

On Eagles' Wings Pt 194

by Don Courville

This sermon emphasizes the critical role of thanksgiving in the Christian life as a means to glorify God and align ourselves with His will.

Duration: 30:15

Scripture: Psalm 119:11, John 6:11, Romans 8:28, Colossians 2:6-7, Colossians 4:2

Topics: "Radio Show"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of using our time wisely and not wasting it on trivial pursuits. He highlights how material possessions and pleasures often distract us from spending time with God and serving others. The speaker also warns against playing games with God and not fully surrendering our lives to Him. He encourages listeners to be thankful to God for His love, greatness, and mercy, and to seek a deeper knowledge and understanding of Him.

Transcript

I'm glad you joined today on Eagle's Wings. Listen to this passage in Philippians chapter 4, verses 6 and 7. Be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known unto God and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Note the aspect of giving thanks in your prayers. There's another passage, Colossians chapter 2, verses 6 and 7. As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith as you have been taught abounding therein with thanksgiving. Also in chapter 4 and verse 2, continue in prayer and watching the same with thanksgiving.

Heavenly Father, we pray that today you'd open up our eyes to see how important it is to give thanks to you in relation to giving glory to you. In Jesus' name, amen. Now we've been covering in the last few weeks this aspect of giving glory to God, and I thought it's good timing that today we'd come up to the area of giving thanks in relation to the glory of God.

We've been studying about these things because they're important. Our life is to glorify God. And probably the top of the list in all of the categories in studying on the glory of God would be the area of praise and thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving was lost, I believe, by the fall of man. As sinners we were by nature without gratitude, lost, and as believers then we must repent of this sin of being ungrateful and unthankful today because we do not give glory to God. Just like the ten lepers in Luke 17.

You know, Jesus entered this village. There were ten lepers and they stood afar off and they lifted up their voice. Here they are crying over to Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

And the scripture says in Luke 17, 14, 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. 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, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? They 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.

Can you imagine these men? Their condition was hopeless. Here they were, lepers, and they were outcasts from their wives, their children. They couldn't work anymore.

They had to depend on others to bring them food. They were treated by society as the lowest and the scum of the world. And they had a hopeless affliction.

There was no hope for them. And here comes Jesus. And the only hope they ever could have would be in Jesus.

And they cried out that he would have mercy on them, and he did. And out of those ten, only one was thankful. And he came back to Jesus.

He came back with a grateful, thankful heart, worshiping the Lord Jesus Christ. And Jesus noticed that he said that the only one has returned to give glory to God. You know, out of all of our professed Christianity today, it's those that are thankful for the precious blood of Christ.

Those that understand the atonement and how precious that atonement was. Here was God shedding his own blood for our sins on the cross when you recognize that without that sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who is God in the flesh, as Scripture says, God manifests in the flesh, 1 Timothy 3.16. Here was God loving you and me enough to die on the cross for our sins when the reality of that hits you and your own despicable condition and your own sinfulness when you see yourself in light of this wonderful gift of God where he shed his blood for us. It will change your life.

It will make you a thankful person. And you will repent of your sins and receive him as your God and your Savior. This is reality in the area of Christianity.

And I want you to note that they were cleansed as they were in the process of obeying God. Their faith was expressed in obedience. But only one of these men Jesus focused on as having reality, really experienced the reality of Jesus.

He was the one who had the thankful heart. Are you thankful? The psalmist said in Psalms 50, 14 and 50, offer unto God thanksgiving and pay thy vows unto the Most High and call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me. You don't call upon him just because you want to be delivered.

You call upon him because you recognize that he is the only one that can deliver you. And these verses remind us that God must be on our mind and his thanksgiving must be on our lips, not only when we're in trouble but all the time. It's the intimate relationship between thanksgiving, obedience, prayer, and the promise of deliverance and the glory of God.

These things are all tied together. Offer unto God thanksgiving. Only the grateful heart will do this.

These verses actually should describe to us the normal Christian life of offering thanks to God. It's important that we recognize the place of thanksgiving in relation to the glory of God. And that's what we plan on doing today in this study on Eagle's Wings.

