

Be Thankful

by Bill McLeod

Bill McLeod's sermon emphasizes the importance of cultivating a thankful heart in the life of a Christian, contrasting it with the negativity of unthankfulness.

Duration: 43:57

Scripture: Matthew 7:7, Acts 13:52, Romans 1:21, Romans 15:4, Philippians 2:14-15

Topics: "Thankfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a powerful story about a man in Chile who was struggling to support his family despite working two full-time jobs. The man lived in a small, makeshift house and could not afford basic necessities like dental care. The preacher emphasizes the importance of gratitude and contentment, highlighting the problem of thanklessness and dissatisfaction in North American society. He warns against the belief that material gain equates to godliness and urges listeners to turn away from such thinking. The sermon also references biblical passages that speak to the unfaithfulness and unholy behavior characteristic of the last days.

Transcript

In Colossians chapter 2, the 7th verse, we're told that we as Christian believers we are supposed to abound with thanksgiving. We are to abound with thanksgiving. And in Colossians 3.15, the last three words simply say, Be you thankful.

Be thankful. And many times as Christians, we're not very thankful. Christians often complain as much as sinners do, and sometimes even more.

I talked with a specialist in Saskatoon several years ago, and he was new to Canada. Came from England, he'd lived several years in numbers of countries around the world. Now he was in Canada, and he said, and you Americans won't mind me saying this, he said, you know, Canada is the greatest country in the world.

He said, you know, Canada has one half of all the freshwater lakes in the world. Did you know that? You probably didn't. There's a hundred thousand lakes in Manitoba alone, you know.

And the mountains, and all this kind of thing. He said, opportunities for making money. He said, it's a fabulous country.

I've never been in a country like it in my life, he said. But I want to tell you something else, he said. See, I've been sharing Christ with him.

And he said, I want to tell you something else. I have never lived in a country where the people complain the way they do in Canada. Nobody's satisfied with anything.

And he said, you know what's happening? I said, no. He said, I'm starting to complain. You know.

Abounding therein with thanksgiving. Be thankful. Be thankful.

Unthankfulness is the characteristic, a characteristic, of the unbelieving world. So Paul tells us in Romans chapter 1, he says that when they knew God. And remember, historically speaking, there was a time when there were no atheists in the world.

You know, right after the dawn of creation, nobody doubted there was a God, see. They didn't doubt that. Because it was too fresh in everybody's mind.

Creation and everything. But it says, when they knew God, they did not glorify his God as God. Neither were thankful.

They were not thankful. And so it says, as a result, it became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like the corruptible man, into birds, into four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

And then three things happened. Twice it says God gave them up, and once it says God gave them over. Because they were not thankful.

Once a year we sing the song, come you thankful people, come raise the song of Harvest Dawn. Once a year we sing that. Just once a year, usually.

And the rest of the time sometimes we complain, and we murmur, and it grieves the Spirit of God. Paul told us, in 2 Timothy chapter 3, that one of the characteristics of the last day would be that people would be unthankful and unholy. Unthankful and unholy.

A characteristic of the last days. And it's a characteristic, I know, of the Church of God. I hear all kinds of complaining among God's people.

I like something that happened in Manitoba some years ago. A plane crashed up in the wilderness. And if you crash in the wilderness in Canada, you may or may not ever be found.

There's all kinds of planes that went down that they've never found, you know. A plane went down in 1940 during the air training thing they had for the war in Canada, and they never found it until two years ago. And they were building a highway up in the northern Quebec somewhere, and when they came across an airplane sitting on a high point of land, and there was a skeleton at the controls, they'd been looking for that plane.

Well, they'd given up, of course, but it was gone that long. Well, these guys crashed. Nobody was hurt.

And then they knew if they walked south far enough, they'd hit a road or a railroad or some civilization, so they started going south. Because there was no plane circling the air looking for them, they were looking for them in a different area and all this kind of thing. Anyway, one of the fellows kept a diary on Birch Park with calls from the campfire.

