

Thankfulness - Part 2

by Derek Prince

Thankfulness is a powerful way to release the power of God in our lives and overcome the dangers of murmuring and unthankfulness.

Duration: 28:40

Scripture: Luke 17:12

Topics: "Thankfulness", "Gratitude"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of complaining and murmuring. They emphasize that when we complain or murmur about ourselves, we expose ourselves to negative influences. The speaker encourages the audience to reverse their negative words and thoughts. They also highlight the importance of being thankful and glorifying God, as unthankfulness is seen as a downward path to ruin. The sermon concludes with a reminder to hold on to blessings by immediately thanking God for them.

Transcript

Or you can walk, let's see you walk. I remember in Charisma Chapel about two years ago, praying for an Episcopalian lady who had been five months bedridden. They carried her to the meeting, placed her in a chair in the front.

When I prayed for her, I said, you healed, do you believe that? She said, yes. Well, I said, if you believe it, do something about it. Get up and walk.

Well, she hadn't walked for five months. The first few steps she took were tottering. But within a minute, she was running around the auditorium.

But had I just left her sitting there, she would have been healed and never known it. She'd have gone back to her sickness. So, remember that.

Faith without works is dead. Similarly, when you pray for a deaf person, at least that's my experience, you more or less have to get them to take out the hearing aid and practice hearing without it. It's a strange thing with deaf people.

I think they get to enjoy their hearing aid. They almost don't want to part with it. But there are times when there's no obvious act that will express your faith.

Like Jonah. What could he do? He couldn't get up and walk. Couldn't kneel down and pray.

There was one thing he could do. What was that? Give thanks. And that was all that was needed.

If you really believe God has answered your prayer, touched you, met your need, and you want to release your faith, the simplest and easiest and most immediate way to do it is to start thanking. And you'll find that faith will become a reality as you thank God. Finally, in this little list of results of being thankful, I want to point out that thankfulness sets the seal on blessings already received.

Many times people get blessed in a meeting, they get touched, they say, oh, I can see, can leave off my glasses. And then they walk out and they can't see any longer. So they put their glasses on.

In other words, it's one thing to get blessed, it's another thing to hold on to your blessing. Charles Simpson says outside every meeting there's a blessing thief waiting at the door to steal your blessing from you. Now there are various different things you can do to hold on to your blessing, not let it be stolen.

But one of the best is to start thanking God for it immediately. Don't wait. I want to illustrate this from the story of the ten lepers.

In Luke chapter 17, I'm going to read this story, it's just a few verses. Luke 17, beginning at verse 12. And as he, that is Jesus, entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers which stood afar off.

They lifted up their voices and said, Jesus must I have mercy on us. And when he saw them he said unto them, go, show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass that as they went, they were cleansed of their leprosy.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back and with a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his face at his feet giving him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, whether not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? There are not found that return to give glory to God save this stranger.

And he said unto him, arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. The Greek says, thy faith hath saved thee. And that's an important distinction.

Ten lepers were cleansed, ten were healed, but only one was saved. Which one? The one that came back to give thanks. It is possible to be physically healed and yet not have your soul saved.

The thing that changed the experience of that one leper was that he came back to give thanks and he got what I call the package deal. The rest of them simply got the physical deliverance but didn't receive the eternal spiritual life which is of course the greatest of all blessings. Now I want to talk for a little while about the opposite.

Because I think to understand something one way is to look at the opposite. Very often if you're learning a vocabulary in a new language one of the things they'll do is teach words to you in opposites. Hot and cold.

What does God say about unthankfulness? What is the opposite to unthankfulness? I find in Scripture two words because it depends which translation you're following. But in the King James and possibly in the modern translations too I think the two opposite words are murmuring and complaining. So let's look what the Bible says about them.

Philippians chapter 2 and verse 14. Do all things without murmurings disputings that ye may be blameless and harmless. In other words to be blameless we have to do all things without murmurings and disputing.

