

INI Hymns:

Sermon 25-39

Thanksgiving

Multiple Texts

10/12/25

Happy Thanksgiving! Why do we need a Day of Thanksgiving? Shouldn't we be thankful all the time? Yes, of course we should, but that's the problem. Gratitude and Thankfulness do not come naturally to human beings. Think about it, you have to teach little children to say thank you when someone does something for them or gives them something. And apparently it is not an easy lesson to learn, for you have to remind them over and over again, "What do you say?"

The 10 lepers show us that even as adults, true thankfulness is not always a natural reaction. I'm sure all of them were overjoyed, but only one out of the ten actually gave thanks to Jesus for healing them. So on this Thanksgiving we will look at several different Passages that God uses to teach us and remind us to be thankful.

The Making of a Thankful Heart!

Thanksgiving Meditation Part I:

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

We begin with what is probably one of the most familiar Psalm verses, "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." Psalm 136:1 God is essentially doing for us what we do for our children. He reminds us over and over to give thanks to Him for all things. This verse is telling us to give thanks and telling us why. It is used many times in several psalms.

There are Dozens of other Psalms reminding us and urging us to give thanks. They urge us to "Praise the LORD." Psalm 135:1 "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name." Psalm 103:1 Psalm 100 "Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands!... Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name." And there are countless other passages throughout Scripture reminding and urging us to give thanks to God. God keeps on reminding us, "Now what do you say?"

Gradually children learn to say thank you, but that doesn't always mean they ARE thankful. They just learn how to be polite. In order to become truly thankful, we need to learn to

Recognize the Lord's Hand in Everything.

Psalm 65:9-13

"You care for the earth and water it, You greatly enrich it; The river of God is full of water; You provide their grain, for so You have prepared it. 10 You water its ridges abundantly, You settle its furrows; You make it soft with showers, You bless its growth. 11 You crown the year with Your goodness, and Your paths drip with abundance. 12 They drop on the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side. 13 The pastures are clothed with flocks; The valleys also are covered with grain; They shout for joy, they also sing."

God is definitely not a hands off God! God is involved in everything. Thankfulness requires recognizing that fact. God allows us to be involved in the process of providing for ourselves. That's for our own good. It is a great blessing to be able to work and help in providing for ourselves.

The farmer tills the ground and plants the seed, weeds the fields and waters it. When it grows he has to harvest it. If the farmer doesn't do the work, he will not get a harvest. The same is true for us. We go to work so we can have our own "harvest." We can buy the things we need. Then we have to work to prepare our food to eat it. God wants us to be involved. He doesn't just give these things without our effort. If we want something we have to work for it.

As a result, we start feeling like we are self-sufficient. People think, "I worked hard for this, why should I thank God?" Psalms like this remind us that, we could do nothing or accomplish nothing

without God's hand blessing our work. The farmer can plant the seed and water it but he can't make the seed grow. When God said there would be no rain in the land of Israel for three and a half years, there was no rain. No one could grow anything. When He said the rain would return, it did.

God is the one who gives us strength and health to be able to work. God provides the jobs and fills the stores with goods. While we're partners in the work, God is the ultimate source of all things. When we learn to recognize God's hand in our lives and that all good gifts truly come from Him, then we will be more thankful and praise him for all our "Harvests."

Thanksgiving Meditation Part II:

The next passage we want to consider to help us build a thankful heart is Psalm 118:24 "*This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*" This verse reminds us of our Greatest Gift from God. The verses right before introduce it. "*The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.*" Verses 22-23

That of course is talking about Jesus. The builders were the Spiritual Leaders of the Jews: the Priests, Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. The stone they rejected was Jesus. They demanded His death. But God raised Him from the dead and made Him the Chief Cornerstone of His Church. So the day the Lord has made that we rejoice in is the Day of Jesus' Resurrection on Easter. That is a day to rejoice in because that is the day when Jesus sealed our salvation. His death paid the penalty for all our sins and His resurrection won the victory over sin, Satan, death and hell. On that day our sins were forgiven and we were fully reconciled to God. That is our universal justification.

When you remember what Jesus accomplished for us through His resurrection on Easter, that changes every day of our lives. By faith in Jesus, every day becomes a day that the Lord has made—a day we can rejoice and be glad in. Every day is a day under God's grace—a day we spend with God our Father and with Jesus our Saviour. Every Day God is with us and showers us with His blessings. He gives us new opportunities to serve Him. He invites us to "*Come boldly before the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*" Heb. 4:16

How do you think about the day ahead when you get up in the morning on a typical day? Do you think of all the things you have to do that day? Do you face the day as series of obligations to meet, tasks to get done, or even unpleasant things to do? That doesn't make for a very thankful outlook on the day.

