

Thanksgiving of Paul for the Saints

by David Smithers

The sermon emphasizes the importance of gratefulness and thankfulness in Paul's prayers, which reveals his priorities and heart, and is a model for believers to follow.

Duration: 38:26

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 1:8

Topics: "Thanksgiving"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being thankful and grateful in our lives. He starts by expressing gratitude for the faith of the listeners, highlighting the significance of this scripture. The speaker encourages the audience to reflect on their own attitudes and asks if they are convicted to change their perspective. He emphasizes the power of gratitude in drawing us closer to God and inspiring prayer. The sermon concludes with a call to repentance for taking people for granted and a reminder that we cannot be both thankful and complain at the same time.

Transcript

Okay, well, last couple weeks I've been preparing some things for our local church back home in Oklahoma and I was really scouring and looking over some things in Paul's epistles real closely and I just started to kind of see a pattern of some things. And what caught my attention was really the prayers of Paul in his epistles. And I started to notice that there was some keys, key elements I think that that was, some consistent keys and reoccurring themes that kept on popping up as I looked at these prayers.

And I really feel they're very important for us to take a look at this weekend. You know, a lot of us are familiar with the passage of Luke 6, the words of Jesus, that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, amen. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Or in other words, what is a priority in your life will come out of it, amen. Regardless how hard you may try to hide it or try to convince somebody otherwise that there's something else important to you, the priorities of your life surface through the words of your mouth, amen. We're all in agreement on that? Okay, but it happens in other places besides our casual conversation.

And I believe you can take it to another level that the prayers of the saints, the things that we pray about consistently reveal the priorities of our Christianity, amen. I get an opportunity to talk about this a lot at different times at HGM's boot camp, on the class on prayer and other places. But one thing I love to do is

challenge people about not only the need to pray, but the things that they're praying for.

The things that they're praying for. What does your prayer life look like? Is it made up of you and your needs and your desires and your hurts and your wants and your dreams, or does it include some other things? Does it include things that have to do with the glory of God and the benefit of others, amen? You know, even in our Christianity sometimes we can be very self-centered or focused on just our own little world, can't we? Have you ever noticed that? That it's so easy to fall into the rut of just being, you know, I want Jesus at work in my life, but it's kind of all about me. Well, as I started to examine this last couple weeks, the prayer life of Paul as revealed in the epistles, I started to see that the prayers of Paul revealed a set of priorities that I found that I desired for my own life, and they had very little to do with his own personal needs, but rather consistently over and over, the glory of God and the needs of other people and how he viewed other people, amen? So what I want us to do is to compare our priorities with that of the apostle Paul's.

Do you have apostolic priorities? Do you have apostolic priorities? You know, the church is founded on the teaching of the apostles, and may I even dare say it is founded on the prayers of the apostles, amen? The things that made up the apostolic doctrine of the first century church were not just theology, they were the prayers of these men, amen? And so I want us to take a look at the prayer life of St. Paul or the divine balance of his apostolic priorities, apostolic priorities. There are certain things that Paul over and over and over again, and I think you'll be struck with this yourself as we look at the Scriptures, things that he prayed for that are in sharp contrast with the way we consistently pray, amen? So, number one, we're examining the apostles' prayers. But one thing I want you to notice is, you know, first and foremost, when you look at the epistles of Paul, what you'll commonly find is a greeting, amen? He opens with a greeting.

He says, you know, Paul to the church at this place or this place, whatever the situation may be. The saints over here. And then he reminds them that he is an apostle, that he is called of God, ordained of God, commissioned of God.

He has this apostolic calling for the laying of the foundation of the church. And usually right after he does that, he starts talking, he starts issuing forth a prayer and emphasizing certain things. First and foremost, what I was struck with when I examined the prayers of the apostle Paul was his heart of gratefulness and thankfulness, amen? Every time you find the apostle starting to pray, the first thing that comes out of his mouth is a prayer of gratefulness and thankfulness for the saints of God, whomever he may be addressing, amen? And you guys, if we're going to be honest tonight, I don't think there's near enough of that in us, is there? So often our eye gravitates towards that which is discouraging, a problem, a dilemma, something that needs to get fixed, you know what I'm saying? Rather than that which is good and a blessing among the saints of God, amen? But if we're going to have authority in people's lives, I believe we also must be grateful and thankful for people's lives.

