

Gives Thanks in All Circumstances

by James Jennings

This sermon emphasizes the importance of giving thanks to God in all circumstances, highlighting the need for genuine gratitude, the impact of thankfulness on our faith and relationships, and the command to give thanks as a concrete expression of worship. It explores reasons why people struggle to give thanks, the benefits of thankfulness, and the significance of magnifying God through gratitude, even in challenging situations.

Duration: 57:40

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:16, Psalms 69:30, Psalms 107:22, Jeremiah 30:19, Hebrews 13:15, Philippians 4:6, Isaiah 38:19, Psalms 92:1, Psalms 75:1, Psalms 9:1, Romans 1:21, Luke 17:11, Isaiah 38:18, Psalms 107:1

Topics: "Gratitude in All Circumstances", "The Power of Thankfulness"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of giving thanks to God in all circumstances, highlighting the need for genuine gratitude, the impact of thankfulness on our faith and relationships, and the command to give thanks as a concrete expression of worship. It explores reasons why people struggle to give thanks, the benefits of thankfulness, and the significance of magnifying God through gratitude, even in challenging situations.

Transcript

Well, amen, that's a lot of truth from what Tim shared and those psalms right there. I mean, just thank the Lord for Jesus Christ. We'll turn to 1 Thessalonians 5. Chapter 5. I want to consider thanksgiving.

Giving thanks this morning, this afternoon. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18. You can start in v. 16. He gives these three exhortations here for us as Christians.

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. And then he says, give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus.

Jesus. And then this statement, for you. For you.

This is directed right at you and me. Let's pray. Father, Lord, in some way, we could just stop right now and give thanks for all the things of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father, You have done what our minds, Lord, we want to comprehend more of. Lord, that's the ultimate thing that we are ashamed that we're not as grateful as we should be this morning. The ultimate thing is that we're not as thankful and grateful.

We're not adoring You as You are worthy, Lord. We feel it. We fall short in our worship of You to adequately praise You for what You've done on that cross.

Lord, we fail. We don't want to fail. Lord, we want to render praise that is sufficient, that is worthy.

And so, Lord, we're thankful that even our praises to You, even our thanksgiving to You, it's cleansed by the blood of Christ. And that You receive it and that You allow us to praise You. Lord, we're just so grateful as Your children this morning.

We thank You, Father, for all that You've done. In Jesus' name, Amen. Now, whether you celebrated Christmas or not a few days ago, whether you, as Paul says in Romans 14, whether you gave thanks to God for the day or you gave thanks to God and did not honor the day, one thing that I think we can all agree on when it comes to the 25th of December, especially if you're a parent with little children, and you've got grandparents who are giving those little children a bunch of gifts, one of the constant reflections I have at the end of the 25th, which tends to not be a sense of a satisfied day, but there comes this sense of why did my kids not express more thanks for the effort that their grandparents and others went through to provide for them some sort of gift? And sometimes children, it's not that they don't even give thanks, it's that they do the opposite.

They actually show ingratitude because their expectations were not met with what they were hoping would be put in that box come the morning or whenever on the 25th. I know for some of us, your grandparents, they came up and they gave gifts and they walked through the window as your kids opened something inside because of all the sickness going around. But often gifts are not what we expect.

We don't see the wise intentions behind the adult and why they chose what they chose. The kids are not grateful for all the effort that their uncle put in at work or somewhere to make money to provide something for that child. And in many cases, a child might say thanks simply out of wanting to keep the hope alive of receiving further benefits at a later date.

Right? They're just wanting to keep the window open. If they respond poorly, they know it might actually hinder what they get the next year. So their thanks is far from genuine.

And I was even thinking how often do kids write a thank you card? I mean, the thank you card is a lost gift. It's a lost act. It's a lost practice.

And now they've made it so easy where you just go online and you order bulk thank you cards and there's nothing personal and you just sign your name on that. Well, if the giver put all this effort into a gift, if it wasn't just, let's say, a gift card, it wasn't just a five minute purchase of a gift card, they gave thought to what they gave you, where is that thanks being rendered for the thought behind it? Now, I imagine that we ourselves do this, this very same thing that we might see in our children that we, in a way, do this very often without even recognizing it. There are many subtle ways in which we can not show thankfulness to God that we can have in gratitude in our own very heart.

And so, as much as we might see the log in our child's own eye, we might have a speck in our own eye that we need to deal with. So are you a thankful person? Are you giving thanks to God for 2020? And this has been a pretty good year, hasn't it? It depends on how you look at it. If someone says, well, yeah, it's been a great year, look how many people have been converted and look at all the baptisms.

Absolutely, praise the Lord for that. But even if you remove that and there's no conversions this year, there's still as much that we should be absolutely grateful for and thanking God for. And I was thinking, one of the true tests of how thankful you are, one of the true tests would be is if I took your children and I lined your children up here this morning, and we tossed the mic down the row of children and asked them to express in the home what sort of attitude do your parents manifest? When something bad happens, when this trial happened, were your mommy and daddy full of thanks? Or grumbling and in gratitude? Our children could be some of those who could witness the most against us in the areas by which we fail.

They might get up and they say, well, man, mommy was so stressed out, I went into my room and I shut the door. Because it just was such a sad feeling in the home. Alright, they might say something like that.

So, I'm certain that 2020 has so many areas in our lives that we could all stand up and testify to the goodness of God this morning. So 1 Thessalonians 5.18 Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Think for a moment of the context of this letter and of this church as you flip over to 1 Thessalonians 1.6. Paul says, you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the Word in much affliction.

The word much is severe. They received the Word in the midst of severe affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit. Verse 7, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Ikea.