How do you suppose it would change your outlook if, when you get up in the morning, you think about Psalm 118:24? "*This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*" Remember Jesus' greatest gift. Remember His great love to give Himself for you, and how He cleansed you and made you a child of God. Remember how "*God's mercies are new every morning.*" All of this is wrapped up in this verse from Psalm 118

If we face every day with this passage on our mind and in our heart, then **We can See Every Day as a Gift from God.** What a powerful impact that will have on our daily life if we see every day as a gift from God rather than feeling stress about what we have to do. We can face the day with confidence, excited to see what He has in store for you.

So try it. If you have a hard time remembering to think about that passage, try setting it as an alert on your phone to come up every morning, "*This is the day the Lord has made; I will rejoice and be glad in it.*" And see how that changes your whole outlook on your day and gives you a more thankful heart so you can truly "*Rejoice and be glad in it.*"

Thanksgiving Meditation Part III:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God

in Christ Jesus for you.”

How can you rejoice ALWAYS, and be thankful in ALL CIRCUMSTANCES? Can you be thankful when you break your arm or lose your job? Yes! You can be thankful that the Lord grants healing. You can be thankful that the Lord promises that if we seek His Kingdom and His righteousness, He will provide for us. So we know we are not forsaken.

Can you be thankful when your spouse fades away before your eyes and then dies? That has to be one of the most difficult situations in life and incredibly sad. Yet, you can be thankful for the years of marriage you had. Especially as Christians you can be thankful that they have inherited eternal life in heaven and are safe with Jesus. You can be thankful that God is always with you.

Not only can you be thankful in all circumstances, but when you are that will help ease the sorrow and pain of that situation. What greater reason to give thanks than to know that we are a dearly loved child of God because Jesus died for us and rose again. In other words we **Find Thankfulness in our Relationship with God**, not in any circumstances of life. Like Jesus told the disciples who were all excited because they could cast out demons. He said, “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

It’s just a matter of thinking about God’s greater blessings and not dwelling on the troubles and sorrows. Know that God is in control of all the circumstances of life and He will work it all out for your good. So when life gets difficult, stop and remember your relationship with God through Jesus Christ. That will also help develop the next thing that will make our hearts more thankful, that is **CONTENTMENT**. The Apostle Paul describes the contentment in his own life in

Philippians 4:11-13

“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Our society with all its emphasis on material things, harbours discontent. All of the commercialism is designed to make us think our life isn’t complete until we this new thing. That fosters an attitude that ties our happiness to getting something new. They have even coined the term “Retail Therapy,” suggesting that shopping can restore your happiness and contentment. But of course it is just a mirage, an empty dream because you will never satisfied when you are always looking at something new.

Then we begin comparing our lives to others, and of course, the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. All this discontent breeds unthankfulness, unthankfulness breeds unhappiness. And it just keeps spiralling downward. It’s impossible to be grateful for what we have if we are fixated on what we don’t have but want.

Contentment, on the other hand, breeds Joy and Thanksgiving. Paul says he learned to be content in whatever state he is in. That is because his contentment was based on his relationship with God. Paul wrote this letter from prison yet it is one of the most joyful Epistles.

When we know God’s perfect love and provision, giving us everything we need, we can be content whether we are rich or poor, sick or healthy. It doesn’t matter, your life is complete with God. And being content with God in our life, we will be all the more thankful always.

Try taking note of the times when you are tempted to compare your life with other people, or where discontent creeps in to your mind. Then, remember that God has given us more than anything in this world can give, He has given us a truly abundant life with Him.

Colossians 3:17

“17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

Paul reminds us here that giving thanks is more than just words. We are to give thanks with everything that we do as well. We can **Thank God with your actions!**

We all have a lot of things to do. Do you sometimes get overwhelmed with the work you have to do and therefore dread it or do it grudgingly? Do you ever feel like Martha and resent that you have to do all the work while others don't do their share? Or do you feel like your work is not appreciated? If so, then those tasks become a drudgery.

Whereas if we develop the attitude that Paul describes here, and consider everything we do as an opportunity to serve the Lord and show Him our thankfulness for all of His abundant blessings, then even the most menial tasks can become joyful even if others don't express their appreciation, you know it is pleasing to the Lord.

Many of you do many things for our congregation. Some of you faithfully set up our church sanctuary for worship every Sunday, some bring flowers, or take care of our altar, some bring coffee or snacks for our Bible Class, some look after our website and social media platforms. Some take care of our finances or keep the records. Some help lead the worship with playing the organ or other music. Some do many of these jobs, and I'm sure there are other jobs that I am not thinking of.

I confess I don't express my appreciation for all of you nearly enough. We truly appreciate all the work you do. I especially thank God for all of you because I know that God is the one who has worked this faith and love in your heart which makes you ready and willing to serve. It truly is an honour and privilege to serve the Lord who has served us so faithfully. By remembering this you can turn every task into a joyful opportunity to serve the Lord and that will make for a Thankful heart that gives praise to God every day.

Consider beginning every job with a brief prayer of thanks for God's blessings and for the opportunity to serve Him with this task. A thankful life is truly a joyful Life. Thanks be to God for giving that to us.

Amen