

Thanksgiving 2024 | Ted Tash

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Preacher: Ted Tash

[0 : 00] Good morning. I've been out of town for a couple weeks. Jeffrey mentioned in the breaking of bread this morning it is deer season and unfortunately that is one of my idols so I have been doing that for the last couple weeks so haven't been haven't been here but a lot has happened while I was gone Wally is back which is great.

Babies are being born all kinds of all kinds of crazy things so it is good to be back good to be here today we have some visitors with us Casey Talley got married on Friday and so that was fun and so we've got we've got some people in town for that we've got some people in town I'm assuming for Thanksgiving and some other things so good to have everyone here with us I will tell you this this message is a is going to be a personal one.

Okay we're we're going to get right up in right up in there and get close to one another today so warning on that but it's a Thanksgiving message so we've been going through the book of Matthew verse by verse I'd say we're about five eighths of the way through the book of Matthew I think we'll probably finish next year but today we're talking about Thanksgiving stuff so that's fun there's really no theme to the Thanksgiving message you know generally speaking other than Thanksgiving being thankful.

Last year Kevin Killeen gave the message and he talked about one of his rejected book titles which was the power of negative thinking and that has stuck with me I think about that probably once a month.

Probably more frequently than that. Two years ago Dave Baumgartner spoke and he talked a little bit about like the pilgrims and where they originally landed at Jamestown and what the first Thanksgiving might have looked like and then I don't remember what it was three years ago or anything beyond that so if there's anything you can take away.

[1 : 51] You should be encouraged that in two years you will forget everything that I'm going to share today. There will none of it will be remembered at all so that's that's good. But turn if you will to Proverbs chapter 6 and we're going to look at a couple verses there before we read those verses in Proverbs chapter 6 I want to throw out there that churches in general ebb and flow.

Churches in church bodies they ebb and flow they wax and they wane they have ups and downs and I think that makes sense right because life has ups and downs life life has good and it has some bad and that's just kind of the human condition and that's that's what we have.

And so churches over time kind of wax and they wane and they ebb and they flow. So I'm throwing that out there as a as just a blanket statement before we start.

And the other thing is that in regards to Thanksgiving you'll see where I'm going eventually with this but but how I'm tying this to Thanksgiving is it's just something I am thankful for. It's something I'm very very thankful for and we'll get to what that thing is here in a little bit.

But I want to start in Proverbs chapter 6 now this passage was shared at a conference I was at it was up in Iowa it was in September and a guy named Micah Tuttle was doing the speaking and he read a couple verses and honestly I don't even remember what the context of his message was.

[3 : 24] I don't I don't really remember what he was even speaking about but I know that he shared these these verses and one of them really stuck with me. And it's been kind of kicking around in my head all fall and as we're going through Matthew you don't really have opportunity to speak about whatever you want to speak about and so here's my opportunity.

So in Proverbs chapter 6 verse 16 it says this these six things the Lord hates yes seven are an abomination to him.

A proud look a lying tongue hands that shed innocent blood a heart that devises wicked plans feet that are swift in running to evil.

You see he's kind of going through all the body parts there it's like a look and then a tongue and then hands and then feet and then a false witness verse 19 who speaks lies. And then the last one here one who sows discord among brethren.

Now you know I don't know why but for whatever reason and maybe there's a couple reasons that last one when he read this back in September it really stuck out to me.

[4 : 33] One who sows discord among brethren. You know I think maybe the first reason is it starts out with saying there's six things that the Lord hates and then it says there's seven that are an abomination.

Well it's like well why aren't there why isn't that equal you know like why isn't it seven and seven or six and six. I don't know but the last one which maybe is one of the ones God doesn't hate I don't know it doesn't say if the list starts at one or if it starts at zero hard to tell you know what's going on there.

But the last one is one who sows discord among the brethren. So that one kind of stuck out to me and then it stuck out to me because it's relatable. Like hands that shed innocent blood that that doesn't do much for me like I don't relate much to that which should be a relief to all of you.

A heart that devises wicked plans you know it's not like I'm sitting around scheming up wicked plans but one who sows discord among brethren. You know gossip is something that I think comes naturally to all of us right I mean that's it's very easy to want to talk about one another sometimes. In the book of James says like no one can control the tongue it's out of control. It's it's like a little flame it says and it can start a big bonfire big forest fire if you're not careful.