Children don't answer your parents back. That's disputing. You're told to take out the garbage.

Yes mother. That's all you have to say. Do all things without murmurings and disputing.

Okay. Now let's look what God says about murmurers. Jude the 16th verse.

The previous verse has spoken about these people and called them ungodly sinners. As a matter of fact the word ungodly occurs four times in the 16th verse. Speaking about these ungodly persons.

Jude goes on to say. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts. You see what I'm saying? Murmuring is a form of ungodliness.

The word complainer there, I happen to look at this in the Greek New Testament. And I noticed a very strange word. I don't want to give it to you in Greek.

But I checked and went back to the dictionaries. And it's a word that means a person who complains about his lot in life. And I thought what an insight.

Why did you make me so thin, so fat, so tall? Why did you give me this job? Why is my hair short, long, curly, straight? In other words, you're complaining about your lot in life. It's ungodly to do that. And it creates problems for you.

Let's turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 10. Verses 6 through 10. 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verses 6 through 10.

Paul is talking about the history of the Israelites in the wilderness, on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land. He says they made a lot of mistakes, which are recorded in Scripture as a warning to us not to make the same mistakes. And he lists five specific mistakes, all of which cost the Israelites very dear.

Now these things were our examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they lusted. Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them. Verse 8, neither let us commit fornication.

Verse 9, neither let us tempt the Lord. Verse 10, neither murmur ye as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer. What are the five things we're warned against doing? Lusting after evil things, idolatry, fornication, tempting the Lord, and murmuring.

See where that puts murmuring? The same category with idolatry and fornication. And it says those who murmured were judged of God. You want to look at the judgment for a moment, turn to the book of Numbers.

Numbers, the 14th chapter. This is the record of the spies when they came back from having searched the promised land. You remember, ten brought up an evil report and only two brought a good report.

And it says in Numbers 14, verses 36 and 37, And the men which Moses sent to search the land, who returned and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, even these men that did bring up that evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord. That's God's estimate of people who create a murmuring spirit in others. The Scripture contains what we call exemplary judgments.

Judgments that are an example of God's attitude to a certain thing. For instance, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was an example of God's attitude to homosexuality. That settles His attitude once and for all.

It doesn't mean that all homosexuals are going to be destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven, but it does mean that's what God thinks of homosexuality. In the New Testament, Ananias and Sapphira tried to cheat on their offerings and they dropped dead. Now lots of other people have done that since, they don't all drop dead.

But that's God's verdict on that conduct once and for all. And here we have an exemplary judgment on men who cause God's people to murmur. Every one of them died instantly by a plague.

That's God's verdict on that conduct. He doesn't repeat that judgment every time, but His verdict hasn't changed. Then we look in Numbers 21.

Again, this is Israel in the wilderness. Beginning in verse 4. They, the people, journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea to compass the land of Edom. And the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the long, arduous journey.

What did they do? What do people do when they're discouraged? One of the first things they do is murmur and become critical. And the people spoke against God and against Moses. Poor Moses.

Wherefore have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in this wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water. Our soul loatheth this light bread. That was the manner.

Now this is another exemplary judgment of God. Doesn't always happen, but it indicates God's attitude once and for all. The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people.

The New International Version says that venomous serpents. Whether they were venomous or fiery, they were very unpleasant. The Lord sent the fiery serpents.

Would you notice that? And they bit the people. And many people of Israel died. What's that? The result of murmuring.

Therefore the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee. Pray unto the Lord that he take away the serpents from us. Moses prayed to the Lord.

The Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, just like the one that's bitten the people. Set it up on a pole. It shall come to pass that everyone that is bitten, when he looks at the fiery serpent on the pole, shall live.

That means he'll be forgiven, he'll be healed. Moses made a serpent of brass, put it upon a pole. It came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, when he looked at it, he lived.