Let me encourage you. You know, we all go through tough times. We all have things that we have to do that we don't like to do.

One of the things I like to do least is plumbing. And it seems like God always puts me in a place where there's some plumbing that needs to be done. We were renting this old house out in the country and got up the other evening.

The kitchen sink plugged up and I said, oh no. First thing I did. Okay, Lord, I give you thanks.

I'll just give you thanks for this. And I was continually tested through that and worked on it a couple hours before we got it unplugged. Probably 20 years of grease in there and hair and all kinds of junk in there.

But like God was showing me, I got to be thankful in this. And it really does stretch me. God knows what we need and he'll let us be stretched so that we will develop the things that we need in our life.

And one of the most important is the area of being thankful. Psalm 69, 30, and 31 is a reminder that being thankful is pleasing to God. He's pleased.

David said, I will praise the name of God with a song and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or a bullock that hath horns and hoofs. Many of us, many of us would be, I believe, happy for God to come along and say, I want you to do this and then I'll be satisfied.

Just like he did with Israel, he laid out what he wanted for them to do, the sacrifices that he wanted, just how they wanted, they had to do it and for the tabernacle and everything. And they did it. But with us, it's not so easy.

We have to pray. We have to be sensitive and seek the mind of the Holy Spirit and what he wants for us. One thing we know as far as sacrifices, we're to present our body as a living sacrifice.

We're to give the fruit of the lips that will give praise and thanksgiving to him as to be a sacrifice to him. But God may come along to you today and ask for a special sacrifice to you that will be a thanksgiving offering to him. And it's not always so easy.

And so we need to understand the importance of thanksgiving and how pleasing it is to God that in everything we give thanks, as it says in 1 Thessalonians 5.18, in everything we give thanks for this is the will of God concerning you. Now, the example of David, if we get back into some scripture, Daniel 6.10, you remember when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, that he couldn't pray anymore? What did he do? He went back into his house, he opened up his windows and he prayed toward Jerusalem. It says he kneeled down upon his knees three times a day and he prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did

aforetime.

There he gave thanks. He gave thanks to the Lord, maybe thanking him for this test and this problem. Now Daniel was in a tight spot because his enemies had just made it illegal to pray.

And in spite of this, he prayed and gave thanks to God and he let God work it out. Now this verse is the description, really, of Daniel's character and his lifestyle. He prayed at least three times a day, the scripture says.

What kind of a prayer life do we have? Many times this is the weakest link in our life and it's evident by how the stress and the things of daily life will take us and it'll take its toll. How easily we'll become distracted or get discouraged or be found grumbling. And it's interesting to note here that the Holy Spirit caused the words and gave thanks to be included in this description.

There's a great lesson here and that's Daniel's prayer life was not simply a series of requests, but he spent time in thanksgiving. A big part of your prayer life should be giving thanks to God, praising him, exalting him. This pleases him and this is probably one of the reasons Daniel was a great man of God because he had a thankful heart.

Then think about the Apostle Paul. In 2 Corinthians 4.15, we talked about this a while back so I just won't get into it a lot more. How when the Corinthians gave a gift to Jerusalem, he made reference in 2 Corinthians 4.15 how this would bring thanksgiving to the glory of God that this church in Corinth had given to the church in Jerusalem.

Now moving on into the importance of thanksgiving, you need to remember, we need to remember that one of the five Levitical sacrifices was designated to be a thanksgiving sacrifice. Leviticus 7.12-15, or 12 and 15 specifically, those two verses, it said if he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil and the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered. By making thanksgiving an important part of the peace offering, God held this area before them constantly before Israel that they were to be a thankful people.

Thanksgiving was not left up to the Old Testament saints as an option. It was made a part of their sacrifices. God made this an important part of their spiritual life.

Now, he made it also to be an important part of our spiritual life also. Now you remember when David, another illustration in the Old Testament, when he appointed certain Levites to thank the Lord, and he wrote in Psalms that there would be an expression of thanksgiving to God, 1 Corinthians 16, 4 and 7, I'm just looking over this, and it says, and he, that's David, appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel. Then on that day David delivered first the Psalms to thank the Lord into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.