Paul had a title that he was an apostle, but I believe that's not the only thing that gave him authority in people's lives. His thankfulness and his perspective about people that he was ministering to gave him the power of influence and authority in people's lives. You know, if you can't ever see something good in the people around you, if you are unwilling to recognize the blessing that has been bestowed on you through the people of God around you, you will find it difficult to have real influence in those people's lives.

If the first thing coming out of your mouth is a problem, is a discouragement, is a dilemma, is a conflict, is some strife, you'll find it difficult to have sway with those individuals. Paul's apostolic authority directly

flowed out of his apostolic gratefulness for the saints of God, his value and appreciation for the church of Jesus Christ. Well, you're going, OK, well that sounds good.

I'm not buying into that. Well, how about let's look at some verses, alright? And convince you a little bit. Over and over and over again, Paul reveals this.

Let me underscore it for you. Actually, we're going to talk about throughout this weekend five keys of Paul's greetings in apostolic prayer life. Number one, his priority of gratefulness.

His priority of gratefulness and thankfulness. Or a divine perspective on the work of grace in other people's lives. Number two, when we're talking about his prayer life, we'll look at his apostolic persistency.

This man prayed and prayed and prayed, and there is such a consistency, a fervency, a tenacious spirit about his prayer that it definitely brings conviction to you when you take a look at it. Number three, we'll also look at this weekend. When praying for the saints of God, not only is he concerned about the work of grace in them and how grateful he is for that and how persistent he's going to pray for that, but when he prays, he's always concerned about the growth and the maturity of the saints of God.

OK, in case you're not sure what we're doing right now, we're doing a little bit of outline, alright? A little bit of points we're going to cover later on this weekend. Also, he doesn't stop there. Not only is he concerned about the growth of the saints, but he's always concerned that they are operating in a spirit of Christ-like love.

When he prays for the saints, he never, never, hardly ever stops praying without mentioning, uttering a prayer that has to do with godly character that is revealed through Christ-like charity. Amen? And then number five, you will never find the apostle greeting the church of Jesus Christ and praying for them without emphasizing the grace of God, the power by which they can even comprehend, obeying the thing that he is saying to them, his instruction for them, OK? So the apostolic authority of Paul's instruction, as found in the New Testament epistles, is almost always founded on thankfulness and prayer for the purpose of establishing Christian growth and the spirit of love by the power of God's grace. Did you get that? The apostolic authority of Paul's instruction, the gist of it, always comes forth with what gives it authority is his spirit of thankfulness, his unceasing prayer for the purpose of establishing Christian growth and maturity in the character of love by the power of God's grace.

Amen? We're going to go through these things this next couple of days here, but first and foremost, let's take a look at apostolic gratefulness, being grateful for the saints of God around you. Are you concerned about the church of Jesus Christ? Do you want God to break in and do something powerful in the church? Amen, I think we do. Are you grateful for the church? Do you honor the church? Do you recognize that the church of Jesus Christ is the bride of Christ, the beloved of our Lord Jesus, and we must handle her with respect and carefulness, amen? And we must not disparage or despise the work of God in other people's lives around us, amen? We've got to see each other, if we're going to minister effectively and have influence with one another, through the eyes of grace and through God's work, amen? Okay, let's take a look at Romans 1.8. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

You know, that's an incredible Scripture, isn't that right? That is a lot to be thankful for. Can you imagine? Now, I wish we could say this more often in the church today, but this was the case. This is what Paul was addressing among the Romans.

He said, I thank my God on every remembrance of you, because your faith, your devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, your passion for the Lord and His kingdom, is known throughout the world, amen? Isn't that what God wants to do, is establish a testimony among the saints of God that is heard from one end of the globe to the other, that would lift up the reputation of Christ, just through the way the saints of God walk and live and love, amen? But Paul, first of all, he says, is first, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all. Before he ever utters any kind of statement of theology, you know, those of us who kind of like a little bit of systematic theology and some good Bible doctrine, you can't help but love the book of Romans, amen? But before he gets all that good stuff that we get so excited about, before Paul starts giving that instruction, he just doesn't jump in there and start lining out the church and tell them how to do this, and oh, about this doctrine or this system of theology. First thing he does is, I thank God for you, amen? I thank God for you.

