

Since Oct. 10, 2004

해외 한인 장로회

Church of the Lord

하나님의

Nov. 30, 2025

사랑교회

(통권 1083호)



오늘의 말씀

"Gratitude in Waiting"

[Isaiah 40:10~11]

Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him. (11) He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.

담임목사 정 석 진

David Seokjin Chung / Senior Pastor

Cell 551.999.5358

pastor.ds.chung@gmail.com

5 Old Dock Rd.

Alpine, NJ 07620

Tel. 201.767.1004

www.churchofthelord.org

We are in the middle of our six-week series, "Spirituality of Thanksgiving." Last week, in our first message, we shared the Word under the title, "The Beginning of Thanksgiving – Awakening Gratitude Through Remembrance." Today, through Isaiah 40:1–11, we will share the second message in this series titled "Gratitude in Waiting." The sub-theme for to-day is: "Giving Thanks to the God Who Fulfills His Promises."

Introduction ~ Thanksgiving Deepens in the Season of Waiting
Advent is the season in which we wait for the One who is coming. But this waiting is not simply a delay of time. It is a faith-act grounded in God's promise. Israel was passing through one of the darkest seasons of its history, the days of exile. At that time, the very first word God spoke to them was surprisingly not rebuke, but comfort.

[Isaiah 40:1] "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God.

The first week of Advent is the time to proclaim "waiting that begins with comfort," and "thanksgiving that blossoms in the midst of waiting."

Thanksgiving Begins with the Comfort of God

[Isaiah 40:1~2] "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. (2) "Speak comfort to Jeru-salem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD'S hand Double for all her sins."

The God of All Comfort Speaks First

Before Israel repented, before any visible change had taken place, God Himself came near and said, "Comfort, yes, comfort My people." This is the love of God.

**[Psalm 94:19] In the multitude of my anxieties within me,
Your comforts delight my soul.**

John 14:16 shows us that the Holy Spirit is “another Helper” (Paraclete), our Comfort-er.

[John 14:16] "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--

God is the One who speaks comfort before He speaks rebuke. His comfort is the true starting point of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving does not begin in our own hearts; it begins with the comfort of the Lord.

The Grace of God Who Brings the Punishment for Sin to an End. In vs. 2, which we have already read, He says: “That her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is par-doned.”

God is the One who first declares “forgiveness.” We have already shared that thanks-giving is not the result of our circumstances; it is the starting point of the believer’s life. Why? Because thanksgiving begins not after our environment has changed, but in the reality of the forgiveness God has already given us. The moving grace of His for-giveness is what leads us to begin our lives with thanksgiving.

[Ephesians 1:7] In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, accord-ing to the riches of His grace

[Romans 8:1] There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

C.S. Lewis, in his book Mere Christianity (Part IV, Christian Behavior), writes: “We come to God because we need Him, not because we are good.” And he also says that what God first asks of us is not good works but repentance, and that repent-ance is the doorway to forgiveness. From this, Lewis is emphasizing that true thanksgiving does not arise from a comfortable environment, but from the reality that “we have been forgiven by God.”

In The Problem of Pain, Lewis discusses the relationship between pain and thanksgiv-ing. He insists that true gratitude

does not come from the absence of pain.

He says, in essence: "It is not that a life without pain is good, but that the grace of God who upholds and restores us in the midst of pain is good." He goes on to say that human beings truly seek God not because pain has disappeared, but because they have come to realize that God has forgiven them. In this way, Lewis emphasizes that inner healing and the grace of forgiveness are at the very heart of thanksgiving.

In *The Weight of Glory*, Lewis says that true joy comes from knowing that we have been accepted by God. In summary, his theology leads us to this conclusion: "True gratitude does not flow from comfortable circumstances, but from the reality that we have been forgiven by God."

Think about this. As we considered recently, the greatest grace given to the exiled people of God was not the restoration of their outward situation, but the comfort and forgiveness of God Himself.

The Passage Also Teaches That Thanksgiving Grows in "Waiting That Prepares"

[Isaiah 40:3~5] The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. (4) Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; (5) The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

God Commands, "Prepare the Way of the Lord in the Wilderness" (v.3)

The wilderness is a place where there is no road. Isn't that true? And yet God is the One who makes a way even in the wilderness. Do you remember this promise?

[Isaiah 43:19] Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road

in the wilderness And rivers in the desert.