They didn't have much to eat, so one day they threw some rocks at some partridge, and they got these partridge, and they... And so he kept a record of this and said, Dear Lord, well, it always started Dear Lord, so he must have been a Christian. And he said, Today we managed to kill some partridge. We didn't eat them all because we hadn't seen much game, and so we thought we'd better save some.

They didn't have any refrigeration, of course, and so later on there came another Dear Lord several days later. Dear Lord, today we ate the last of the partridge. And he said, They stunk like terrible, they tasted horrible, but Dear Lord, I'm not complaining, I'm just reporting.

And maybe we can follow his good example, not complaining, just reporting. But what does God say? Abounding. What about today? Abounding with thanksgiving, yes.

No matter what the situation is, abounding with thanksgiving. Unthankfulness is a characteristic also of people who are full of lust. It says so in Jude, verse 16.

There's one chapter in that book, as you probably know. It says these are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts. They're murmurers and complainers.

And the Bible has uncomplimentary things to say both about murmurers and complainers. For example, did you know this? That if you start to complain, you will go down spiritually? It says so in the Psalms, I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. And you'll be overwhelmed by your own complaining heart.

See? So murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts. Then, it's a characteristic of a proud man's heart. Do you remember the Gospel of Luke when the Pharisee prayed thus with himself? I like that little phrase, he prayed with himself.

It means, of course, that heaven was not listening. He was just flapping his lips, and nobody was listening at all. But he said, God, I thank Thee.

He was very thankful for what? He was very thankful for himself. I thank Thee that I am not as other men are. That's what he was saying.

I'm not unjust, I'm not an extortioner, I'm not an adulterer, I'm not like this publican, I fast twice in a week, I give tithes of all that I possess. Heaven, you ought to be very thankful for me. But heaven wasn't even listening.

He didn't really have a thankful heart at all for the proper things. He was just stuck on himself, in love with himself. And under a terrible misconception that heaven was very pleased with him, because he wasn't like this publican over here.

But, of course, he was filled with self-righteous pride, which to God was as bad as anything, or maybe even worse, than a publican had done. It's a characteristic of proud people, that they're too proud even to thank God. They think they did it all by themselves.

Or they think that maybe they belong to a lucky family or something, you know. And God doesn't get glory or credit for anything that goes on in some people's lives, and sadly, in some Christians' lives. Many of us haven't learned how to be thankful for the smallest blessings that God may give.

Unthankfulness, then, a characteristic of a sinful heart, we might put it that way, of a carnal heart. You know, we sing, count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done, but we don't count our blessings. Very seldom do we do that.

I think it's a good thing maybe once a day to just rehearse the blessings of God, all the good things God has done for us. There are so many, when you really get to think about them, but a carnal Christian, he'll never think about that. All he can see is the bad things, or the things he thinks are bad, at least the things that are not working out according to his plans.

And since he's not surrendered to the will of God, he's always unhappy because things are not happening the way he thinks they should happen. He just wishes God had come down for a counseling session so he could counsel God, get him on the couch and tell him better, you know. So we have this unthankful heart.

Why should we be thankful? There's a thousand reasons why. I guess one of them would simply be the fact that God tells us to be thankful. We've noted two texts already that said that, and they're by no means all that God has to say in this area of being thankful.

But in Deuteronomy chapter 8, Moses talked about what he called blessings of basket and store. And that refers to what we would call material blessings. I don't know if you've ever traveled in third world countries, but I've been in a lot of third world countries preaching, and every time I come home, you know, I've said to my wife many times, I just feel like kissing the ground.

Put her back in Canada again. Most of these countries, dear people, if you don't have a job, there's no such thing as unemployment insurance. If you get hurt on a job, there's no such thing as workman's compensation.

If you're a widower, there's nothing for widows. If you're an orphan, there's nobody looking after orphans. I've been in cities where there's thousands of orphan kids just roaming the streets, trying to live by their wits.

They'll rob you if they get a chance, and you can hardly blame them, they're trying to exist. How would you feel if you saw a lady, maybe 30 years of age, in India, crawling over the top of a heap of garbage, and she's got a bag, and she's looking for orange peels and banana peels to put something in the bag to take home so her kids won't starve to death. And then we complain about this and complain about that.