You guys, if you are not thankful for the church, the people around you, I don't believe you have any authority to instruct them, amen? If you're not a thankful person, you have not earned the right to open your mouth and try to teach somebody. If you disparage the work of grace in people's life, if you're disgusted by them, irritated by them, and you know, just bugged by them, chances are you'll never get a chance to have authority and influence in that person's life. You want influence in somebody's life to really teach them something that will help make them a more mature disciple of Christ? You've got to start with thankfulness, amen? And I'm preaching to myself here, amen? Isn't this where me and you, the rubber meets the road, where we really struggle a lot of times? Isn't it so easy to grumble, you guys, and complain? Don't we just naturally kind of, oh yeah, that's messed up, you know, that needs to be fixed.

God wants us to start someplace else with thankfulness. 1 Corinthians 1.4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus. I thank my God always concerning me.

Why do you have to throw in that word always, you know? Okay, we're thankful sometimes, but always thankful. How are you doing, you guys? I don't think I'm doing too hot about being always thankful about the saints of God around me. You know, I tell you, when you get a little bit of influence and authority in the church, the job gets harder, did you know that? When you try to lead a group of people and help disciple and get involved with shepherding a group of people, the job doesn't get easier to be thankful.

It actually becomes more challenging because you know the ins and outs of all kinds of stuff that tempts you to complain. But when you're a complainer, you lose influence. Amen? 1 Thessalonians 2.13 For this reason, we also thank God without ceasing.

Without ceasing. Because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it, not as the word of men, but as the truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. When they considered the church there at Bethlehem, at Thessalonica, they were thankful without ceasing.

They were unceasingly thankful for the people of God there. And Philemon 1.4-7 I thank my God making mention of you always in my prayers. I believe Paul's prayer life that was unceasing, that was so fervent, that was so diligent for the saints of God, that persistence in prayer flowed directly out of his thankfulness for the saints.

Amen? Have you ever tried to put on a heart of thankfulness, and it really entered into a real heart of gratefulness, and didn't eventually end up praying? Have you found that that's kind of how it works? When

you really thank God, when you really recognize what the grace of God is doing in your life and in the people's life around you, you just get drawn into prayer, because you're reminding yourself, you're encouraging yourself, about the fact that your God is a covenant-keeping God. He is a faithful God. He is not a man that He should lie.

He's not a man that He should disappoint. But He keeps His Word. He keeps His promises.

And you're giving thanks and praise for that. And pretty soon, the needs that are on your heart or around you, they come bubbling up within you, and you start praying again. Amen? You want to be a prayerful person? Be a thankful person.

Amen? You guys getting anything out of this yet, or are you too tired? Should we just wait for tomorrow to finish this up? Oh, okay. Just checking. I thank my God making mention of You always in my prayers.

Hearing of Your love and faith which You have towards the Lord Jesus and towards the saints, that the sharing of Your faith may become effective by the acknowledgement of every good thing which is in You in Christ Jesus. For we have great joy and consolation in Your love because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by You, brother. He's grateful for this minister, Paul is.

I thank my God making mention of You always in my prayers, starting with thankfulness, and then 1 Thessalonians 1, 2, and 3. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of You in our prayers, remembering without ceasing Your work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of our God and Father. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of You in our prayers, remembering without ceasing. You know, if you're really going to be a person who knows how to give thanks for other people, it means remembering.

It means taking the time to be thoughtful and consider the blessing that your brother and sister is in your life. Amen? You know, sometimes we use that word remembering like, you know, it's just kind of a random thing that happens to you. You know, as you're going through the course of the day, you're involved in some activity and some odd event happens which kind of just jogs your memory about something.

Now that is one way that we remember. But you know, we are exhorted over and over and over to remember the Lord Jesus Christ, to not forget His benefits, to remember all of His promises. You know, it is a willful act of our volition.

We are cooperating with jogging our memories on purpose. It is to be mindful of a fact. Amen? To remember someone and the benefit and the blessing they are isn't just supposed to be an accident.

It is supposed to be a practice and discipline. If you want to walk with your brothers and sisters the way that you're supposed to, if you want to keep your perspective and your gratefulness and thankfulness about people around you, you are going to have to become disciplined in reminding yourself purposefully, being mindful of the fact that God's grace is at work in their lives. Amen? Being mindful of the fact that they have been a blessing to you, that they have stood by your side, that they have spoken words of hope and encouragement to you.

