

“Thanks be to God for God’s indescribable gift!”

2 Corinthians 9: 6-15

It is the most wonderful time of the year! No, I’m not talking about the fact that at this point in the year, our attention is mainly captured by visions of gathering around the table with the people we love, surrounded by dishes and dishes of wonderful food, and everyone is getting along. No, it is the most wonderful time of the year because at this time of year, we all seem to slow down a little bit, gain some perspective and thank God for all our many blessings. It is at this time of the year when we center ourselves on the understanding that all things flow from God’s good grace. It is at this time of the year when we take the time to reflect on what we are thankful for as children of God. It is at this time of year that we are reminded that giving thanks is central to who we are as people of faith, when we are reminded that we are called to live lives with a sense of gratitude, knowing that all we have, and all that we are is based upon our dependence of God. It is a time when we are reminded that as we give our thanksgiving and praise to God, we are called to show our appreciation for these many blessings with lives that reflect thankful living..

And that is exactly what our Scripture calls us to do today. It may seem like an odd sort of text for Thanksgiving Sunday. It is not full of the usual thanksgiving

type images that we are used to hearing and seeing on this particular Sunday. We are used to hearing from the Psalms that usually remind us of God's abundance.

So why this text? We are looking at this text because it calls us to move beyond the words of thanksgiving and praise and begin living lives of generosity and gratitude that reflect our experience of God's extravagant grace.

In our text today, we get part of a letter that Paul has written to the church in Corinth. He sends it along with Titus as a way of reconnecting with them after such a long time. In this letter, Paul is not shy about admitting that this letter is an appeal for funds. He states his purpose up front. But he doesn't want to guilt them into giving. He wants them to give freely and for them to give what they are comfortable giving to the cause. So instead of guiltting them or giving them some sob stories, Paul give them a pep talk about God's grace and reminds them to be grateful for all that God has done and continues to do for them as a community of faith. Paul says that in response to such an amazing gift like God's extravagant grace the only way to respond to such a gift is to sing praises of thanksgiving and live lives of thank filled living!

Paul wants the community at Corinth to think about the times when God's grace filled their lives and blessed them in unexpected ways. In all those times, Paul reminds them that this community of faith didn't receive those blessings, didn't receive God's grace because they earned it or because it was a reward for

giving the most of their resources. God's grace is not their reward for being faithful. God's grace is given because God wanted to give. God wanted to bless them in those unexpected ways. And these blessings are not just limited to this community in Corinth.

God wants to shower all of God's children with the gift of grace, a gift that sustains, a gift that transforms, a gift that frees us to become the people that God created us to be. God's grace is a gift that words cannot describe or even capture the amazing experiences it offers for all of God's children. It is a gift that is freely given because God wants to shower all of God's children with this blessing!

In fact Paul reminds this community of faith that from the very beginning of time, God has thrown caution to the wind and has given to all of God's children with reckless abandon, that from the very beginning of time, God has been extravagant with all of them who are in God's care, who are wrapped in God's love, and who are filled with God's blessing. From the very beginning of time, God has been generous and supplied the needs of God's children, no ifs, ands, or buts!

And the only way that we as people of faith can respond to such an amazing, to such an extravagant gift is with thanksgiving and praise, is by living lives of thank filled living, lives that reflect and share that very same amazing, extravagant grace with all of God's creation.

Through lives of thank filled living, we respond to the gift of God's grace by waking up each morning, thankful that God has given us this day to experience the blessings of God. Through lives of thank filled living, we respond to God's grace by saying thank you to God for the food in our pantry. We respond to God's grace by saying thank you to God for our families and friends. We respond to God's grace by saying thank you to God for all the unexpected blessings that fill our lives. God has been extravagant with us! We are showered with God's grace each and every day of our lives and we sing songs of praise and thanksgiving for such an amazing gift!

What makes it such an amazing gift is we know that we didn't earn it and yes, we will even admit that on certain days, we know we don't deserve it! And so we respond the only way we can. We live lives of thank filled living, knowing that our lives have been so transformed by God's grace that we will never be the same. We sing songs of thanksgiving and share the good news!

And the best part of all is that we don't respond because we have to or because we are guilted into doing so. We don't respond because we are fearful of what God will do to us if we don't. We respond because we know that we are blessed beyond our imagination! We are blessed because we are claimed and named as God's very own. We are blessed because God sent God's own Son so that we might have new life. We are blessed because we are surrounded by a

community of faith who will walk with us, who will support us, who love us. We are blessed because we are loved by a God who throws caution to the wind and gives to us in reckless abandon!

And we respond the only way we know how: we sing songs of thanksgiving. We sing songs of praise. We sing songs of amazing grace and thank our God for all of our blessings!

And the best part of all is that we know that when we sing our songs of thanksgiving and praise, our voices are joined with the chorus of praise from all of God's creation, giving, thanking, and praising God for all that God has done. We know that when we respond to God's gift of grace with lives of thankful praise, we become even more connected with all of God's creation and we become more aware that these blessings of grace cannot be contained or saved for just a chosen few.

We respond to such good news by sharing God's grace with those in need, with those that are hurting, with those that are lonely, with those that are suffering. We share the extravagant gift that was first shown to us with all of God's creation because we know that through our lives of thankful praise, that through our acts of justice, our acts of peace, our acts of mercy, our acts of hope, more and more acts of great praise and thanksgiving will be lifted up to God. We know that more and

more of these amazing blessings will be experienced. We know that more and more of God's grace will be shared with all of God's creation.

And the choruses of thanksgiving and praise will multiply! It will become a joyful noise for all of God's creation! It will become strains of good news that will drown out the cries of hurt, the cries of sorrow, and the cries of pain that fill our world today. And that is the promise of the Kingdom of God!

The good news for us this morning is that we know as children of our God who throws caution to the wind and gives with reckless abandon, our spirits of thanksgiving and our lives of thankful praise are promises to help us overcome our sufferings, help us overcome our struggles, and to help us overcome the hardships we face. We know that our God has not left us alone. Our God is there supplying all our needs. Our God is there walking with us through the darkest valleys. Our God is there, holding us in the palm of God's hand.

We are not alone. Our God has thrown caution to the wind and has given to us with reckless abandon! So now let us shout with thanksgiving. So now let us sing songs of God's great harvest, a harvest of justice, a harvest of peace, a harvest of righteousness, and most importantly a harvest of grace. So now let us sing our praises to our God, knowing that our songs of thanksgiving, knowing that our lives of thankful praise multiply the blessings of our lives even more! The good news is that our God is extravagant with the gift of grace. Our God throws caution to the

wind and gives with reckless abandon! Our God has given us an indescribable gift for which we are thankful each and every day of our lives!

We sing with thanksgiving and live lives of thankful praise because we know that we are witnesses to the extravagant gift of God's grace and through our praises of thanksgiving, we worship and thank we now our God for God's indescribable gift!

May we all live lives of thankful praise and lift our songs of thanksgiving to our God who throws caution to the wind and gives with reckless abandon! Amen.