

Thanksgiving Eve– November 22, 2017

Text: Deuteronomy 8:1-10

Theme: "He Had a Hat!"

**I know I have told this story before but that's what you get for keeping around more than a decade.**

**A grandmother took her grandson to the beach and he was playing in the waves when all of a sudden a giant wave came in and swept the little boy out to sea. The grandmother fell on her knees and prayed. "Oh God! Please bring my grandson back. If you just bring him back, oh Lord, I'll never ask another thing of you. I'll go to church every week. I'll give 10% of all that I have, I'll..." Just then another great wave came into shore and deposited the little boy safe and sound if a bit damp right in front of his grandmother. She looked to heaven and said, "He had a hat!"**

**We are not always very thankful people are we? It is easy to grow accustomed to the freedoms we enjoy, the wealth we have, and the salvation we have been given. Moses was preparing to die before Joshua would lead his people into the Promised Land and he preached a sermon we call Deuteronomy. It got labeled Deuteronomy, which means second law, by a mistranslation of the Hebrew, "a repetition of the law." There is no such thing as a second law. However, the Old Testament believers**

**always called it simply "devarim" which mean "the words." They were the words of Moses to his people. They are also the Word of God through Moses to us.**

**God promised Abraham that his descendants would live in the land of Canaan, but after 400 years in Egypt, it did not look promising. About 70 people had come to Egypt to avoid dying of famine and now 400 years later and a new Pharaoh who didn't know anything about this Joseph person to whom promises were made, they were slaves making bricks for Egypt's pyramids. But God had promised, and so he sent Moses to take his people back home. You remember all the whining and complaining that went on. "We're out of food!" So God sent manna. "We want meat!" So God sent quail into camp. "We're going to die of thirst!" So God brought forth water from a rock. "He had a hat!" When do you think they would stop whining and start thanking God for all that he did for them? When do you think they would start just expecting God to care for them as he had promised as they lived out lives glorifying him? When do you think we will?**

**It is good to take at least one day out of the year just to focus on our blessings from God. Do you realize that in a time when churches are dying right and left, we are going strong? In a time when churches are living off of their endowments, our giving has increased. In a day when churches have nothing but octogenarians running everything, our**

**octogenarians are allowed to offer wisdom and guidance while dozens and dozens of millennials run the day to day business of the church. We are a 104 year old congregation that is blessed beyond our understanding and today we bow before God and thank him. We thank him for all that he has given and all that he has withheld that would have been bad for us and we simply marvel at how gracious he is. What did we ever do to deserve all of this? Absolutely nothing.**

**The Lord has chosen us. Why? We do not know. But for his own reasons, he sent his son to die for us on the cross and suffer Hell for us. He has chosen to love us and provide for us and make us a shining example of his grace in this community. As we enjoy food and family and relaxation over the next few days, we remember that all of this that he provides for us is just a bonus. This is all gravy compared to what awaits us on the last day. Whatever good we enjoy now, we are thankful for, but what is coming is so much more amazing. That is what we are truly thankful for. Our eternal life with no sin and no sorrow in paradise is coming. He had a hat! Eternal life - that's the hat. That's when our eternal joy will be complete.**