The waiting of Advent is not an unprepared waiting. It is a season of spiritual training in which we open the way for the Lord.

God Then Speaks of the Preparation of "Valleys Raised and Mountains Brought Low" He says that "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth."

Our pride must be brought low. Our wounds must be filled and healed. Our rough and uneven hearts must be made smooth. Only then can the King of glory come along that way. If we truly desire Christ to come into our lives, then this kind of preparation is necessary.

**[James 4:6] But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:
"God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."**

The miracle of pride being humbled, wounds being healed, and crooked hearts being leveled happens through thanksgiving. Thanksgiving humbles our pride and smoothes our hearts. It is the inner obedience of preparation.

And God Promises That in This Waiting "the Glory of the Lord Shall Be Revealed" (v.5)

Even if we cannot see it yet, the faith and thanksgiving of waiting become the channel through which the glory of God is revealed.

**[John 11:40] Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if
you would believe you would see the glory of God?"**

Thanksgiving is a spiritual door that invites and ushers in the glory of God.

Thanksgiving Stands upon the Unchanging Word of God

**[Isaiah 40:6~8] The voice said, "Cry out!" And he said,
"What shall I cry?" "All flesh is grass, And all its loveliness
is like the flower of the field. (7) The grass withers, the**

flower fades, Be-cause the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. (8) The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

The heart of man is like grass, and human glory is like the flower of the field. But the Word of God never changes.

Thanksgiving Is Faith That Clings to the Word, Not the Situation
Environments change. People's words are unstable. Our emotions come and go. But the Word of God is the unshakable foundation.

[Matthew 24:35] "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

[Psalm 119:89] Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.

These unshakable promises of God's Word are the very source of our thanksgiving.

The Promises of the Word Make "Gratitude in Waiting" Possible
Because we have God's Word, we are able to wait, and even in the midst of waiting we can give thanks.

Hudson Taylor once said, "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply." Throughout his journey of missions in China, he testified that he experienced the mira-cles of thanksgiving through waiting rooted in the Word.

Pastor Chuck Smith, whom I dearly love and respect, would often say, "Where God guides, God provides." This is the confession of a life that trusts the promises of God and gives thanks while waiting.

The Passage Also Teaches That Thanksgiving Is Faith That Looks to the God Who Is Coming

[Isaiah 40:9~11] O Zion, You who bring good tidings, Get up into the high mountain; O Jerusa-lem, You who bring good tidings, Lift up your voice with strength, Lift it up, be not afraid; Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" (10)

Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him. (11) He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.

The Text Proclaims, "Behold Your God(v.9)!"

This is the core proclamation of Advent: "God is coming."

This is also the declaration that "He will fulfill His promises."

He Comes as the Mighty One, Yet as the Shepherd Who Carries Us (vv.10–11)

He is the King who rules with a strong arm. At the same time, He is the Shepherd who feeds His flock, gathers the lambs in His arms, carries them in His bosom, and gently leads those who are with young.

These two attributes~almighty King and tender Shepherd~are perfectly united in the person of Jesus Christ.

Faith that Looks to the God Who Comes Responds with Thanksgiving

Jesus has come, is still coming into our lives today, and will come again in glory.

Thanksgiving is the confession of faith that looks to the Lord who has already come
and the Lord who is yet to come.

Conclusion ~ Thanksgiving Deepens Most in the Season of Waiting

Thanksgiving begins in the comfort God gives. Waiting is not a passive delay but a pre-paratory season of thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving does not grow on changing circumstances, but on the unchanging Word of God. And when we look to the God who is coming, thanks-giving becomes hope. We must wait for the

Christ who came to this earth with thanksgiving. And we must also wait for the Christ who will come again with thanksgiving.

Today's Prayer Points

A. As Advent believers, help us to wait for the Lord by humbling our hearts, raising up the valleys of our wounds and unbelief, and preparing a level road for the Lord to come.

B. Lord, help us to give thanks for what You have done in our past, for what You are doing in our present, and for the promises You will fulfill in our future.

C. In a world that is being shaken so violently, help us to hold fast not to the instability of circumstances but to Your unshakable and eternal Word. Teach us to live clinging to Your promises more than to our situations.

D. Until Christmas Day comes, help us to spend each day in fellowship with You, walking in obedience as we wait for You.