The Heart of Thanksgiving
Hebrews 13: 15-16 --- S.R. John 1:29

Introduction:
A. We have a place to worship. It is the altar of God.
B. As believer priests we are to offer an acceptable sacrifice unto our God.
C. This offering is to be part of our daily worship.
D. But we must first lay hold of Christ through faith in him.
E. Consider these principles as the heart of our thanksgiving and let us:

I. Offer the Sacrifice of a Surrendered Heart.
   A. See Romans 12:1, 2
   B. This is the act of consecration of a believer.
   C. This is the confession that I have been bought with a price and belong to another.

D. As Christ gave himself for us we in turn are to give ourselves to him in return.
E. No man can present himself until he has been forgiven.

II. Offer the Sacrifice of a Submissive Heart.
   A. The sacrifices are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart thou wilt not despise.
   B. This is the Christian’s presentation of himself to God: his submission.
   C. It is the answer to the animal sacrifice previously written about.
   D. It is to be a continual offering.
   E. There are to be no strings attached.

III. Offer the Sacrifice of a Loving Heart.
   A. Our example is the interceding love of Jesus.
B. Jesus, the Lord of all glory, humbled himself.

C. Therefore, by him, let us offer.... vs. 12, 13 Jesus said I am the way.... John14:6

D. Jesus alone, bore our iniquity upon a tree.

E. Jesus has provided a new and living way to approach God.

IV. Offer the Sacrifice of a Serving Heart.

A. Believers are created unto good works. Ephesians 2:10

B. We are to offer the fruit of our lips.
   1. Fruit is a living thing.
   2. Receives life through the Holy Spirit.

C. We are to minister to others.
   1. “Now there was at Joppa a certain woman named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms deeds (act of mercy) which she did.” Acts 9:36
   2. Because we ourselves have received mercy.

D. We are not to grow weary in well doing. II Thessalonians 3:13

E. “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but indeed and in truth.

I John3:18

Conclusion:

A. With such sacrifices God is well pleased.

B. God regards our works as an act of worship.

C. The Philippians had given Paul a gift which he acknowledged as” an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. Philippians 4:18

D. God remembers our good work.

E. Let us go forth, broken, and poured out.

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THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE
(THE CHURCH)

There are many, and most Christians do not know how the Lord's church began and even when it began. Most Christians have not studied the word of God to know and most Christians believe their pastor or some preacher they like on T.V. and many times are misled in the truth.

The Lord said in Matt. 16:18 "Thou art Peter and upon this rock (Jesus) I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
We have the assurance from the Lord that he (Christ) would bring his church through all things to victory.

When Jesus began his public ministry (he was 30 years of age) and first of all he went to John the Baptist. God's authority to baptize and was baptized by John. When any Christian begins his or her ministry to serve the Lord they must be first of all baptized by the Lord's church. The only authority to do this.

As Jesus began his public ministry he walked by the sea of Galilee and called Peter and Andrew his brother to follow him and going on further he saw two brothers, James and John and he called them and they left their father and the ship and followed Jesus. Matt. 4:18-22, and seeing the many people he went into the mountain and taught his disciples. This is a mission Jesus is gathering and first of all he is teaching them many things. The Sermon on the Mount taught his disciples how to live their Christian lives before the people. After showing his disciples his power to heal and that he had the control over all things it was time to publicly organize his (mission) into a public church for all to know and see. In Matt. 16:1~16 they said that Jesus is the Christ the son of the living God. Upon this confession that Jesus was and is the Christ he ordained them in Luke 6:12. Now his church has been set in motion. All the members of his church have been baptized by John the Baptist. Always all members of his church have to be baptized by the right authority from God. As head of his church and the Lord and Master of their lives he will now teach them his doctrines.

When the day of Pentecost was come, Jesus had taught his church all his teachings and was ready for the world wide ministry he would give unto her. The church was complete and in agreement on all the issues of the Lord. Acts 1:1. As the Holy Spirit came as a mighty rushing wind and cloven tongues like of fire and sat upon each one of them.

Each member is responsible for the carrying out of the preaching of the gospel. The cloven tongues like a fire represented the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Both given to the church on the day of Pentecost. The church is to preach and teach and the Holy Spirit will be with the church each time they meet to give power to the word. The Holy Spirit will lead his church to carry out the World Wide Mission of preaching the gospel and his knowledge to each member what and how to do it.

As the Lord's church now is fully prepared for service, Peter and other apostles preached on that day and 3,000 souls were saved. Acts 2:41 and baptized and added to the church. Matt. 28:16-20. Jesus gave the world wide commission to his church and knowledge would be given by the Holy Spirit how to do it. II Cor. 5:18-20.