Here is a Psalm, 1 Chronicles 16, you can go back and look at that, 4 and 7, and look around in the context in there. But all of this indicates that David's understanding of the place of thanksgiving among the people of God was important. He built it into the formal worship of the day, and he wrote the Psalms, which could be used to thank the Lord.

Is thanksgiving an important part of your personal worship? Is it an important part of your corporate worship as a body of Christ? Now, if David found it necessary to make it formal, how about us, in our

lives? He made a formal preparation in his life and among his people, and we are exhorted to do the same. And so thanksgiving, we take one day a year, basically, as a nation, to thank God for what he's done. And we have been a blessed nation, and with all the problems that we have, and with all the stuff that's going on, it's really hard to be thankful, but we need to remember our roots.

And it may be that this would be the key for bringing revival in our land, to turn our land back to our constitutional foundation, where we recognized as a nation, our nation was started under the recognition that it needed God to be born into existence and to exist. And here we're coming to the point where we're throwing God out, telling him we don't need him anymore, but it was God that gave us this great land. Thanksgiving is important.

Something else that's a good illustration for us, and that's this, that thanksgiving was a spontaneous activity in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. You go over to John 6, 11, and 11:41, and you look there, and it says, And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to his disciples. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid, it says about Lazarus in 11:41.

And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. He exhibited the character of gratefulness and thanksgiving to those. And while the Lord Jesus is our Savior, and he's the Lord of everything in our lives, he's also our example, 1 Peter 2, 21.

He was our example. And this is clearly presented to us that thanksgiving was a part of his life and is to be a major part of our life, and if anyone, any one of us will choose to live in the realm of thanksgiving and being grateful, and I don't think it's a natural thing of the flesh. The flesh, the natural thing is to complain and want more and not be satisfied.

I think thanksgiving and with a grateful heart, the attitude of thanksgiving is a quality of the Holy Spirit that's manifest in the life. Just like we will have quality flaws of anger or greed or lust, the fruit of the Spirit will be manifest in the attitude of thanksgiving, being grateful and thankful. And actually, this is probably a form of humility, the humility of Christ.

He was so thankful that he gave thanks. Now, thanksgiving's an important part of the Word of God in that God made it a commandment. First Thessalonians 5:18, I shared this with you, in everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Just as the sacrifice of the Levitical offering was not an option, so thanksgiving to you and me is not an option. Now, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul wrote this exhortation to be thankful as a commandment, and we need to accept this. And the interpretation of thanksgiving, along with other things like rejoicing and praying, this is the will of God, and if we will accept this, that we are to be thankful, it will open up to us doors of ministry, it will open up to us exciting avenues to be used by God, and all of this is so that what? He can be glorified.

Now, the interpretation of thanksgiving is, let me say it like this, thanksgiving is important. I think maybe I'm beginning to repeat myself here, but let me put it like this. No believer would knowingly choose to live out of the will of God, would he? You don't really choose to live out of the will of God, do you? I don't knowingly choose to live out of the will of God, but listen to this.

This is exactly what we do when we choose not to be thankful in every situation that we are in. Exactly what we do. We choose to live out of the will of God.

You say, that's pretty heavy, and that's pretty hard. That may be true, but I think it is true. This verse has been one of the biggest verses.

It's like a mountain to climb, 1 Thessalonians 5.18, in everything, give thanks. And there have been men, I know one preacher friend of mine that shared this in a sermon at a conference that he was sharing in, and it brought a lot of flack. A lot of people did not believe that you were supposed to give thanks in every situation, but that's what the scripture says.

And you have to tie it again with other scriptures, Romans 8.28, knowing that all things work together for good to them that love God, to those that are called according to His purpose. It really comes down to the area of, do you believe in the sovereignty of God? Do you and I really believe in the sovereignty of God? It will be expressed by our thanksgiving or our lack of thanksgiving. Now, the Bible tells us to praise the Lord and to thank the Lord, enter into His gates with thanksgiving, Psalms 104 and 5, and into His courts with praise.