[5 : 43] And so for whatever reason that verse has been kicking around in my brain all fall. One who sows discord among brethren. And that's in the list of the things that God hates or the list of things that are an abomination to God.

And so I looked up that word abomination what does that mean and obviously it means something that is abominable or something that is abhorrent. Something that is vile disgusting. In fact it's it was if you if you look it up it's something that is like so vile that you you can't look.

You have to turn away from it. Last weekend I was hunting as I said and I was with with Jeffrey and two other fellas.

And I want to paint a picture for you here of something abhorrent. Something so vile you must turn away. We we were hunting hunted all day Saturday from from sun up to sun down at sundown. I shot a deer another guy that we were with named Scott. He also shot a deer. And we are way back in the woods like way way back. It's public land. You cannot drive.

[6 : 47] You have to drag and walk. Anything that comes in has to go out on foot. And so you're very choosy when you see a deer because it better be worth it to drag it out.

So Scott shot a deer. We drug that one out before dinner. So it's maybe seven o'clock. We get back to camp after having dragged a deer which is a lot of work up some hills.

At least a mile's worth of walking and dragging deer or not light. And and we got back to camp and I was the camp cook. And so I cooked dinner and we had steaks and we had some potatoes and a salad.

And I had some like garlic confit. If you are familiar with the term it's some like roasted garlic with the oil and it was very good. And so like nine o'clock bellies are full. We're going to go get my deer. Hunting is so fun.

It's so fun. So we go out there and it's like at least a mile walk. So we walk back there full bellies. And on the walk or maybe even before the walk we decided you know we're not going to drag this deer out.

[7 : 49] That does not sound fun at all. We're going to do the John Clevel method of butchering it in the field. And then carrying it out in parts and pieces. That way you're only carrying the essential parts. You're cutting as much weight as you can.

And so we get back to it. We find it. We find my pack which I had left there as well. And that's what we're going to do. We're going to put the loose pieces into bags. We're going to put those in the backpacks. And then we'll carry like the hams out.

You know the hindquarters over our shoulder. Whatever. And that's exactly what we did. And so let me paint the picture for you. With full bellies late at night and garlic and steak brewing in there. I'm down and I'm taking care of the back straps. You know I'm cutting in and I'm behind the deer. It's in front of me. And I'm getting those out. And Jeffrey's very graciously taking care of the

hindquarters. And inevitably he did nothing wrong.

There's no way you can avoid this. He gets into the gut content. That's just what happens when you're butchering a deer. And a wave of just gut content just fills the nostrils.

[8 : 46] And this is common in deer hunting. But man I gagged and it was something bad. I gagged and I looked up and my eyes were closed. And my head was spinning. And it was so vile you had to turn away from it.

And that is what one who sows discord among the brethren is like. It is so vile it is abhorrent. The good news is when we got back to camp around 1045.

I got to sleep in the next day and Jeffrey had to get up at 430. So that was to keep hunting. So why am I talking about this? Where does this tie into Thanksgiving? And the pilgrims and all that.

I don't know. Maybe a month ago, two months ago. We had our neighbors over for dinner. Which again is Tom and Nikki. My mother-in-law and father-in-law. And Lydia that day had gone apple picking.

She had gone I think with like. I think it was Bethany and Hope and Anna. I think. And Brad. And Tom made the comment.

[9 : 49] He said it is really special what you have with the Bethel moms. He said it is really a special thing. And then we kind of dug into that a little bit. And his point was that.

We have a lot of Bethel moms. Like there are a lot of Bethel moms. Lydia and I on the way here. We were counting the children. Children loosely defined as like. Josiah and under.

Not that you are a child. Josiah. But kind of in that range. 34 kids is what we came up with. We got like 34 kids at Bethel. Which is a lot of kids. Like it is great.

Like it is so cool. That we have that many kids. And that many moms. And Tom's point was. It is cool that four moms. Can go apple picking. And there is no drama with the other moms.

Of like oh we couldn't make it this time. Like there is no drama. And that is great. That is awesome.

Like and there is other things. That maybe Lydia wasn't able to. The schedule didn't allow. And there is no drama with that.

[10 : 44] And the other moms got to enjoy it. And that is such a special thing. Like that is such a special thing. And so I have been kicking in my head. This idea of you know. One of the things God hates.

