



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Memorial Day, Lesson 1

Lesson Title: Remembering to Be Thankful

Take Home Point: A thankful heart is a happy heart.

Warm-Up:

A few years ago, a popular saying appeared: "He who dies with the most toys wins." It reminds me of the story of steel magnate John Rockefeller, who in the early 1900s was considered one of the wealthiest and most powerful businessmen in the world. During an interview he was asked, "You are rich beyond anyone's dreams. How much is enough?" Rockefeller replied, "Just a little bit more." In those five words he succinctly articulated the mindset of the discontented. Whatever he had was not enough. And with Rockefeller's focus on gaining what he didn't have, thanksgiving to the God who provided what he did have was forgotten. During his lifetime, he considered Christians to be weak and Jesus to be a matter for others. He died a bitter, hard-hearted man, still looking for an edge in money and power over anyone and everyone else.

Read: Psalm 103:2-5; Philippians 4:4

Observation (What happened?):

List all the benefits from the Lord that David mentions in Psalm 103:2-5.

According to Paul's letter to the Philippians, what is the basis for our rejoicing always?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

What do you think David means when he says the Lord satisfies your desires with good things?

What does it mean to always rejoice?

Insight:

One person in the Old Testament stands out for his attitude of rejoicing in the Lord. You may not have heard of him. His name is Habakkuk. His namesake book is in the part of the Bible known as the Minor Prophets. Habakkuk asks the Lord how long he is going to put up with the wickedness of the Israelites, so God says he is sending the Babylonians as his instrument of judgment. Habakkuk is horrified. "They're worse than the Israelites!" He tries to talk God out of it to no avail, of course. Eventually, Habakkuk understands God's plan is beyond comprehension, and in verses 3:17-19 (NIV), he says, "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights." Now that's rejoicing regardless of circumstances.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

When is the last time your soul rejoiced in the Lord? How close to "always" are you?

Time yourself for exactly two minutes. During that time, write down every blessing from God you can think of, not including any stuff. Which did you run out of first – time or blessings?