

11/20/22 Sermon: Thankful for a Happy Heart (Scriptures Psalm 100 & Colossians 3:15-17)

This is Madame Blueberry. And she is blue, *yes, I know she is a blueberry*, but she is blue because she wants what she doesn't have.



Watch this video to see: https://youtu.be/wkDMEKp_Bgk

Yes, Madame Blueberry is blue because while she has stuff of her own, it's not what her neighbors have. In fact she is so jealous of their items that as you saw, she will sketch and draw pictures of their items, and place those pictures in her home. Her heart is filled with wants, with envy, with jealousy, and so she is blue.

This is the story line in the Christian based curriculum, from Veggie Tales, that teaches about the downfalls of wanting what you don't have. There's a biblical term for that, called coveting. And this is *not* good, according to God, in fact it's in God's top 10 list of what *not* to do. **Exodus 20:17** *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."* I like the way the Message interprets this commandment: **Don't set your heart on anything that is your neighbor's.** Coveting is a matter of the heart. And God wanted the people of God's nation to have *a right heart, that is a heart that is thankful.*

In our scripture lesson today taken from the **Psalms**, we are informed of the goodness of God, a goodness that calls for praise and thanksgiving, because God will make the heart happiest.

Now scholars believe this is one of the oldest psalms to be used in a liturgical setting, that is in a time of worship, by the Israelites. And you will notice it has a structure. The first four verses offer an Invitation to come into God's presence in the sanctuary where God can be rightly honored and worshiped with joyful noise, gladness, and thanksgiving. And then the last verse tells why God should be honored and praised, ***For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*** This was a guideline for worship for the Israelites as God was forming them into God's nation.

That means worship would be a time to give thanks for God's faithfulness from the call of Abraham, to the exodus with Moses to their new land with prophets and judges and eventually their first king. All under God's steadfast guidance. God is faithful, God is just, God is right. This God watches out for them, hears their cries, and saves them. Therefore this God should be honored, trusted, obeyed, and praised. Because every time they worship, it is an act of identifying themselves to the One who meets their heart's desire.

Every time we worship, it is an act of identifying ourselves with that same God. This is the message of **Colossians 3:15-17** Hear it again. ***Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.***

God's love has been revealed in Christ, who offers us peace to rule our hearts, and inspires us to sing with thankfulness, just like the Psalmist.

Going back to Madame Blueberry, before things get better, they got a little worse. She ends up going on a massive shopping spree, and overloading her home to the point that it actually falls apart. Her desire for what others have, leaves her homeless. But she meets Annie, whose family doesn't have much, in fact it is Annie's birthday and the only thing her parents can afford to give her is a piece of apple pie. Yet, Annie is grateful for what they have. Here's her song of thanks: <https://youtu.be/rKoC92BpEn4>

When we start to understand that we can be thankful for what we have, instead of what we don't have, our hearts change. They become content and joyful, they become happy. That's what the commandment against coveting means, to know that our focus should never be on what we don't have, rather recognizing all that we do have, and giving thanks to God for that.

You may know that it was that same sense of gratitude that led President Abraham Lincoln to formally establish the first Thanksgiving Day in 1863.

On Oct 3, 1863 he made this statement, proclaiming the new holiday. “We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people.” And so he declared the 4th Thursday of November as a national holiday of Thanksgiving. A day to give thanks to God.

President Lincoln, like little Annie, like the psalmist, like the author of Colossians, all understood that when we are thankful for what we have, instead of what we don't have, our hearts change because we recognize and praise God for all we have been given.

This week as you celebrate Thanksgiving, may you count your blessings and be certain to give thanks for what you do have, because as the Psalmist states, ***For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.***

Let us pray: Wondrous God, as the nation prepares to take time to celebrate the holiday of Thanksgiving, may you accept this prayer that celebrates all that you give and all that we receive.

Lord we thank you for the gift of life and for the promise of tomorrow.

Thank you for the satisfaction of our work and harvest as well as the grace of our leisure and rest.

Thank you for the security of your peace, and for the blessing of fellowship in the church and in our home.

With our gratitude we open our hearts and our lives so that your gifts of love and compassion may flow through us, blessing others in your name.

Too often we receive your kindness and abundance, only to bottle it up inside, keeping it to ourselves.

Today make us channels of your goodness, guide us and teach us to share, so that all people may know and experience a grateful and thankful season in your name.

We ask all this through your Son, Jesus Christ *our* Lord, who inspires our gratitude and joy and who taught us to pray saying...Our Father...