We've got so much here, like the Bible says, we have more than a heart could wish. In Sergio, which is a city of 80 or 90,000 in Mindanao, in southern Philippines, I've been there, and I have movies of all this. Here were two streets, like one street, two blocks.

And you know what it was? It was called Garbage Street. You see, there was no garbage pickup. So by agreement of the people, they decided to make these two blocks Garbage Street, so everybody brought their garbage and dumped it in these two streets.

So when I took my movies there, the garbage pile was six or eight feet high, and it ran for two blocks, and it stretched from house to house, right across the street. No traffic could ever get down the street. And

sometimes we complain because the garbage pickup is a little bit late.

No garbage pickup at all. I was in Chile, and an interpreter brought me a fellow one night, a great big guy, he was twice my size, and he was crying, and the interpreter was trying to get him quietened down, so he could interpret to me what he wanted to say. And finally I got it.

The message was this. He had two full-time jobs, he was working 18 to 20 hours a day, and he couldn't make enough money to properly support his family, and he wanted me to tell him what to do. What would you tell him? I'll tell you, I really struggled with that.

What could I tell him? You may not know this, but in many of these third world countries, if they could get to the United States of America or to Canada by swimming, they'd swim. They'd do anything to get out of their country. Because of the rotten system.

Somebody called politics in third world countries political mayhem, and that's exactly what it is. It's dog eat dog. And the worst cook is usually at the top.

And everybody's out to feather their own nest, and they sock money away in the Swiss banks, and if the thing blows in their own country, they hop a plane and they're gone, and then the people have to pick up the pieces. One kid, a Christian kid who backslid terribly finally, just because of the bitterness in his heart over the situation in his own country, he said, our country's had about 30 revolutions in the last 50 years, and not one has produced anything better. Just a different bunch of cooks at the top.

And he was right, that's how it was. And then we complain. I went into a tailor shop in Madras in India one time, and asked the owner if I could take some movies, and he said I could, and I took some movies in there, and then I talked to some of the... He had four men, each man with a sewing machine, and they were working eight, nine, ten hours a day, so I asked them, how much money do you make? It was two dollars a week.

Two dollars a week. Nobody in his right mind would work for two dollars an hour here. There are at least 70 countries in the world where the average annual income is one percent of what you make here in the United States of America.

One percent. Like a hundred dollars a year. And we complain.

We do complain. And I said to myself, I wonder how in the world God looks at this. It bothers me when I hear people complaining in North America.

Blessings of basket and store? We ought to be praising God all day and all night for the blessings of basket and store we enjoy here. Transportation. Could I give you a little contrast? I met a fellow in India, and he was maybe 25 years of age, and God had called him to be a pastor, and some church had called him to be their pastor, and he had to wait six months before he went, I forget why, but he could hardly wait to get there, you know.

So I asked him some interesting questions. Like I said, how much are they going to pay you? What kind of a salary? And he looked blank. And he said, well, we never talked about that.

I don't know if they'll pay me anything. I said, where will you stay? Will they have a house for you? He laughed, no, no, he said, I hope one family will have a room somewhere, and if not, he said, I can sleep

under a, you know, under a bridge or under a platform or something, that's no problem. And I said, how big a library do you have? And he held it up.

One little tattered old Bible, four by six inches falling apart. That was his library. I said, so how will you get around? Will you have a, I knew he wouldn't have a car, so will you have a donkey or a horse or a bicycle or something? No, he said, I can't afford anything like that.

I'll just walk, he said. And you know what? He could hardly wait to go. By way of contrast, in Canada, I know a church, they asked a man to candidate, and the salary he'd been getting before was \$42,000 a year, and the church offered him \$35,000, and he said he couldn't come for that, it wasn't enough money.

He had to have \$42,000. He couldn't go down to this lower level, you see. And I say to myself, what in the world? I mean, how does God look at all this? I think a lot of things are going to be reversed, dear people, when we get to heaven, and God begins giving out the rewards.