Is one who sows discord. And then Tom is saying. Man it is just so great. What we have right now. With like no drama. And everyone is getting along. And then we just. We started talking.

We went on a whole conversation. About what we have at Bethel right now. Is really nice. Like it is really special. The unity that we have at Bethel. And I am very thankful for that. So there is the Thanksgiving pitch.

I am so thankful for what we have. Going on at Bethel right now. If you will turn in your Bibles. To 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians chapter 1.

And once we get there. While we are getting there. I want to give you just a little. This is where we are going to get. Get all touchy feely here together. Give you just a little.

[11 : 42] Just brief history. Of the last few years at Bethel. I started coming here. I think like 2013 ish.

Lydia and I started dating in 2012. I was still. I was living in Columbia. Still going to Fenton Crossing a little bit. When I was in St. Louis. So probably 2013 ish. Is when I started coming here.

And I don't know the exact dates on any of this. But somewhere around 2019. 2020 ish. We had a little bit of turnover. And for those of you that were here for it. You'll remember.

Like we had some turnover. Again, I don't know the exact dates. But somewhere around 2019, 2020. We actually lost like two deacons. Like two people that were not only in the flock.

But like active in the flock. Like in the leadership of the flock. You know, we lost Mark Manila. And you might say, well, don't we still have Mark Manila? There was two Mark Manilas. It was very confusing.

[12 : 40] One was Money Mark. And one was RV Mark. Money Mark had the way cooler nickname. But he was great.

Like they would come to the Breaking Bread. He would share at Breaking Bread a lot. Like he played guitar. He was very active. Deacon. And you know, there wasn't the relationship went south or anything. It was just they. I think they started taking care of her parents or something like that.

And just kind of fell off. Gary and Bev. Very active here. You know, my wife got a lot out of Beverly's teaching in her women's ministry here. Gary was very active.

Would share in Breaking Bread. Played guitar. He would fill in if Dave was out for singing. And then you start thinking about the singing. Okay, a little closer to home.

We lost Nate Kleppel. Great friend of mine. Family to most. We lost Luke Grass. Jacob Grass. All three of who could play and sing. Like we used to have so much worship talent up here.

[13:38] That we had teams. Like for those of you that are like more recent to Bethel. That probably blows your mind. But we had teams. We had so much talent. That we had teams. Each team had two guitar players and a bass player.

Unique from the other teams. Like that's hard to wrap your head around. But we had that for a while. It was really cool. And as somebody who's not very talented. It was really cool to have a deep talent pool to draw from.

And you know, again, no sour relationships. We still see all those people pretty regularly. Like still have a good time. But they left. You know, for two of them they got married. One moved away. And you know, they're also walking with the Lord.

It's all still good. But just as a flock, it was sad a little bit. You know? And so again, where am I going with all this? Just thankful hearts for the body that we have now.

I remember specifically praying one time. God, could you provide a drummer for Bethel? Now that was a selfish prayer.

[14:42] Because I can like kind of play drums. I play left-handed. So it's an ordeal to switch it all around. And I'm also just not that good at drums. And I really didn't want to have to play drums at Bethel. Like I can't tell you how much.

And I still really don't want to play drums at Bethel. And I was up here. I specifically remember praying that. And I remember talking with Jordan. He was playing bass. And I was playing guitar or something. We were just talking in between meetings. And Michael Wolfe comes up and says, Hey, I can play the drums.

Is it okay if I sit in sometime? And we're like, sit down right now. Like, here's the sticks. Like, yes. And then not even a month later maybe, I'm up here.

Jeffrey was going to do the announcements. And I had something that I wanted him to announce. And Clint walks up and says, Hey, we just moved here from Kansas City. I used to play drums at the church back home. Is it okay if I fill in sometime? We're like, fill in right now.

You know? Like, it's just crazy how God provided. Because when Jacob was here, he could play drums. And if you guys remember Rick, he was an excellent drummer. And so we went from two drummers to just Jacob.

[15:41] Then Jacob left. Nobody. And now we're back to two drummers again. Like, it's awesome. Like, how cool is that that God has provided that? You know, I'll give you another just crazy example.

