Dear Open Door Family,

I had such great plans. I was going to finish up a few things and then relax and spend some time with Carol after having been gone all week. But Sunday afternoon MY PLANS suddenly changed. We discovered water backing up into our laundry tub (that is never a good thing). So I proceeded to try plunging and pouring a gallon of highly toxic drain cleaner into the drain in hopes that I could avoid a service call. Nothing worked; so much for MY PLANS. My next thought was, perhaps I can take off the cleanout cap to see what is going on and do something about it myself. At this point however, the laundry tub (full of highly toxic drain cleaner and sewer water) was higher than the cleanout. So I took a bucket and slowly emptied the laundry tub. I moved the washer and dryer to get to the cleanout cap. Then I got everything in place so that I could slowly drain the remaining liquid from the pipes into some containers I had ready. I picked up the channel locks and turned the cap slowly. It broke, giving way suddenly and pouring sewer and drain cleaner out all over. Not exactly what I had planned. Several attempts to get something down the drain and a trip to Home Depot left me with no alternative. I had already invested several hours and nothing had worked. So I made the call; they came, took 15 minutes to snake out the drain and went away with my check. Not what I had planned. Let's look at these verses together.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 (HCS) Rejoice always! Pray constantly. Give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Don't stifle the Spirit.

I do not remember the exact thoughts that went through my mind when the cap broke and sewer water spewed out at me. I do not think I was REJOICING. I had been praying and asking for help. But now there was nothing left to do, I had to call for help. The exhortation here in these verses is to Give THANKS to God no matter what. WHY? This is not a pleasant or good thing that happened. The challenge is not to THANK God that it was not any worse than it was. The command is to Give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for you. I don't know why this was part of God's plan for me Sunday - but it was. I could whine and complain and be in a bad mood or I could accept what had happened and continue to honor the Lord knowing that NOTHING ever catches Him by surprise. As I was thinking about these verses I came across this comment: "These verses are not just good advice; they are God's will for every Christian." Bible Knowledge Commentary So, even if I am covered with sewer sludge and my plans are ruined - I can thank God and continue to Rejoice in Him. WHY? Because it is God's Will for me. I believe it because I TRUST God and His WORD. So even if it means MY plans are shattered, I will thank God for what He is doing and bringing into my life.

**PRAYER:** Lord God, thank you that You never make mistakes. Thank You for the hard things in life which remind me that YOUR plan is the one that matters. Lord, help me to live with a heart full of Thanksgiving and PRAISE.

Pastor Mark Kieft