Now Jesus Christ is engaged to this body of believers (his church). He died for it. As an institution it will forever be here until God comes for her and the Spirit will be in charge to preserve her, lead her, teach her, love her and bring her to account before her master and judge in that day. II Cor. 5: 10.
Now in this time of the church's relationship with her Lord, the Holy Spirit has engaged the bride to be faithful to every command the Master has given. II Cor. 11:1-2. In this verse Jesus is saying to his bride to be how he loves her and is courting her in all their relationships. Jesus did this all through the days when he was present with her in his earthly ministry. Now having died for her. Eph. 5:25 and rose again he courts her through the Holy Spirit to give her victory over all things. John 16:1-3. Jesus said to his church "I have to go away but I will come back to receive you unto myself that where I am you may be there with me always."

When a mission is organized into a church, other preachers and deacons of like faith and order are invited to help the sponsoring church in this service. The declaration of our faith, twenty one doctrines of the faith are read. The covenant that binds each member together in church order are real and the members of the mission are asked to accept these two articles of faith by public vote. All have to be accepted by each member. If they don't they are asked to leave and are left out of the membership. This covenant binds each member together to carry out the teaching of the Word of God and this commitment is binding as long as they live. If any member fails either morally or spiritually they can be excluded from the membership by one hundred percent vote.

The epistles to his church or his churches are inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit discusses fully the things in each letter. The Holy Spirit will teach each member all his or her responsibilities before the Lord. II Tim. 3:15-17.

Each saved are given the Holy Spirit when they are born again by power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will give each person power to obey the will of God for their lives. Each church member (saved) must read their Bible, be faithful in attendance to their church, and obey the teachings of the Bible in every part of their life. We all (each one personally) must appear before our Lord and Master and Head of the Church (His Church) to give account of our lives having said we would in church covenant relations.

As believers in his church we are expecting his return. He said in John 14:1-3 "if I go away to prepare a place for you I will come again to receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also." In his return in the air to call all God's children to him, both dead and alive will go up to meet him in the air. I Thess. 4:13-18, I Cor. 15:51-58.

The first event that will take place in the air will be the Judgement Seat of Christ, II Cor. 5:10. Of course in the resurrection we will receive a body like Jesus. I John 3:1-3. A perfect sinless body, suited for heaven. No limitations to our freedom in the heavenlies.
To his church at the judgement seat of Christ we will be judged for our faithfulness in using the gifts he has given his bride. Matt. 25:14-30. His joy in our being faithful and gaining 100 percent with our gifts is to be a part of his bride. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. His joy is for all to be in his bride, but only the faithful will be. The next thing is the wedding. This is the greatest and closest relationship there is with Christ and his bride. Rev. 19:7. The wedding itself. The bride hath made herself ready. Her dress will be fine linen for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints (faithful in all things.)

The marriage supper of the lamb, all the saints in heaven will be invited to this supper. This will not be food like we eat today. Matt. 22:23-33. Verse 30 - no marriage in heaven. In this life marriage is only good for this life. Till death do us part. Our oath and it is okay. In the resurrection all will be single or unmarried. Our fathers and mothers (here) will not be father and mother over there. We will know each other only as children of God. Paul says the former things have passed away.

There will be the lamb, the bride, as honor and honoree. Since the Holy Spirit is the best teacher ever he will serve us with spiritual foods. This super will last a long time. The Holy Spirit will teach us the wonderful spiritual food about the lamb, the bridegroom. It will be our joy to partake of this spiritual food. It will be our life. Jesus spoke of this in John 4:32. Jesus had met the woman at the well (Jacob's well) and witnessed to her about the Christ. Believing this she was saved and the disciples had gone into the city to get something to eat and brought back some food for Jesus. When he delayed to eat, the disciples begged him to eat and then Jesus spoke words. John 4:32. I have meat to eat that you know not of. The true meat for disciples is the spiritual divine meat about the Master and heavenly things. We shall never hunger nor thirst when we feast upon this.

After the supper when Jesus has completed all things necessary to the work of the kingdom we shall all come back to earth to help Jesus start the kingdom work for one thousand years. Rev. 19:11-16. Jesus will sit on his throne as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and rule and reign for one thousand years. We shall rule and reign with him. Rev. 20:6. The bride with fullness of job and happiness will be with the bridegroom in Jerusalem in the temple to help in each work Jesus has for her to do.

Zechariah 14:16. The law of Kingdom - everyone of all the nations must come to Jerusalem to worship the King and keep the feast of tabernacles once a year.