We had bees in the west wall of our church. Do you guys know that? We had, there were dead bees in our light fixtures out in the little foyer area there. They were coming in and out of the rock wall.

Jim shows up and, hey, I'm a beekeeper. I can take care of this. Grabs the queen, which I heard was really cool. Swarms out. And then not only takes care of the bee problem, but makes honey out of the comb that was in the walls and distributes it.

Like, how cool is that? Like, it's super cool. Right? Like, I don't know. I think it's super cool. So what I'm saying is, I'm very, very thankful for the unity and the current body that we have at Bethel Community Church.

Like, I am beyond thankful for it. And so I want to look at Corinthians, just a couple things that Paul says about unity. You know, 1 Corinthians is really, the Corinthian church had some issues, for sure.

[16:50] And so Paul writes to them to address some of those issues. But really, if you look, you know, if your Bibles have like a theme at the start of a book, the theme you'll probably see for Corinthians is Christian conduct or perhaps church conduct.

And so in a book about church conduct and a book about Christian living, what's the first thing that Paul talks about? Well, you know, the first nine verses is kind of introductory.

It's kind of greeting. It's, you know, hey, grace and peace to you. Greetings. I, Paul. You know, whatever. But the first thing he really says starts in verse 10 after the greetings are over. He says, I plead with you.

I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. So he says, I'm pleading, I'm begging. He invokes the name of the Lord. By Jesus' name, what is this super important first thing he's going to say?

That you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

[17:59] Man, that's what, that's what the Apostle Paul, obviously inspired by the Spirit, wants for a church that you all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions, that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Now you read that and you think, okay, when do the Nike track suits and the Air Jordans come out and when do we all drink the Kool-Aid together? You know, you think like same mind and same judgment. That kind of sounds a little weird. That's not at all what the Lord has done with the church.

And I think that that is the cool part. Turn with me to Corinthians chapter 12. And we see that, yes, there are individual differences between the members of the church, but we're all together in one body.

Corinthians chapter 12 says this in verse 4. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. That word diversity literally means variety.

Another word is actually like division, like it's a distribution. So it's kind of interesting thinking about the topic of unity to think of there's a division of gifts.

[19:12] Like they're separate, but yet it's all together. So there's diversity or variety of gifts, but the same Spirit. Differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

Diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. So despite the differences, and despite the divisions individually, we're all members of one body.

And that's another thing to be thankful for. You know, it says there's diversities of gifts. I think I have the gift of teaching and the gift of hospitality. Love having people over.

Love making them food. Love making them feel at home. Sacrifice some polished time on the message to have Kayla and Travis over. 100% worth it yesterday. That was the highlight of the week. Like, I do not have like the gift of comfort.

Like if somebody is going through it, man, I tend to be more like the Pharisee and the scribe where I take the long path around. The, you know, the wounded one where the good Samaritan might rush in and help them.

[20:17] That is not a gift that I have at all, but there are certainly those here that do, you know? And man, I'm thankful for that because there's a difference of gifts in the same Spirit. Spirit, there's a difference in ministry.

Boy, that's true, huh? Like there are definitely differences in ministries. Just to put KJ on the spot, I'm a huge KJ fan. I am all in on KJ. KJ, top notch.

Seriously. The online presence that we have through our website and just the quality of production that we have on our live stream, you would think that there's 100 people watching our live stream. There's like four people that regularly watch our live stream.

Sometimes, like if I'm homesick, there might be six. Like, crazy. But I mean, like if I walk over here, the camera will follow me automatically. He's got it all wired up through JavaScript to just do that. Crazy cool. Kevin, could you do that? No chance. But, could KJ lead a youth group like you do?

[21:20] No, and that's the whole point, is there are differences in ministries. Differences in ministries, but the same Lord. Diversities of activities. You know, my wife has ran, or she's on pace to run 520 miles this year.

That was her goal. 10 miles a week. Jeffrey just ran the New York City Marathon. I don't run. I really don't run. I am an oversized human being.

I've had three knee surgeries. I hunted two weekends in a row, did some serious walking on public ground. My knee was so swollen that my ankle was swollen, like the last couple weeks. I don't run.

That is not my activity. Gary, bless you and your ninja stuff. It has been a great, great thing at Pinecrest. The children love it. The adults love it. It is not my activity.