Amen? They have stood by you. They'll stand with you in the days to come. Are you disciplined in being mindful of the benefit that your brother and sister have been in your life? Or are you unmindful? Do you never take the time to consider the people around you? If you don't take the time to consider them, chances are you will be ungrateful for them.

Amen? Out of sight, out of mind, you've heard that old saying. The reality is, you don't take the time to put somebody in your sights, to take notice of what's going on in them, to consider them in a careful way. They will be out of your mind.

They will be in your thoughts. And as a result, you won't be thankful for them. Let's go on.

Let's look at another verse. Philippians 1, 3 through 6. I thank my God upon every remembrance for you, always in every prayer of mine, making requests for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. These greetings, these prayers of the Apostle Paul, they're not just polite niceties that he's just starting an epistle with.

Amen? We have little conversation starters, don't we? Little lines that we use on one another to break open a conversation. You guys, this is the inspired Word of God. These are not just little clichés that Paul would go, well, I don't know how to start this epistle, so I'll just resort back to my familiar prayer and greeting.

That's not what the Apostle is doing here. These words are meaningful, they are purposeful, they are designed and inspired and motivated by the Spirit of God. Amen? He is not wasting his breath here.

He's saying, I'm always thankful. I am always thankful for you. I am thankful as I remember and pray for you that God who started a good work in you will finish this good work.

You see the Apostle's perspective? Well, I thought, you know, Apostle Paul, he's this sacrificial, radical disciple of Jesus Christ that lays down his life and willing to give up everything and boldly preaching the Gospel where other people shrink back and are afraid to preach the Gospel. He's this man all about commitment and the stripes on his back and being beaten and stoned here. Those are all the kind of things we like to talk about the Apostle.

What makes him more beautiful, more attractive in all of his self-sacrifice and his willing to lay down everything for the Lord Jesus is that he is a man of gratefulness. Amen? He's a man that knows how to be thankful and appreciate the people around him. And you guys, this is where you and me are hurting so often.

Amen? We take one another for granted. We don't recognize the grace of God the way we should in one another's lives. Amen? We are presumptuous so often about, oh yeah, they were there yesterday.

They spoke those words last week. Maybe it's a pastor in your life. Maybe it's a deacon.

Maybe it's some other church leader. Some guy that's leading up a campus ministry. You know, they're there.

Their faithfulness actually tempts you to be presumptuous about them and take them for granted. We've got to be careful about that, don't we? Amen? This is what I love about Paul. He recognizes the grace of God in everything.

He recognizes the treasure that is in the people of God around him. And he's careful not to take it for granted. Amen? You know, in many of these epistles, Paul shared very penetrating, direct words of God that had teeth in them and had a little bit of bite in them.

But he started it with the word of gratefulness and thankfulness. That's actually what helped open the door of their hearts so they could receive the instruction that He would later on give them. Amen? Years ago, I was in this one particular church that, to be quite honest, I didn't want to particularly stay at.

I ended up staying there nine, almost ten years. I don't know if anybody else has been in a situation like that. But, you know, God just let me know, hey, it wasn't up to me if I stayed there or went and found someplace that was more comfortable with me.

And He just would not let me have peace about going some other place. And I praise God for it because He's worked out a lot of stuff in my heart and my life with other people there. You know, and one of the conflicts that I always had was with this one pastor was that, you know, I didn't really appreciate how he was kind of handling things, and I always had a different spin on it and a different perspective.

So the only time that I had interaction with him and communication with him was usually when I had a problem with him, okay? Or I saw something I didn't like that he was doing. Anybody else ever had this problem in this room? So, I mean, I knew what was going on in this guy's life. You know, in his mind.

Every time he saw David come walking down the aisle towards him, he knew conflict was coming, alright? He knew that I was going to share something that I was concerned about. That, you know, I felt the Spirit of God was telling me. I'm not undermining that.

I really believe God was communicating, laying many things on my heart to communicate with him. But God started to eventually convict me that the only time I ever, ever, ever talked to my pastor was when I had a problem. And the only thing that he ever heard out of my mouth was, you know, and this and that and this and that.

And I could see it on his face after a while, after a few years of wearing him down. I could see it on his face that when he saw me coming, I saw his countenance fall. You know, that is not a good thing, is it? And I'm going, what's going on with this? And the Lord really convicted me that I never encouraged him and affirmed him.