The wife of the King will have much to do with the people. To take care of their needs, she will arrange the Feast of Tabernacles every day.
The thousand year reign of Christ will enjoy perfect peace. Satan will be bound during that time. Rev. 20:1-3. The sheep nations and goat nations will be on earth during that time. Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:7-9.

All people will have to go to Jerusalem once a year to worship the King and keep the feast of tabernacles. Zechariah 14:16. Jesus the King of Kings and Lord of Lords will rule from Jerusalem with a rod of iron. Rev. 19:15.

The saints of the Lord redeemed in perfect bodies will reign over different cities and towns all over the universe. Israel redeemed in perfect bodies will bear children in Jerusalem and carry on the government over the whole world. (Isaiah 43:19-21; Isaiah 52:6-12; Isaiah 60:1-22; Isaiah 11:1-16; Zechariah 8:1-8.)

There will be one King (Jesus Christ), one nation (Israel). Jesus will sit on his Father David’s throne in the temple in Jerusalem and rule righteously. The government and laws of Israel during the one thousand years will be from the Lord.

All the saints from Adam to the kingdom age will be grafted into the nation of Israel and there will be one fold and one Shepherd. (John 10:16; Romans 11:17; Romans 24:26). The Feast of Tabernacles will be observed every day. Thousands of people will be in Jerusalem each day at the Feast of Tabernacles. The memorial of all the saints of God gathered together. Jesus promised that and the memorial of perfect peace over all the earth. Jesus promised that in Zech. 14:16.

It is scriptural to read the twenty one doctrines that we believe the Bible to teach that declares Jesus Christ as the sovereign God and our Lord. Matt. 16:13-16. It is scriptural to name each person going into the membership of the church at that time and by that they are set aside forever as the Church of Jesus Christ ordained of God to carry out the works of God’s commission Luke 6:12-19. When Jesus named the twelve apostles I believe he went among the disciples and put his hand on each one he named. In the organization of the church it would be wise for the presbytery to lay their hands on each member going into the church at that time.

The church of the Lord has continued from the day that Jesus instituted it until this present day and will continue until Jesus comes back for her as he promised. John 14:1-3. All the churches that Paul organized have failed to continue, but the church as an institution will be forever. Many times in the dark ages the church has gone underground, met in secret, but never ceased to exist. God's power has preserved her. Matt.16:18; Eph. 5:25-33.

God's plan for the lost person is to be saved by trusting Jesus Christ for salvation. After being born again by power of the Spirit of God that
person should obey his Father and unite with the Lord's church in their location.

God saves us all for a work he wants us to do. Baptism is a must for the believer. Not for salvation but to obey the Lord as God's child. Eph. 2:8-10. Those that obey the Word are blessed much more that serve their Lord in his church. Eph. 3:21. It should be a joy for each believer to meet with other believers in the Lord's church to serve as God's instrument in his Word. To win the lost to salvation is the first important duty we have in the church. The commission is in three parts. Win the lost (preach the gospel), bring into the church (baptize them) then vote them in. And teach them as church members all the Word.

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THANKSGIVING

I cannot see what life will bring today:
How bountiful or barren it may be,
Nor how the course of life in one swift stroke
Can redirect and change its plan for me;
But this I know, in all by daily living
I turn to Thee, O God, with my thanksgiving.
In years gone by, how surely Thou hast led
And given much where little was my due.
Thou hast in all Thy goodness known and cared,
Replenished faith, my courage to renew.
Today I look to Thee in prayer and praise,
And voice thanksgiving for Thy gracious ways,
Without Thy care, our days would empty be

And fearful as the burning desert sands.
Who else could swing this universe of ours?
How else, but by Thy great and mighty hand?
So frail and weak we are – O make us see
That Thou art good, and raise our thanks to Thee.

K Stevenson Shaffer.

NEHEMIAH – GOD’S MAN FOR THE HOUR
Nehemiah 1:1-4

1. The student of scripture soon discovers that an important segment in God’s plan to deal with the sin problem in the human race is – He uses men to lead in His Kingdom work.

2. A quick review of God’s word will reveal this truth:
(1). Father – first, priest of family.

3. It therefore should come as no surprise that Satan would launch many attacks to damage or destroy the effectiveness of those filling leadership rolls.

4. Two sources confirm this truth:
(1.) Examples found in God’s word –
Illustration: David – numbering Israel –
David, committing adultery; Elijah conflict with Ahab and Jezebel;
Corruption of Priests office.
(2). Development of a carnal society in our day: Illustration: Jimmy Swaggart, Oral Roberts – others.