A lot of us people here in North America think we've shone pretty good. We'll find out that our lamp glass was full of smoke, you know, and the flame was out, and we didn't even know it. We'd be in the back row instead of the front row.

Alright. Blessings are a basket and store them. In Ephesians chapter 1, Paul talks about, he says, God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things, in Christ.

The spiritual blessings. And there's so many. There's a list of them in Ephesians chapter 1, and I mean almost every book of the Bible, especially in the New Testament.

It's all these spiritual blessings that God has given us. And you see, and rising out of that, you remember in Romans chapter 8, it says, He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? So Paul said, All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Peter or the world or life or death or things present or things to come, all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. All things are yours.

How rich we are. No wonder Paul said, Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. It's a gift so great.

Christ is a gift so great that words fail. They break down. They can't carry the load.

They can't carry the message. You can't describe it really. God's gift of his son to a sinful world.

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. You can't think of anything else to thank God for, thank Him for Christ. God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son of God has not life. We can thank God then for the spiritual gifts. Christ, eternal life, the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, and many other things enumerated in the word of God.

If we just, you know, one of the problems I think is we just don't take time to get along with God so we can really think and let God speak to our hearts. If you and I were to get along with God and say, Lord, show me some of the things you've done, He'd flood your mind, and you'd begin to see all kinds of things that God has done. The Lord just pushed something into my mind.

I'll have to share it with you, I guess. It comes from India. I was sitting in a station at Lucknow in India, and there was a number of missionaries there, including a lady missionary, and we were talking.

The train leaves eight hours late, and of course there they don't let you know. You just wait till the train comes, you know. And so we were waiting, and here came a man, and he was terribly twisted, his body was.

He didn't have hands, proper hands. He had kind of sticks tied on and stuff, and then he was pulling himself with his elbows like this across the platform, you see, and he had a rope over his shoulder and a little carton behind. He was dragging this cart.

He had it kind of tied around himself, and he came over, and this lady missionary said to me, He's a Christian, and he won't beg for a living. There's thousands of beggars in India. He won't beg for a living.

He wants to make his own living. He shines shoes. She said, Let him shine your shoes.

So we beckoned him over, and he came, and he shined my shoes, and he had such a happy face. And she told me, she said, He's a great Christian, you know. And she spoke to him, and they spoke back and forth, and he was just praising the Lord.

So I said, Be sure you tell him I love Jesus too. So she did, and his face just lit up like a June morning, and so afterwards, I forget, I gave him maybe ten times what he'd normally get, which didn't even amount to half a dollar, you know. And she said, Oh, you've just made his day.

He's such a sweet Christian. And I hear again, you know, I think of that, and I think, Oh, that man is as precious to God as Dwight L. Moody, Billy Graham, or you and me. And in heaven, he'll shine.

All his body problems will be gone. He'll shine like the stars forever and ever. People want to get things straightened out in our mind, to see them as God sees them, because God is the eventual, the only eventual reality in the universe.

And the love of God, that's the greatest, I hate to use the word, thing of all. The love of God. All right.

Blessings of a basket in store. Blessings of the promises of God. 7,487 promises in the Bible.

If you were to take a one every day, a new one every day, you can go for 21 years. And why would someone say, Well, they don't all apply to us. Well, suppose they don't all apply to us.

So what? A lot of them do. A lot of them do. And whatever things were written before, Paul said in Romans 15, referring to the Old Testament Scriptures, was written for our learning, our instruction.

So when you read the Old Testament, expect God to speak to you from it, and he will. Precepts, commands, examples, the Bible is loaded with them. How thankful we ought to be for this book.

Thank God, if you had no other book in the world, you could be a well-educated person by just studying the Bible and applying its principles. You'd be a cultured person, a wise person. Yes, and a Christian person, too, if you listen to it.

So to be thankful. Be thankful. Here are some things that we can be thankful for.

Answers to prayer. Jesus said, Ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full. And George Mueller, the famous man of faith and prayer from Bristol, England, you will remember that he kept a prayer ledger.

Some of you will know this. One called him the prayer, and the next called him the date he began praying, and the third called him the day when God answered. And when he was 85 years of age, he lived to be 94.

