at what everybody's wearing, but pray  
For 10 minutes; Just 10 minutes; From quarter 'til, to 5 'til

Calling out to the Lord for our service; Seeking his presence  
Asking him to move in power and reveal his glory; And pleading for the fullness of his  
Spirit as we gather in his name  
Just 10 minutes, starting 15 minutes before the service

And if you're like, "Oh, we don't get here that early" – What if you did?  
What if you made that a part of your Sabbath worship just like everything else?  
What if you got here at 20 'til instead of 2 'til? What might the Lord do?  
That's one thing – pray up front before each service\*\*\*\*\*

- Another, is gathering every now and then for nights of prayer  
We've put 3 on the calendar this year, on Thursday nights; That's in addition to the 2  
weeks of prayer around Easter and our ministry year kick-off  
The idea being, that we would gather right here, for an hour and 15 minutes, to do  
nothing else but pray; No singing, no preaching, just praying  
Sometimes individually, sometimes in groups, and sometimes corporately  
But always, for all that God will do in our lives, and families, and church

It's a pattern to practice; And the benefits are so potential-packed, and God-glorifying, and  
soul-satisfying – we'd be absolute fools not to do it  
Not to discipline ourselves, and order our lives, to pray *more* for all God will do  
It's a pattern to practice

And last, is to . . .

**Offer all in worship and praise (v9a,10)**

David says in v9 – *Sing to him, sing praises to him*

And in v10 – *Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD  
rejoice!* That's worship

Where you sing, and rejoice, and revel in God's holiness – as an expression of praise

And do so with your *whole* heart; Like David says in Ps 86:12 – *I give thanks to you, O  
Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever.*  
So the pattern to practice, is to offer our *all* in worship and praise

- Which requires 2 things – attendance and participation  
If you're going to offer your all in worship and praise, you have to *be* here, and you  
have to *participate*  
Not that you can't worship on your own; You can and should  
But if you leave *this* out, if you leave *corporate* worship out, you're not all in; You're  
not offering your *all* in worship and praise

What if you made a New Year's resolution to never miss a Sunday in church this year?  
To never miss a gathering of the saints for the purpose of worship and praise?  
What would happen in your life if you honored the Lord like that?

I'm not saying that God has no grace or patience for extenuating circumstances every now  
and then; I'm saying that in order to offer your *all*, you have to be here  
I'm saying that the only way to fully *appreciate* worship, is to fully *participate*  
Not just standing there, but singing; Not just barely, but loudly; Not just being *okay*  
with God's glory, but reveling and *rejoicing* in it (**Summary**)

- Can I encourage you to make such a commitment? B/c just like with most things in life,  
desire follows discipline; Desire follows commitment  
The more you discipline yourself to be in the Word, the more you'll *desire* the Word

And the more you discipline yourself to be in worship, the more you'll *desire* to  
worship; It's a pattern to practice for sure

Pray – Lord, thank you for these reminders; Thank you for all you've done in our church,  
from the changed lives to the abundant provision; Find us overflowing to talk about it,  
and do more we pray; You're good, and faithful, and worthy of our worship  
And we give now, as an act of praise, and love, and obedience