The remedy for murmuring is looking at the serpent on the pole. Now in John chapter 3, Jesus said, As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up on the cross. And I want to point out to you, that is the real remedy for murmuring.

It's looking at the cross. The moment you really look at the cross, you've got nothing left to murmur about. If you really believe that the eternal sinless Son of God, came down from heaven's glory, took the form of a man, willingly went to the cross, and bore the whole weight of our sin and our infirmities and our sicknesses and our curse, and He did not have to do it, but He did it out of the love of the Father and the Son for lost humanity.

Once you look at that, you've got nothing left to complain about in this life. So if you're tempted to murmur, look at Jesus on the cross. I want to give you one other Scripture in Romans.

Let me point out without turning there, that in 2 Timothy chapter 3, there are 18 moral defects listed that will characterize humanity at the close of this age. And three of them are disobedient to parents, unthankful and unholy. All I want to point out to you is that unthankfulness is next to unholiness.

And right beside disobedient to parents. And basically being disobedient to parents is usually an expression of unthankfulness. And it's dangerous.

Now I'll turn to Romans 1, beginning in verse 20. Speaking about the depraved, sinful, hopeless condition of humanity. Paul says they are without excuse because the witness of God and His creative power and glory is everywhere in the earth.

For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead. So that they are without excuse. Remember, every sinner that walks the face of this earth is without excuse.

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful. Now you look at the end of that chapter, it contains perhaps the most appalling list of human sinfulness found anywhere in the Bible. If you go on to verse 20, I just read it because the impact of it is powerful.

Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. What a list! You say, how did humanity ever get into that horrible condition? And I want to show you the first two downward steps that lead to that pit. They're there in verse 21.

When they knew God, they glorified Him not, step number one. Step number two, neither were thankful. And the moment that you or I cease to glorify God and to be thankful, we have taken the first two downward steps, which if we do not change our course, will ultimately plunge us in that same abyss.

Bear that in mind, the moment you cease to be thankful, you're starting on a slippery downward path to ruin. Now, I have two more things to say. I've already read the story where Israel murmured and God sent fiery serpents that bit them.

Earlier, I pointed out that giving thanks releases the power of God. I want to point out to you now that murmuring releases the power of Satan. They are opposite.

Just as surely as giving thanks will bring God's power to work in your life, so the opposite, murmuring and complaining, exposes you to the fiery serpents, the demonic forces. This is very, very certain. And now I want to give you a personal testimony, a very remarkable one in my judgment.

I've never had another case like it. I've asked the permission of the lady concerned to give this testimony, because it's as much hers as mine. The lady is my wife.

But, when it happened, it kind of opened a new window into the spiritual world for me. And I saw a whole chain of consequences and principles that I'd kind of been groping for but never been able to lay hold of. Before Ruth and I were married, we used sometimes, before we got so busy getting married we couldn't do anything else, we used to go down to the beach, which we both enjoy, and we'd swim and sunbathe.

And one day while we were down there sunbathing, Ruth said to me, I wish you'd pray for my leg. And the Lord had already done a number of miracles of healing in her body, including straightening her spine, which had been crooked for almost her whole life. I said, what's wrong with your legs? Well, she said, I don't know, but I get these agonizing pains in my calf.

And if I don't keep moving or exercise them, if I just sit too long, I get these pains. Apparently, there was no medical diagnosis for the pain. Now, I didn't reason, I didn't plan, I didn't think.

But instead of immediately praying for her legs, I did something that I cannot remember I ever did before. I began to speak to her legs. And I said, legs, I want to thank you.

You've done a good job. You've supported Ruth. You've carried her around.

You've brought her to me. I really appreciate you. I just want you to know that.

Well, that sounds crazy, doesn't it? And then I prayed for her legs. And there was some improvement. But after we were married, when we were in Jerusalem, we were lying side by side in the bed.

She said, my legs still hurt. I still have that pain. Well, I said, I think there must have been a moment in your life when you exposed yourself to that thing.