I never took the time to get along with him and say, you know what, you're doing an awesome job in this. This is an awesome blessing. You know, this is real growth.

This is a good thing. You know, was it because there wasn't anything going on? No, not really. You know, I just kind of thought I had kind of this prophetic edge that noticed the issues.

You know what I mean? I'm one of those guys that can walk into a room and I'll notice a picture when it's hanging crooked on the wall, right? That's kind of how I, I mean, my eye catches those things. It can be something God uses, but it also can be my greatest Achilles' heel. You know, the thing that gives me most difficulty in having the right attitude sometimes.

So, you guys still with me? So over a couple of years, I started to even out my time with my pastor and give equal time for blessings. I didn't have to make him up. I just had to notice him a little bit.

I just had to slow down to affirm it, okay? I was all worked up about these other things a whole lot more than I ever was worked up about just saying a word of encouragement. And suddenly as I gave him a little bit of equal time, his heart opened totally to me. And to be quite honest, I never thought it would happen.

I actually ended up on one of the advisory council as one of the guys that was going to be an elder in the church. That was not what I was looking for, but that favor was bestowed upon me because I took the time not just to gripe, but also to be grateful. Amen? Does that make sense to you guys? It took me longer than I thought I wanted it to.

I wasn't there nine years, but I left in good standing with that pastor. And he's still my friend to this day. Amen? So often we leave churches and every pastor of those churches we've left would come to dodge and duck if we're sitting at the mall or a Walmart, right? Right? Oh, there he is.

You know, that's not the way it's supposed to be. Amen? Okay. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Philippians 23 and 6. Every remembrance of you.

Taking the time to be mindful of the benefit that somebody else is will naturally produce within your heart a heart of thankfulness. You want to be apostolic in your teaching and doctrine and your approach? You can't do it without being a thankful person. Amen? Oh man, we want New Testament Christianity.

We want to turn the world upside down. We want to go for it. We want to be radical.

Sell out! Do it all for Jesus. Amen? But you don't have time for thankfulness? Forget it. It's not true apostolic Christianity.

Amen? It is not the real deal and it is not the model that Paul laid out for us. I'm practicing on you guys so I can go back and show this at our church or back home. You guys get it first.

Colossians 1-3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ praying always for you. Again, we find Paul when he's talking, he's starting to pray for the saints. He starts with thankfulness.

Amen? As I was often shared before, Jesus, the way He taught us to pray when we go praying for things, He also taught us to do it with thankfulness. Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. We start with worship.

We start with praise. We start with how awesome God is. Understanding who God is.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. Your agenda, your rule, your reign be established in the earth, Lord.

And then we get down to our stuff. Oh, by the way, Lord, give me this day my daily bread. Amen? So often our prayer life is all made up about our daily bread and it doesn't start with worship and thankfulness.

You know what? And if you don't start with worship and thankfulness, your perspective is all messed up. It is all messed up. Because when you take the time to be thankful about the saints of God around you and what God's doing in His kingdom, suddenly that will naturally be a tonic and an encouragement to your faith for the things that you're about to request that concern your life.

Amen? Does that make sense? When you're taking the time to be mindful of the benefits of God and how faithful He's been in the past, that can do nothing but encourage your faith for the things that you're about to pray for. Amen? And when it comes to praying for the church and praying for revival in the church, hey, you know, we wouldn't need revival in the church if there wasn't a problem. Isn't that right? That's pretty elementary, right? But you guys, let's start with understanding the good things that God is doing.

Amen? 2 Timothy 1, 3 and 4 I thank God whom I serve with a pure conscience as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears that I may be filled with joy. He prays night and day because He took the time to remember them, to be mindful of the good things that were in other people. Amen? You know, sometimes we can't pray for people because we're too mad at people.

Everybody ever have that problem in this room? You know, I've told some people this story before, but me and my father had a bad relationship growing up. I was so bitter when I was approximately your guys' age. I had all kinds of walls up between me and him.

And later on, I came to the place where God really convicted me where I wanted to make these things right and I wanted to put on a heart of forgiveness, but I didn't know He had a clue how to do that. And the Lord did the funniest thing. He started to encourage and prompt me to be mindful of little, seemingly insignificant things about my father.

These little memories started to come back to me about my dad. Little silly things that were just kind of novel, but somehow affectionate or good or a benefit. You know, my mind immediately raced towards, hey, that doesn't matter because He did this and such.