When he was 85, he began adding up the figures, and he had 30,000 prayers that God answered the same day he prayed. And he had a larger list of 55,000 answers to prayer that took God longer than a day, maybe a week or a month or a year or 20 years. Somebody asked him, Mr. Mueller, Do you ever give up when you pray for something? Do you ever give up? And he said, George Mueller never gives up because God is faithful.

He is faithful that promised. And he is faithful, and we ought to be thankful just thinking of that, the marvelous faithfulness of God to his people. God can do anything but fail.

We say it glibly, but it's a fact that God can do anything but fail. God never sleeps. He that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety. We had a house break-in a while ago, and it made my wife pretty nervous, and so I thought, since I'm on the road so much, I'll get a security system. So we put in a security system.

And my daughter, Joanna, who lives with us two days a week, she counsels two days a week at a Christian counseling center in Winnipeg, so it's quite close to our house, so she stays with us those two days. Then she works in a thing called Genesis Counseling Center at the Winnipeg Bible College and Seminary, so she lives there the rest of the week. So she was staying in our house, and she said she couldn't sleep all night wondering if that system was going to go off.

You know, it's supposed to give you, you know, peace. And she said, Dad, it was terrible. She said, I could hardly sleep at all.

I was just waiting for that stupid thing to go off, you know. No, security's in God, really, isn't it? I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety, so our safety is in Him. And so no matter where we are, what happens? We can just praise the Lord.

He's with us. You know, if we would praise the Lord more, we'd see more of God's power and God's grace. I know that.

Abounding with thanksgiving. He always responds. God always responds to that sort of thing when He sees a thankful heart, because there's so few people that are really thankful.

Did you ever notice Jacob's prayer, not prayer exactly, but his confession, his testimony before Pharaoh over there in Genesis chapter 48? You know, Pharaoh looks at this old man, Joseph's father, and he says, How old are you? And I think to myself, Man, now Jacob's got a fantastic opportunity to share with Pharaoh, greatest monarch of his time, about the power of God and the salvation of God, and they blew the whole thing away. Remember what he said? He said, well, in effect what he said was this, Well, my days have been few. He said, I've only lived 130 years and my days have been evil.

I've had all kinds of terrible things happen, you know. I said, man, he sounds like a modern Christian, you know. And he blew it.

And then it says he blessed Pharaoh. I think Pharaoh must have had mixed emotions about that blessing. I mean, if being a believer in the living God means that your years are going to be few and you'll have an evil time, forget about the blessing.

I don't want that kind of blessing. I'm sure Pharaoh must have had mixed emotions. Maybe Jacob had a fight with his wife or something that morning.

I don't know what went on, but something was wrong that there was no joy there. He just wasn't rejoicing in the Lord. Gordon Bailey knows Kurt Bork in Canada.

He's a good friend of ours. He's been a faithful Christian worker for many, many years, preaching in logging camps. He's a great person.

He's got a little phrase. He'll say, Happy-loo-ya anyhow. Happy-loo-ya anyhow.

I heard him say it many times. One time he and I were sitting on a bunk in a bush camp. I was with the same mission for some years.

And, of course, it was a double bunk. So there's a bunk up here, you know, with the angle iron on the side and the bunk here. And Kurt got up suddenly and forgot there was anything above him.

And he cracked his head on this thing there. You know, he just stood there sort of swaying. I know he really hurt himself.

And then he said, Well, happy-loo-ya anyhow. Now, some people have trouble with that. Some Christians have trouble with that.

They say he's stupid. That's stupid. He's a fanatic of some kind, you know.

Is he really? Dear people, I don't suppose anything grieves the heart of God as much as to see unthankful Christians. All that we have, as we've noted, spiritual, blessings of basket and store, and all the rest of it, and still we can't somehow really praise the Lord from our hearts. I heard of a woman in Scotland.

She was very, very poor. And all she had for this meal happened to be a part of a loaf of bread, and it was dry and a little bit moldy. And she took the bread in her hands and she looked up to heaven and she said, All this, and heaven too? Praise the Lord.