5. Irregardless to what has happened or will happen to damage the leadership role – the fact remains – God still uses men to lead in His Kingdom work. (this will never change in this age)

6. There seems to be a pressing need in our day for men of honesty, integrity, good character, and conviction of truth – to fill the leadership role in God’s work.

7. The focus of our attention in this message will be on such a man found in God’s word – NEHEMIAH.

A. TITLE

8. The import of this message is to use the example of Nehemiah to challenge us to be GOD’S MAN FOR THIS HOUR.

9. Setting of scripture:
   1. Events of Nehemiah pertain to God’s chosen people – after the 70 yrs. Captivity in Babylon.
   2. Babylon was overthrown by the Persians.
   3. God stirred up Cyrus (Ezra 1:1), and the first group of Jews returned to Canaan.
   4. In 536 B.C., Zerubbabel returned to Jeremiah to rebuild the Temple.
   5. In 457 B.C. or about 80 yrs. later Ezra returned to establish the moral and religious order.
   6. About 14 yrs. Later Nehemiah returns to rebuild the walls around the city.

10. SCRIPTURE READING – Nehemiah 1:1-4

11. NOTE: Encouraging truth – When a particular need arises in God’s work – there seems to be always someone to rise and answer the call to meet that need. (It is through God’s sovereignty and provision for the human race that this happens)

12. Nehemiah primary purpose was to return to rebuild the walls
   A. To us, this may not seem very important
   B. But – 2:17 – states that the walls in ruin was a reproach to God’s people – thus to God also.

13. These walls may be symbolic of various walls in the spiritual realm that need to be rebuilt in our day:
   (1). Wall of dignity and respect for the office of pastor.
   (2). Wall of influence and reputation for our church.
   (3). Wall that protects against complacency
   (4). Wall of defense against Satan’s attacks on the home and family life.
   (You may be the key person in building these walls)

I. Verse 1 – HE WAS GOD’S MAN FOR GOD’S TIME

A. God is a God of plan and order and works His will according to His time and Purpose

1. Eccl. 3:1 – “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven”
2. Gal. 4:4 – “When the fullness of etc.”
3. Jesus said – “My time is not yet come”
B. The mention (1:1) year and month proves this was the time for Nehemiah to respond.
C. 2:1 – Further teaches that time is an important factor in accomplishing God’s will.
   1. Consider how it took time to build Nehemiah to the point he could be given permission to return
      Illustration: Moses – prepared 40 years. Israel – wandered 40 years.
D. Before the time was right for Nehemiah to respond for his work – other things had to be done.

LESSONS:
1. Before some of God’s churches can grow – some things must be set in order. (walls built)
2. We may work ourselves into the ground, yet little accomplished until etc.
E. How quickly God’s will is accomplished will depend on our prompt and correct response to Him.
F. To delay may delay God’s work in your life and the life of others.
G. How much of God’s work will be affected by our response to His will – NOW.

II. NEHEMIAH WAS GOD’S MAN
    BECAUSE HE COULD BE BURDENED.
A. Verses 2-4
B. He could receive this burden only because of his love for God and His cause.
C. We will never rise to meet the need in God’s Kingdom work unless we feel the pressure of it in our own soul.
D. Only when we feel this burden will we see souls dying without hope.
E. The burden heart is the heart God can use in the power of the Spirit.
   1. “To this man will I look, etc.”
   2. Jesus saying – “Oh, Jerusalem, etc.”
F. NOTE: verse 4 – Nehemiah expresses his utter helplessness
   1. Paul – “When I am weak, then am I strong”

III. NEHEMIAH – GOD’S MAN – BECAUSE HE WAS A GODLY MAN.
A. He retained His communion with God – though tempted by his social and political position.
B. The pressures of our society can launch a full-scale war against God’s leaders (men). (prosperity of others, money, etc.)
C. Nehemiah grew and matured spiritually, in the midst of a heathen nation.
D. Those who have the right impact upon an ungodly world are Godly people (men).
E. NOTE: Impact of Nehemiah godliness –
   1. Nehemiah first love was the Lord’s work.
      a. Only with Godly men will this be true.
   2. Nehemiah retained the ability to see the need of repentance. Vs. 5-6
   3. Nehemiah prayed before proceeding – V. 11
4. Nehemiah based his prayer upon God’s promises. Vs. 8-9
5. The basis of our motivation is Calvary – not accomplishments

IV. NEHEMIAH WAS WILLING TO BE USED OF GOD – PERIOD.
A. His position did not sway his decision regarding the Lord’s will.
   1. God needs men with undivided interests. II Tim. 2:4
B. He was willing to adjust his life to the will of God.
C. The focus of his life was on glorifying God.
   1. God’s honour – his first concern.
D. He assumed the responsibility of his calling
   1. 2:12 – NOTE
   2. He knew if this work was accomplished – he must do this.
   3. God will bless men who assume this responsibility
E. He responded the only way he could to do the will of God in his life – by FAITH.