Praise be thankful unto Him, and bless His name, for the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth to all generations. Now it's obvious that these verses state that thanksgiving is a necessity if we're going to come before God, and the general teaching of the Bible would imply and does imply that for us to come before God, we must come with a thankful heart. And if we're not coming into His presence with a thankful heart, we're really coming in unprepared, and we'd be coming in there with a wrong attitude, and if we're not thankful, we'll probably be coming in in the frame of mind of self, and being selfish.

There's something that we want God to do for us, there's something that we want God to get straightened out, and we are not thankful. So how do you and I come before God? Do we come before Him thankful? And these verses are explaining to us how to be thankful, and for what? We are to be thankful to God for Himself. Do you thank God just for His person? Just for the fact that He is real, and that He's revealed Himself to you, and that you can know Him and love Him and walk in the power of His Spirit, and He talks to you, He communicates through His word to you in your spirit.

Have you thanked Him for His greatness? He is so great, and He's so mighty. A while back we had a series on His goodness. Do you thank Him that He is so good? And if you're not focusing in on Him, you'll forget that He's good.

In these days that we live, with the political situation, the economic situation that is coming, and these things, it'd be easy to get our eyes off of God. We have to remember, we keep our gaze on God continually, and this is what produces the thankful heart. And we just glance at all these other things around us, circumstances, plumbing problems, flat tires, motors that are burned up, and things, all these problems that are a part of life.

We want to get rid of life, really. You know, broken down things, it'd be probably to our advantage if we didn't have so many things to make life easy for us, because they really give us sometimes a lot of headaches. We do have it easy.

The problem is we're not doing more profitable things with our time, that all these material things give us the freedom of time. We need to spend more time with God, and being thankful, and praising Him, and serving others, looking for opportunities. And with this extra time we have, instead we look for more pleasure, more things that we can do to waste our time in getting into the area of ecclesiastes.

We become vain, vanity of vanities. There's a lot of the stuff that we do, playing little silly games. I've shared this with you before, that some men die in battle, and some men die in flames, but most men die inch by inch as they play silly little games.

Are you playing games with God? Well, He's not playing games with you. Matter of fact, if you have not yet received Jesus Christ as your Savior, and you understand that He died on the cross for your sins, He gave Himself as a sacrifice for your sins, and you understand that He did that for you, and you have not yet repented of your sins, and given Him your life, and you're playing games, you're gambling, that God's going to give you one more day to live. My friend, you are a gambler.

Now, what happens if you lose? You lose all hope of ever going to be with Jesus. You lose all your chances, or gone, of ever being saved for all eternity. You will live in a literal burning hell that the Bible describes.

This is not my idea, other preachers' idea. This is what Scripture says, and this is why the unbelievers that are around in this world want to, they don't want to hear the doctrine of hell. But hell is just as much a part of the Bible as heaven.

Matter of fact, there's more mentioned, I've been told, about hell than there is heaven. The reality of life is that if you die without Jesus Christ, you will go to be eternally separated from God, and hell is a place of ungrateful, unthankful people. Eternal grumbling, eternal screaming, eternal burning, eternal misery.

You'll want to die, but that will be death. The wages of sin is death. But there's another option, and that's this, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord, and it's up to you to receive Jesus.

And if you think that you can outplay God in the game of life, you're going to lose. You think, well, I'm not really ready to give up my lifestyle. I'm not really ready to give up my life and the things that I know that I'll have to do if I receive Christ as my Savior.

Then you're saying to God that you do not want Him to be your God, and you're saying that you are not thankful for what He's done for you. You're saying that you are not grateful for what He's done for you, and you are gambling with your soul. You are a fool to be doing so.

Hell will be a place of unthankful people. So we're to be thankful to God for His love for us, for His greatness, His goodness, and we meditate on these things, and we must seek to understand God's person. Paul said after he met Jesus Christ, he said in Philippians, that I might know Him, I might know Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.

Oh, God, help us to know You. Oh, we have all kinds of programs for knowledge. We send our kids to school, and they just pump knowledge into them all the time, but knowledge does not build character.

Knowledge puffs up, the Scripture says. And without the character of Jesus Christ in our lives and our children, we will manifest the character of greediness and selfishness, and that's what's basically being programmed into our children nowadays is all of this stuff. We are to be thankful to God for His mercy, and it's everlasting.