I'm sure God was pleased with that because, well, it's so rare to find Christians who really rejoice in the Lord. Now, in the third chapter of Philippians, the Apostle Paul said, Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. And there's a little chorus.

I'm not a singer, but it goes like this. Rejoice in the Lord all way, all way, and again I say rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord all way, all way, and again I say rejoice.

Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice in the Lord all way. Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice in the Lord all way. Rejoice in the Lord all way, all way, and again I say rejoice.

Rejoice in the Lord all way, all way, and again I say rejoice. That's a great little chorus. Always.

Pains, aches, praise the Lord. Paul said, Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. And one of the ways, dear people, to get the power of God in your life is to rejoice and glory in tribulations, persecutions, distresses, necessities, and persecute, all of these things for Christ's sake, Paul said, for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Peter said the same thing in 1 Peter chapter 4. He said, If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you for the spirit of glory and of God is resting upon you. But we don't do that. We complain and we murmur and we wonder why and all this kind of thing.

God allows trials and tribulations to come, dear people, to test us. It isn't that he's forgotten us. He never forgets his people.

He cannot. But he does test us in these ways. Now, 1 Timothy chapter 2, verse 1 says, I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.

Do you ever thank God for electricians and plumbers and carpenters and policemen and truck drivers and school teachers and all the rest of them? Ever do that? I heard of a fellow who was a great witness for God and he'd meet some person and the first question he'd ask would be, What's your profession? And the fellow would say, Well, I'm a plumber. You're a plumber? I've been praying for you. And the guy would say, What? We just met.

Oh, yeah, but I pray for plumbers all the time. The Bible says to do it, to give thanks for all men. Because we live in a highly integrated society, you can't live without garbage collectors.

I mean, you could, but it would be kind of rough. And plumbers and all the rest of it, right? So, give thanks for all men. Then it talks about giving thanks for our politicians.

Well, a lot of them are rascals. I don't know why it is they get so many that are rascals. We have the same problem here.

When you had Watergate, we had Harborgate. You never heard about Harborgate, did you? Of course you didn't. Canadians know how to cover up their sin.

You Americans don't. You know? Now, we've got rascals. Our President, Prime Minister, he shot himself in the foot so often he can't walk anymore.

You know? He went in as one of the biggest majority in Canadian history and right now he's right down at the bottom in the public polls. He's, so much graft and corruption and junk going on, not himself personally has been totally implicated, but, you know, some of his henchmen. I don't know why that is.

But still the Bible says we're to give thanks for kings and for all that are in authority. We're supposed to do that. So, it doesn't say do it with reservations or with your tongue in your cheek either.

But they are running the country and our countries are run a lot better. Canada and the States and most countries are. I'll tell you, it's, oh.

You know the first time I was in Argentina, you know what they told us? One of the first things the people told us? Don't get near a policeman. I said, why not? They'll rob you. Oh, I said, come on.

Policeman robs sure, they said. I said, what do you mean they'll rob? I said, they'll ask for money. I said, do you have to give them money? Well, they said, if he's got a pistol, you better because his gun might go off accidentally.

And I found out it was a way of life down there. I was driving in a missionary and we came to a roadblock and the roadblock ostensibly was for the policemen. They had a little place and a bunch of policemen to search for terrorists.

So, this policeman comes over very sloppily dressed and very sloppy in his demeanor and he wanted to search the trunk. So, he opened the trunk and he looked in the trunk and then he came over and he held out a raffle ticket and he wanted the driver to buy it. And the driver said something to him in Spanish and I mean, the driver was, he was a missionary, he was really angry and the policeman looked at him and shuffled away.

And I said, what was that all about? Well, he said, I just told him, look, I bought one of your stupid raffle tickets when I came down here. You stopped me at the same roadblock and I'm not going to buy one going back because there's no such thing as a raffle, you see. If they just print these tickets and you have to pay them for it, you don't get through the roadblock.

There is no raffle, you don't even stand a chance of winning anything, see. Just a big deal, you know. That's the police.