That's of no consequence because He wasn't there in this situation or that situation. And the Lord started to convict me that if I would just take the time and push all the junk out of my mind for a while that I was so mad and bitter about and just put on a heart of thankfulness for the little stuff that He was trying to remind me of about my father, that the grace of God would be given to me to forgive and to be thankful. You know how you know when you've been out of shape at somebody and you're not really thankful for them? It's when the first thought of that individual is something negative, is something discouraging, is something that you're bitter and angry about.

Praise God when I started to obey the Lord and started to say, yes, God, that's good. That was good about Him. That was good when He did that and when thus and this and that.

When I started to do that, my perspective started to change and God filled my heart with grace and helped me do something I couldn't do in my own strength. And that was love and forgive my father. Amen? And now when I think about it, the first thought isn't negative at all.

It's just some good, positive, encouraging thoughts. See, and this was a real dilemma for me because by the time I wanted to forgive my father, he had Alzheimer's and didn't even know who I was. And so it was really a little challenging to be reconciled with somebody who can't cooperate with the process.

But you know what, you guys? We have to forgive people all the time that don't want to cooperate with the process. Amen? And a lot of times it starts with just agreeing with God about something that seems so small that's good about that individual. Amen? Is this making sense to you guys? I thank my God whom I serve with a pure conscience as my forefathers did.

And without ceasing, I remember you in my prayers. Night and day. Praying night and day because He was thankful for them.

Amen? The last verse. 1 Thessalonians 3, 9-13 For what thanks can we render to God for you for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God night and day, praying exceedingly that we may see your face see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith. Being thankful once again.

Are these just nice words that Paul kind of starts a letter with? Or do you think perhaps this is part of his apostolic perspective that helped give him authority and influence in other people's lives? Amen? You want to have an impact on somebody's life? You want to be able to teach somebody something? You want to hold sway with them? But you can't be thankful for them? It's not going to work, you guys. First and foremost, what I want us to notice is we've got to be a people that are thankful. We've got to repent of taking people for granted.

We've got to repent for being ungrateful. You know, have you ever noticed how you can't be thankful and complain at the same time? You ever notice that? Boy, and you know what? When you're really grumbling and complaining, not only can you not be thankful for your brothers and sisters, you can't praise God. Unless you're interested in just doing some religious thing, filing into a room and, you know, it's time to sing songs.

I don't think we're interested in that, are we? We want worship. We want gratefulness that we experience as a corporate group here to be the real, accurate expression of our life. Jesus, make us to be a grateful people.

Not to take people for granted. Amen? That's all I've got for you tonight. I think it's a good place to start.

How about you? Anyone else convicted besides me? I mean, how can you read these Scriptures without sin? Ouch! I need help there, Lord. Help me. Listen, Sean, this is what I was kind of thinking.

If you could kind of help us as a group make a good decision to put on gratefulness and thanksgiving right now. Amen? If God's convicted you though this evening, you go, man, you've got a rotten attitude. You know, you're just a scary person.

You're a pastor or you're a home church leader or you're a campus minister. Why would they even want to take time to speak to talk with you? All you do is complain. Let's change that.

Amen? If that's the reality of our life, let's sow a little bit of encouragement into one another and see if it doesn't have an impact on your life and have an influence over other people. Can we do that? But if you want to make a fresh commitment to be a grateful person, starting this weekend, I just encourage you to stand right now and let's just pray the Lord. It's kind of one of those requests that you look at if you stay seated.

I didn't plan it that way. I don't know if I did. But let's just pray with me, okay? And then Sean will lead us in a song of worship and we'll make a decision now.

Amen? Through our song. Lord Jesus, we just ask You to help us. God, forgive us.

Forgive me, Father, for an ungrateful attitude, for taking the saints of God for granted, for God for looking and only seeing that which means help, God, rather than is a blessing. God, I pray You help us, Jesus. God, I pray You help us get a little more equal time to gratefulness and thanksgiving as we do for fault-finding and correcting more, Jesus.

Help us to be balanced and help us to be, God, apostolic. God, to have the priorities of the Apostle Paul. To encourage, to be thankful for those people who we would dare try to instruct and encourage in the faith.

Thank You, Jesus. Help us right now in honesty and truth to be of people who worship You and lay all the junk aside and just bless us with an encouraged heart and the lightness of spirit in Jesus' name. Amen.

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