And if you're quiet, the Lord will show you when it was. And I think it's important for your full healing and deliverance. So we lay there just a few moments.

And she said to me, I know exactly when it happened. She said, when I was about 15 years old in high school, I was in the restroom with another girl who had such beautiful legs. And she said, I looked down at my own legs and I said, legs, I hate you.

And I said, in effect, you pronounced a curse on your own legs. You handed them over to the power of the enemy. And her legs had been kind of hard.

I put my hands on them, massaged them, prayed for them. But there was something in them that just didn't give. And she said, it's up to Ruth, but she'll let you, you can come and feel them today, they're soft.

I believe in real, you know, flesh and blood evidence. Can you see what the essence of the problem was? Murmuring, unthankfulness. Complaining.

You know what I came to realize? That must cause problems in the lives of hundreds of God's people. The failure to thank God. You become a murmurer, a complainer.

You complain about your hair. It's too dark, too light, too short, too long, too curly, too straight. God, why did you give me hair like that? Well, you're really putting a curse on your own hair.

Or some other part of your body. I'm too tall, too short, too dumpy, too thin, too wide. My nose is too short, too long.

I remember when I was growing up about 18. I wasn't spiritual, but I had a lot of spirits. For several years, I was agonized by the fact that I was convinced that my nose was crooked.

It sounds extraordinary. And no one could convince me that it wasn't crooked. I don't know whether I grew out of it or what happened.

I think it's probably salvation is really what adjusted it. But I mean, I realize the agony that a person can go through because they're not satisfied with some part of their body. Or their whole body.

Or something else. I can't talk well, or I can't sing, or I can't do this, or I can't do that. The moment you become a complainer and a murmurer about yourself, really, you are exposing that part of you to the fiery serpent.

And believe me, they'll move in. And you will have a problem. I believe the only valid and final way out of that problem is to reverse what you've said.

Cancel it. I want to say one more thing, and then I'm going to give you an opportunity for a practical application. As we enter the new year, I want to give you one of my favorite Scriptures.

A very familiar one, but it's a good one. Proverbs chapter 3, verses 5 and 6. Proverbs 3, verses 5 and 6. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy path.

You want divine direction in the year that lies ahead, there is a guaranteed recipe. Not only is it in the Bible, but I can testify to you that for about 14 years, I've systematically obeyed that. I've acknowledged God at every turn in my life, and known that when I acknowledge Him, He will direct my way.

Many times we make decisions which we don't even have time to think about. Or we may not consider them important, and yet they determine the destiny of our life. That happened to me when I immigrated to the United States.

I never intended to immigrate, I got here by accident, and then I became an immigrant. And yet that was one of the most important and decisive turns in my whole life. How can you be sure, even if you don't have time to pray, or you don't recognize the importance of the decision, that God is guiding you? By acknowledging Him in all your way, and then He will direct your path.

Now how do you acknowledge Him? I think the simplest and the best way to acknowledge God is by thanking Him. And I'll show you how I do it. For instance, I intend to do that sometime before this year ends.

Lord, I want to thank you that you've brought me through this year. I want to thank you for all the blessings. I want to thank you for your mercy, for your love, for your faithfulness, for your power, for your wisdom.

They've all been demonstrated in my experience this year, over and over again. God, I want you to know I'm sincerely thankful for you. I want to thank you for the special blessings.

I want to thank you for the wife you've given. I want to thank you for the home you've enabled us to establish. I want to thank you for the love of hundreds of people this year that they've showered on us.

I'm going to take time to acknowledge God before I step into the new year. And I know God is going to step with me. But the way to acknowledge God is to thank Him.

For further teaching on this theme, we recommend the cassette, Triumphant Praise, number 1022. For further information and a complete list of cassettes and books, contact Derrick Prince Ministries, Box 300, Department T, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 33302, telephone 305-763-5202.

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