A guy moved into Buenos Aires and he made the mistake of telling the police that he was going away for two weeks holidays, please guard my house. When he came back, there wasn't even wallpaper left in the walls, you know. Well, it's not that way here, so don't complain.

Thank God, thank God, thank God, thank God. Rejoice in the Lord always. I find people in those situations praising God.

Some of them know how to praise God better than we do here. They've got so little to praise God for in one sense. The spiritual blessings are theirs too, but I mean in other respects.

I'm sure God knows how to sort it out. Well, be anxious for nothing, be careful for nothing, but in everything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

There it is again, with thanksgiving. Pray with thanksgiving. I find it really helps because people often tell me, well, I fall asleep praying and I have trouble praying, you know.

I say start by thanking God. Start with thanksgiving. Even make a list if you have to.

Think of all the things. I see a man with only one leg. I thank God I've got two.

I see a man with one hand. I thank God I've got two. I see a blind person.

I thank God I've got eyes I can see through. I saw a fellow sitting in a station platform in India, he and his wife or girlfriend, whatever, and his feet were as green as grass with gangrene or something, and he had a stick and he was taking pieces of meat off the bottom of his feet. Terrible.

He couldn't go to a doctor. He never had any money. In a lot of those countries if you get sick, you know, you can't phone for a doctor.

First of all, you don't have a phone, and secondly, there's no doctor available, so you put up with it. Well, I don't know where you're at, but I know it is a problem with most Christians to be truly thankful, rejoicing in the Lord always. You remember in Luke 10, Jesus said, like he sent the 70 out and he told them to heal the sick and to preach the kingdom.

They came back and said, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through your name. And he said, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven. And there's a hymn that says something like this.

Written in heaven, O glorious thought, this consolation to me Christ hath brought. Your name is written in the book of God. That's something that never changes.

You may have some defeats when you're warring and battling with the devil, but your name will always be in the Lamb's book of life. You've received Christ as your savior, God's child. Rejoice that your names are written in God's book.

So we're not to rejoice in some of the things we do rejoice in. It makes me sick sometimes. I was in the church, an evangelical church a while ago, and they were raising money because they were behind.

They built a big building. They were quite a bit behind in money, so they had all kinds of schemes and projects to get this money. And so the preacher explained to the people that that text in the Bible that says you're not to let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that that doesn't mean that you shouldn't let the people in the church know how much you're giving.

He had some other explanation for it. I don't know what the explanation was. I've never heard of anything so stupid in all my life.

But anyway, he had a gun to his head. He had to get the people giving, and so he wanted to play one against another. This was the idea, you see.

So then if you gave, you were to tell the church how much you were giving. He had them come up with a platform. And people came up with a platform.

My wife and I were sitting there. I couldn't believe it, you know. And somebody said, well, the Lord told us we're to give \$2,000 and we're going to do it in the next three years.

And then a fellow came up, a member in good standing, a good sound evangelical church, you know. And this fellow came up, and he said the Lord has told my wife and I we're to give \$40,000 in the next three years, so we're not going to take any holidays, we're not going to buy that new car we're going to buy. And when the people, first of all, when they got there, they gave their name, they told what their jobs were, you see.

Do you know what his job was? For the province of Manitoba, he was the top man for the lotteries for the whole province of Manitoba, which is a big gambling thing, you know, you see. And, of course, when he said he was going to give \$40,000, the amens were broken all over the place, you know, \$40,000. Isn't that fantastic? I would say if the devil's money, I don't think it's so great.

But anyway, there's some strange, strange things going on in the Christian world today because people are almost totally ignorant of the Bible. They don't know what it says. Some people don't have a clue.

I hear it again, oh, that's in the Bible? I didn't know that was in the Bible. Like a fellow one time, believe it or not, he taught Sunday school. And I'm not being critical, but I'm just saying.

And I quoted a verse in the meeting, and he said, you quoted this verse, he said, you know, it's funny, he said, I know the Bible pretty good. He said, I don't think, I don't remember that verse at all. He said, where's it found? I said, it's in the book of Hebrews.

Oh, yeah. He said, I knew it had to be in the Old Testament. He said, you know, I know the New Testament off by heart.

