Dear Open Door Family,

I Love Thanksgiving - for more reasons than the food and football. For me one of the joys of Thanksgiving is that I love being with family and friends. I enjoy being able to laugh and talk and share the good things God is doing in our lives. But even more important is the fact that we are a few days closer to Christmas. I have officially been listening to Christmas music since the first of November. The tree is up and the house is decorated. YEAH! As far as shopping and presents that is just not as important to me as the awesome wonder of Christmas which I see in the beauty of the music and the lights. For me it reminds me of sleeping in the living room by the Christmas tree when I was a kid, falling asleep, listening to Christmas music. I am too old to sleep by the tree now, without a very thick air mattress, but I am still warmed by the wonder of Thanksgiving and Christmas which have so much more to do with our hearts and minds being focused on Jesus than anything else. Let's look at these great Christmas verses together.

Luke 2:36-38 *(NET) There was also a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old, having been married to her husband for seven years until his death. [37] She had lived as a widow since then for eighty-four years. She NEVER left the temple,* ***WORSHIPING*** *with FASTING and PRAYER night and day. [38] At that moment, she came up to them and began to* ***GIVE THANKS to God*** *and to speak about the child to ALL who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.*

Luke 2:37-38 *(JBP) She spent her whole life in the Temple and* ***worshipped God*** *NIGHT AND DAY with* ***fastings*** *and* ***prayers****. [38] She came up at this very moment, praised God and SPOKE ABOUT JESUS to* ***ALL*** *those in Jerusalem who were expecting redemption.*

Jesus was being presented at the Temple by Mary and Joseph. Simeon had just declared that Jesus was the Messiah, the Salvation God had promised. At that point we meet Anna. We are told that she is 84 yrs. old, a prophetess, who had been married for 7 years before she became a widow. With no children that must have been a very long hard life. As I meditated on these verses this week these three things became very clear. 1- Anna was ALWAYS seeking to be in God's presence. 2- She worshipped and served God with PRAYER and FASTING day and night. 3- When she met Jesus she could NOT stop **thanking God and telling others about Him**. What an amazing woman. She had every reason to become self-focused maybe even bitter but she did not. What an amazing testimony of God's power and sustaining grace. May we be like Anna in our own lives.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, help me to live my life consciously seeking You in any and every situation I face every day. Please Lord, help me to learn to more and more how to worship and serve You with Prayer and Fasting. Please give me many more chances to talk to others about YOU.

Pastor Mark Kieft
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>