It really is not my activity. But it's great that it's there. There's a diversity in it. There's a division of it. There's a distribution of it. But it is the same God who works all in all.

[22 : 20] You go to verse 18 of chapter 12. It says, But now God has set the members. That's you and that's me and that's all our differences. He has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

If you are here, He has set you here just the way that you are, each one of you, just as He pleased. And then, we'll just pause there.

Again, I am so thankful for the body that we have here. I am so thankful for each of the members that we have here. It is a, as a father that has three of those 34 kids here, what a blessing.

You know, we church-topped quite a bit growing up. There wasn't a ton of stability in the church that we would go to. And honestly, some of the churches that we went to were a bit of a downer, just to put it frankly.

What a blessing that I can come here. My kids run around for three hours having a blast. Bo was just super excited about going downstairs. Like, what a blessing as a father of children to have that.

[23 : 29] So I am so thankful just for the church that we have, for the leadership we have, for the unity that we have, and for each one of the members that are here and the way that God has placed you into the body.

Application. What do we do with that? I told Lydia, I was like, it's a little dangerous doing a message on unity. I'm sure there's going to be a big fight that springs up here in the next month or so. So let's not let that happen, right?

Verse 24 and 25. Where's the application come in? It says that God composed the body, having given greater honor to the part which lacks it, lacks honor.

So again, God has composed the body. Verse 25. That there should be no schism or division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

What we have here right now is really special. It's probably the most special that we've had in my decade and a half of being here. There should be no division.

[24 : 31] God has placed each one of us in here. He has composed the body as he sees fit. We need to be very careful not to sow discord amongst one another, not to have schism or division, that each of the members here should care for one another.

We need to use the gifts that we have and the differences that we have for the ultimate glory of Christ, and we should have the same care for one another. If the musicians want to come up, I found a list.

This is a pastor who's been a pastor of a big church for 25 years. Or he's been in leadership, sorry, for 25 years. And he had a list of 20 things that he has had to deal with as a pastor.

And I thought this would be a good way to close it. So 20 divisions or schisms in the church that he's had to deal with. The first one was an argument over the appropriate length of the worship pastor's beard.

A fight. Oh, this is a good one, especially because we have a playground. A fight over whether or not to build a children's playground or to use the land for a cemetery.

[25 : 43] A deacon accusing another deacon of sending an anonymous letter and deciding to settle the matter in the parking lot. Oh, boy, I'm going to skip that one.

Church argument that went to a vote to decide if the clock in the worship center should be removed. That's a wild one. A 45-minute debate over the type of filing cabinet to purchase, black or brown, and a follow-up debate of two or three drawers.

A fight over which picture of Jesus to put in the foyer. A petition to have all church staff clean-shaven. A dispute over whether or not the worship leader should have his shoes on during the service.

I definitely vote for shoes on on that one. A church argument over the discovery that the budget was off by 10 cents. Kevin. He has a note on this one that he finally gave a dime to settle the argument.

A dispute because someone bought cranberry juice for the Lord's Supper. A business meeting over whether they should purchase a weed eater or not, which took three business meetings to resolve.

[27 : 02] Arguments over what type of green beans the church should serve at a potluck, and they ultimately said no green beans. A fight over the church of coffee. Now, I get that one.

I do buy the Dunkin' Donuts for myself, for all of you, but also myself for in there. Major conflict when the youth borrowed a crock pot without asking.

A big fight when one member hid the vacuum cleaner from another. I could see that happening. Oh, man.

The last one I'll share. The argument over whether the fake dusty plant should be removed from the podium. I get that one. Bethel, I'm very thankful for each one of you. I'm thankful for what we have here.

Let's continue to love one another from here on. Let's pray. Father God, thank you for loving us.

Thank you for just the church body you've placed here, Lord. We're very thankful for it. We're thankful just for all the blessings that you have.

[28 : 06] God, we pray that you would just continue to bless us. Thank you for all the children that you've provided here at this church. God, I pray that we would be just good stewards of them. I pray that we would be good parents to them and just raise them, Lord, in a way that fears you and a way that they would want to submit to you and give you the glory with their lives.

God, we do thank you especially, Lord, just this week for friends and family with the time of Thanksgiving and pray you just bless us all as we travel here and there to celebrate.

God, we just thank you once again for all you've done for us. In Jesus' name.