

DOXOLOGY
November 22, 2015 –Philippians 4: 4-7 –Congregational Meeting
The Church of the Covenant

Geoffrey Wainwright wrote a book of theology entitled, *“DOXOLOGY; The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life.”* His basic premise is that everything is Doxology, everything is praise to God, everything is “Praise God from whom all blessings flow” as our Doxology puts it, based on Psalm 100.

Worship is perhaps the most obvious. For it is the focusing of our heart and thanks and gratitude upon the One, from whom all blessings flow. It is fixing our heart and parking our soul in the presence of the Almighty. As we sing, we praise God. As we pray, we praise God. As we unpack the scriptures, we praise God. Just gathering together to ask the Lord’s blessing is Doxology. All of worship is one great mighty act of worshipping and praising and saying “Thank You” to the Lord God Almighty for all of the many blessings we receive in our life. *“Doxos”* in the Greek means praise. *“Doxology”* then means the study of praise. All of life is one mighty act of worship; all of life is focusing our life on God; all of life is studying what it means to be a person whose life is fixed on Jesus and whose life is praising God. Wainwright’s point is that all of life is one great act of praise to God, from whom all blessings flow.

It is the praise of God in doctrine, in what we believe. What we believe about God matters. That what we believe comes from the Bible matters. We don’t worship a generic God, we do not worship a God created by our own mind and assembled of those pieces of goodness we think important. Our opinion does not create God in our own image. Opinion polls do not construct an image of God; that is idolatry. No, the creature does not create the Creator; rather, God is re-creating us into the image of His Son. We worship the One True and Living God revealed in the Bible, made known to His people through the Word of God. We know what we know about God by what God has revealed about God in the scriptures. Seeking God in study, in the devotional reading of the Bible, in prayer, in speaking together about the things of faith. Adult Ed isn’t a program we attend; it is a perfect expression of our praise and worship of Almighty God. It is Doxology.

It is the praise of God in life, in how we choose to live our life, that is Doxology. It is worship and praise to devote time to mission, to see Family Promise come to the church and people who are homeless beg me for a vacuum cleaner to make sure the youth lounge is clean because they are so grateful to God for a roof over their head. It is praise to God to make sure a young Haitian child has education and clothing and at least one hot meal each day in the midst of a culture of corruption and a grinding poverty that impoverishes the body as well as the soul. Ministry, Mission, the Maintenance of this building gives praise to God. This sanctuary is praise to God. A beautiful crisp fall day, the leaves turning and winter soon to come, all of creation itself is praise to its Creator. Our lives submitted to the Lord in obedience, “Not my will but Thy will be done”, is praise, is worship, is Doxology. Is their excellency in our character? Are we people of consummate integrity? Do we know what we believe in our heart and who dwells in our heart by faith (the Lord Jesus Christ) and then is every part of our life more and more each day lived in conformity with that reality? Then our worship is DOXOLOGY. And our believing is DOXOLOGY. And our very life itself and every breath we take is DOXOLOGY. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

If all of life is Doxology then perhaps the most important holiday of all is Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving – giving thanks to God –praising God for our many blessings –counting our many blessings in a spirit of Doxology. I was struck this year by our church Thanksgiving Dinner; more than 250 people gathered to give thanks to God with their lives. There was a palpable sense of blessing present; great fellowship equals Doxology; great food equals Doxology; great fun equals Doxology; the joy of being together and

being together in God's presence equals Doxology. Saying "Thank you for Giving to the Lord" and being unashamed of noting that but for God's blessing we have nothing, is Doxology. I think gathering round the table at Thanksgiving and taking time to count our blessings in the presence of the Lord is Doxology. It is a wonderful spiritual exercise and I commend it to you this Thanksgiving as you gather around your Thanksgiving Dinner table. Were I to count our many blessings as The Church of the Covenant I would have trouble counting them all. The four babies baptized today are blessings; the fact that we baptize more babies than any other church in Washington Presbytery is a blessing. The fact that we have taken in more than 400 new members in the past seven years and that more than half the present church has joined since then is a blessing. The fact that worship attendance has grown from 248 per Sunday on average to 314 is a blessing; most churches are in steep decline. That we were able to retire the mortgage through the Light the Fire Campaign and that we raised MORE money than our goal is a blessing. That we now have a credible youth program that does things like Youth Sunday and the Washington City Mission Trip is a blessing. That we fill the chancel area every Sunday with children is a blessing. That we have a Preschool with 164 children in it, the largest and best in Washington is a blessing. That we have a core of gifted volunteers in a church world where most churches can't muster that any more is a blessing. That we have a generous mission budget that helps people in need in our community and world is a blessing. That our choir is growing, a wonderful faithful praise team, that we have three worship services where most churches struggle to have even one, is a blessing. Lord, make us mindful of our blessings...and the One from whom all blessings flow...

All these wonderful babies, every one of them a blessing from the Lord. Wouldn't it be a crying shame to throw all our blessings out with the bathwater by being angry with one another??????

Our scripture for today is wonderfully instructive. *"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice." (Philippians 4:4)* Praise God always. In any and all circumstances, praise God. Have Doxology come and enter your heart and flood your soul. *"Have no anxiety about anything..." (v. 6)* it continues. I have to admit I have a lot of anxiety about today's Congregational Meeting. But I am choosing to work on letting that anxiety go; replacing it with praise and thanksgiving and Doxology instead. Counting my blessings, not my problems. It goes on, *"But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make your requests be made known to God."* In EVERYTHING it says; so I have been making my requests related to this meeting known to God. I am quite sure that many, many people are likewise praying for today and not just in our congregation but in many places. *"With thanksgiving" (v. 6)* it says. With **Doxology** it says. Rejoicing in advance, it says. When we approach today with rejoicing and thanksgiving and Doxology then there is a promise – *"The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."* (v. 7) The promise is PEACE and a peace which *"passes understanding"*; it is a peace which is not logical and not like the world. See, we can choose for today to be a blessing, to show ourselves as a shining example of what we believe and in whom we believe. We can be different from our angry fallen world. We can set aside our anxiety, we can choose to pray instead of fight, can trust God to provide blessings of PEACE instead of curses of conflict.

We can choose DOXOLOGY...or not. So, may the peace of God which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. May we be able to reconceptualize today into Doxology, an opportunity for rejoicing and praise. Because everything is Doxology: our worship, our doctrine and the way we choose to live our life today. Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Have a HAPPY and BLESSED Thanksgiving! Amen and Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*