His mercy is everlasting. He extends His mercy to you every day. And if you are without Christ, you are slamming the door on God's face every day.

You go back to bed and go to sleep without Jesus Christ as your Savior, without receiving Him as your Savior. You're an ungrateful person for what He's done for you on the cross. So we're to be thankful for His mercy.

Without mercy, the mercy of God, let me tell you, we'll all be in hell. That's where we all deserve to go. Without His mercy, we'd just all be in hell.

But because of His mercy, we have the option of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. We're to be thankful for His truth. Oh, what a wonderful privilege it is to have the Word of God, to be able to hold it in your hands, to be able to memorize it and read it.

Are you thankful for your Bible? How many of you spent one hour this week reading your Bible? How many of you spent five minutes reading your Bible? The amount of time that you spend meditating and studying God's Word, memorizing it, hiding it in your heart, like David said, Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. He said, Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? You're having trouble with sin. He said, Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.

How much time did you spend in the Word of God this week, reading it? If you didn't spend much time, then you're not thankful to God for His Word. Thousands have literally given their lives that we might have these scriptures, the Word of God, that they might keep the Bible and have the Word of God. But many have sacrificed their lives in the past years, and even today, in getting it across boundaries and into places like China.

And until the doors have just opened up here recently in Russia, many gave their lives for the Word of God. Many are probably still in the prisons because of the Word of God. And yet we're unthankful.

We won't read the Word of God. We're unthankful to God. But oh, God, help us bring about a spirit of repentance, that there might be a spirit of revival, that we will be thankful for Your Word.

And the Word of God is truth. It gives you the truth about life. It gives you the truth about yourself.

It endures from generation. It won't change. It's here.

And God has revealed Himself to us in the scriptures. And there's such an attack today, a subtle, dangerous attack by Satan today to destroy the scriptures. There's such a perversion in many of the so-called translations from the Word of God, a deviation from the original scriptures that he gave us.

We need to be careful. We need to study it. We need to guard it.

We need to protect it. It's a precious thing. God gifted us in our land with the Word of God.

And what are we doing? Oh, whatever you're doing to get the Word out. I believe in missionaries. I believe in praying for missionaries.

I believe in giving to missionaries and supporting them, encouraging them. Because they're going out to get the Word of God out in areas where people need the Word of God. And what do we do many times? We get to focus in on ourselves, putting our money into bigger buildings and bigger parking lots, more comforts for ourselves.

And those things are all okay in the right priority. If the Word of God is not the priority, though, in the getting out of the Word through your personal life and through your church and giving out scriptures and talking about it and through missionaries, we may get into the framework of not being grateful to God. Well, I need to move on here, a couple more comments.

Are we thankful for His Word and then realize that God has revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures? He's revealed Himself to us, and we're to be thankful that He's revealed Himself to us. We must take time each day to express our thanksgiving to God. It's not just one day a year that we're to have thanksgiving, but the truly born-again person is to manifest a gratefulness and a thankfulness to God every day.

He is to be exalted. You know, and how we raise our children will be an evidence, too, if we're raising them to be thankful to God for where they're at, for what kind of situation they're in. Let me close up with this little story to you.

I knew a little boy who had a deformed ear, and the side of his face was deformed. And he'd come up to me, and he'd tell me, Don, someday I'm going to have a surgery to fix my face up, to fix my ear up. And he wore his hair long down around his neck to try to cover up that.

His parents would let him go like that. And I thought about this. I said, Oh, God, here's this little boy that you have given a special mark for him to wear for your glory.

And instead, he's been told that this mark is a mark of shame, something to get rid of. Has God given you a special mark that you've not been thankful for? Use it for his glory. Turn that into an opportunity for God to be glorified.

And if he desires, he may remove that special mark, that special deformed ear that this little boy has. But first, accept your special mark of God's love. Accept him and his design for your life.

Be thankful and grateful. And then if he changes it, like with the lepers, then be even more thankful and grateful. But whatever estate you're in, we're to be thankful and grateful.

Well, I've got to go. Time's about gone. Till next time, may God bless you, my friend.

But remember, Jesus Christ is all you need. Have you come to the point in your life where he's all you want?

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