CONCLUSION: Who among us will be GOD’S MAN FOR THE HOUR?

Loyd Roper Hot Springs Arkansas

FREEDOM
Psalm 33:12
Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

INTRODUCTION:
A. On July 4, 1776 (Wednesday)
   This Nation was born – The Declaration of Independence
(2). “Freedom from ETERNAL DEATH” – Romans 8:2 – Romans 6:23
C. These are “Our Freedoms” – How much more they mean to us as “Christians”
   (1). “Freedom of Speech” – Saying what we want to so long as it is pleasing to God.
   (2). “Freedom of Worship” – Go to God anytime – any place through Jesus Christ (special in HIS Church)
   (4). “Freedom from fear” – He is with us always – taking away our fears.
   (5). “Freedom from SIN” – He forgives us of all SIN. I John 1:9
D. What a “Wonderful Independence Day” We have the day we take Christ as our Savior.

UNbeknown

WHAT TIME IS IT
Isaiah 21: 11-12

The burden of Dumah.
He calleth to me out of Seir,
Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?
The watchman said,
The morning cometh,
and also the night:
if ye will enquire,
enquire ye: return, come.

INTRODUCTION:
A. This text has had plenty of use and miss-use in these troublous times – no matter how well-worn it may be – never more timely – we are in the middle of a pitch black “Moral and Spiritual Night”. We need a “Watchman” – we need to know what of the night.

I. “THE TEXT SUGGEST A WATCHMAN”

A. God’s Prophets were – his Preachers are “Watchmen” Ezekiel 3:17 – a watch dog that will not bark—is not worth much – A preacher who will not warn men of “Sin-Judgement” is not worth much.

B. Too many people today are like those Isaiah described in his day – Isaiah 56:10 - 12 – nothing to get excited about – everything is alright - this talk about the Lord’s return – coming judgement – just a nervous reaction from the tense times in which we are living

C. There were and are “False Watchmen” those who would lull men to sleep with a “soothing – social Gospel” – Faithful Watchman Called a “pessimist” public hoot owl – like Micah – Micah 1:8 – better to be God’s hoot owl than the Devil’s mocking-bird.

D. This (text) sets before us not only “Watchman” – but also the “night” (evident to all who will open their eyes and look – that
we are living in the midst of
“Moral – Spiritual – Social”
night (darkness) – see a world
gone mad with sin – God is
writing on the wall) – Matthew
16:3
E. (text) – also sets forth a question
– “What of the Night” – a
double answer – “the Morning
cometh – also the Night”- (is
world getting better or worse)
(1). “Real Christians” are
turning to the Bible – drawing
closer to God – As the Night
grows darker – these will grow
Brighter – these are waiting for
the Morning to come
(2). But world itself is growing
Worse – for the unsaved world
the “Night Cometh” – the
“Morning” cometh for the
believer – the “Night” cometh
for the un-believer – the Eternal
Night of Judgement and Hell.

II. WHEN ALL EVIL IS FINISHED JESUS
IS COMING – THE QUESTION – HOW
ILL HE FIND ME WHEN HE COMES”

A. Some he will find
“SCOFFING” - mocking –
denying his coming – (II Peter
3:3-4)
B. Others he will find
“SURFEITING” –over doing –
Luke 21:34 – would you not
think in such an hour –
humanity wallowing in blood
and tears – foundations
crumbling – that churches
would be over-flowing – men
going right with God – NOT
SO – Merry making etc. Not

“repentance” is spirit of this
age.
C. Others will be “SLEEPING” –
Romans 13:11 – strange stupor
has fallen over the church –
many things account for it – but
Satan is behind it all – he has
lulled many to sleep.
D. We must wake up- so when the
Lord comes He will not find us
“Scoffing – Surfeiting –
Sleeping – but will find us
SERVING
E. Let us hear again the words of
the Lord through the prophet of
old – “If Ye will enquire –
enquire – ye – return – come” –
Let us get back to God in our
hearts – homes –churches

CONCLUSION
A. SAVED – “What time is it in
your life” – UNSAVED – “What
time is it in your life”

UNKNOWN

II Chronicles 7:13
If my people, which are called by my name,
shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek
my face, and turn from their wicked ways;
then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive
their sin, and will heal their land.

Matthew 6:33
But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his
righteousness; and all these things shall be
added unto you. Take therefore no thought
for the morrow: for the morrow shall take
thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto
the day is the evil thereof.