But I think we need to ask, I think we need to repent before God at the same time for our lack of thankfulness. And you may have a bad home situation, but you do have a home. I saw a fellow in India.

You know what his home was? A cardboard box. A big cardboard box sitting on the sidewalk. And he cut the front up two sides and across the top so that in the daytime he could let the front down so the sun would come in.

In the nighttime he'd pull it up so he'd be alone in there, you know. Of course, when the rainy season came, which once a year at least, you know, then he'd lose his house. I took movies of the fellow.

His house was about this tall, and it was just a bunch of sticks and hunks of paper and junk and just long enough. And he had to back in there, lying on his stomach, just back in there. That was his home.

And I took a picture of him standing in front of his house. He didn't have, I think he had one tooth left in his head because he couldn't, of course, afford to go to a dentist. And oh, dear people.

I mean, the Lord definitely laid this on my heart to share with you this morning. And I don't want to sound critical at all, but I know it's a major problem on God's people in North America today that we're so thankless and we want more and nobody's satisfied and nobody's happy. I want to close.

You remember it says that some people suppose that gain is godliness. And he said, from such people, turn away. Don't listen to them.

Gain is not godliness. He said, we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. A rich man dies, and the inevitable question is, how much did he leave? And the proper answer is he left it all.

He left it all. And so it goes on to say in 1 Timothy 6, having food and clothing, let us be there with content. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

How many Christians in North America would be content with food and clothing only? No car, no house, maybe a house to rent or something, but not a house you own. Food and clothing. Be content.

Godliness with contentment is great gain, he says, great gain. So to flee, as a matter of fact, he used that very word, flee from a pursuit of material gain. Flee these things, man of God, Paul said, flee these things, and follow after righteousness and godliness and love.

These are the things to pursue, but not material things. If they come use them for the glory of God, be thankful, but don't ever set your heart on them. Set your mind on things above, your affection on things above, not on things on the earth, for you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.

And I guess one of the reasons why we can't praise God the way we should is because the old self problem. We're living under the dominion of the old man yet and we haven't gotten free. And we can be free by the grace and power of God, we can be free, we can get to the place where we can be thankful for, you know, potatoes that are not even cooked.

Wilberforce was a famous English politician who loved God with all his heart. They called him a butterfly. His wife was an abominable cook, and sometimes Wilberforce, everybody he saw he'd invite to his house for meals.

And people who knew better never ever went because the food was so horrible. Everything was cold and either burnt or cold or something was wrong with it. But they all agreed they never saw a man so happy in the Lord in all their life as Wilberforce.

Just praising the Lord. He loved his wife, he didn't care about the cooking. I guess he knew what all of us know but sometimes forget.

That in the glory land we aren't going to have leaky roofs or leaky taps or flat tires in cars or bad crops or anything of that kind. So can't we put up with these few things for now and glorify God in the fires to use a biblical phrase and set an example to the world out there. They need to.

But if they see that I'm happy under adverse circumstances and maybe desperate circumstances I'm still praising the Lord. Then that says something to them. It speaks powerfully to their hearts.

All right, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Now you may struggle with that but this is what God says. And those three words again.

Be you thankful. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts it says. And be you thankful.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for all you've done for us and all you mean to us. You have given us eternal life and this life is in your Son.

And you said he that has the Son has life and he that has not the Son of God has not life. Oh God, you have blessed us in marvelous, marvelous ways. And Father, no doubt many of us here today are not really truly thankful as we should be and this grieves your heart.

And Father, we pray you'll work powerfully in all of us in these days. Change us Lord. We read of the early disciples in Acts 13.52 it says, And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.

For again, Father, in Romans 14, the kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Oh Father, dear God, lead us to this, we pray, lead us to this place where our hearts are wholly thine and we don't complain. Because you said to all things about murmurings and disputings that you may be blameless and harmless as sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom you shine as lights in the world.

Oh God, forgive us for complaining and murmuring when we should be rejoicing. And dear God, continue to work in our hearts. We pray in Christ's name.

Amen.

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