So these believers had had severe affliction. Paul is telling them to give thanks in every circumstance. Give thanks in every circumstance.

And Paul is calling those to give thanks who he's already overflowed in thanks to. If you look at 1.2, look at what Paul says here, we give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering you before our God and Father, your work of faith and labor of love. I mean, Paul is just overflowing with thankfulness.

2.12, he says in 2.12, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. Verse 13, and we also thank God constantly for this, that when you receive the Word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the Word of men, but as what it really is, the Word of God. And then in 3.9, Paul's just overflowing with thankfulness.

For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you? For all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God. Paul's just thinking, before God, he has so much joy for what the Lord has done for these Thessalonians who've received the Word. They've turned from idols to serve the living God.

Paul is just overflowing with thanksgiving for them. And in many ways, Paul's thanks to them is in some sense a sense of assurance to these brethren. He's trying to encourage the reality of their faith by even pointing out what God has done in their life.

So giving thanks, it's one way you can really encourage people compared to the opposite of not having gratitude, not looking out for what is positive and giving thanks. So Paul was modeling an attitude of thanks before the very people he was going to look at and say, give thanks in all circumstances. This is a reality in Paul's life.

Right? If Paul had been doing a bunch of grumbling and not having gratitude, and he comes along and he tells them give thanks in all circumstances, and he's not living up to that reality in his own life, that would

not be received very well. It would not penetrate the ears if he's not living it out in his own life. And here, this section here, Paul has these three incredible characteristics.

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances.

We're being called to these realities by Paul in all three of these things. If you look at Paul's life, was Paul a man who would rejoice always? Yeah, I mean, you see that, right? Was Paul one who prayed without ceasing? I mean, you constantly see Paul mentioning his prayers and how he was praying for the brethren. Did Paul give thanks in all circumstances? You go to the book of Philippians, you go to all these other places, you're going to find Paul constantly giving thanks.

So Paul lived out these realities. Paul said in Ephesians 5.20, give thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is the man who in Acts 27 was on the ship that was going to crash, and there he was giving thanks to God before everyone on that ship.

Unafraid, trusting the Lord in the midst of those circumstances. So Paul modeled these exhortations in his life. Now, think of this.

You need to give thanks in all circumstances. What does it mean to give thanks? What does that mean? It's one thing to read the words there in v. 18, give thanks. What's going on in the heart? Because giving thanks, just saying the words, thank you, that's far different than actually giving thanks.

There's something going on in the heart. Listen to these verses that help shed some different light on the aspects of what it means to give thanks. Psalm 69.30, I will praise the name of God with a song.

I will magnify Him with thanksgiving. Wait, when you're giving thanks, what are you doing? He says, I'm actually magnifying God. I'm promoting God to others and enlarging Him and causing their view of God to grow as I'm giving thanks.

So giving thanks deals with magnifying God. Psalm 107.22 says this, and let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving. What does it look like? And tell of His deeds and songs of joy.

So when you think of giving thanks, it's not just saying thank you. He's saying here there's actually this telling of the works, the specific things that God has done and bringing those out. And as you're doing that, you're seeking to magnify God and promote Him to others.

Jeremiah 30.19 says, out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving and voices of those who celebrate. So you think of giving thanks. It's like there's a celebration.

That's what a birthday is. You're celebrating that you have another year with this child. You're giving thanks for the fact they're still alive.

You still have another year. So when you think about giving thanks, there's this celebration. You're looking at realities of who God is and what He has done, and you're praising Him for those.

Hebrews 13.15 Through Christ, then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God. What does that look like? That is the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name. So when you're giving thanks, are you acknowledging the name of God? Are you magnifying God? Are you telling of God's deeds? Is there a sense of you're celebrating with what the Lord has done? So true thanks can be expressed through your lips, telling of God's deeds, magnifying Him with thanksgiving, and celebrating what He has done.

Giving thanks is a concrete expression of your faith and trust in God. And when it really comes down to it, you're observing all these realities of what God has done, and your statement of thanks be to God, it's this concrete expression that my faith and trust are in the Lord. I am believing God.

I'm looking to Him right now here in this situation. What's not saying thanks? There's no concrete expression of having faith that God is intricately involved in the circumstance that you are facing. Giving thanks, what is it? It's that which reveals what you most highly value.

Whatever you largely give thanks for is what you value the most. You look back, what are you giving thanks for in your life? It's that which you're most appreciative that you have received. So what you give thanks for shows what you value.

If you're thanking the Lord for different difficulties that sanctify you and make you more like Christ, that shows you put a high value on sanctification. If you're grumbling and not grateful for the iron that sharpens you and makes you more like Christ, it shows there's a lack of thankfulness and a desire to be made more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ. You know what true thanks to God shows? It shows a true surrendered will to Him.

I mean, Lord, I'm thanking You for this situation. That means You're acknowledging this is His will. A missionary said this, I have learned from the Savior that instead of protesting, I should be praising God for the very experience I find so painful and unpleasant.

When we thank God in health, peace, and prosperity, what achievement is this? Any sensible person would do that. But when we offer praise and thanksgiving to the Lord while our world is crumbling around us, that is an act of true worship. This brother was going through a lot of suffering.

And he was at someone's house. And he gave thanks to God while at that person's house. Those people, they recognize something's different.

It's one thing to be thanking the Lord when the circumstances are going very well. It's another thing to be thanking the Lord when the circumstances are very severe and there's much persecution going on and there's trials. That all the more shows a true worship of God and the worth of God when we give thanks in the midst of that situation.

People are watching. Acts 16:25, about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the prisoners were listening to them. Well, what if Paul and Silas wouldn't have been singing hymns and praises to God? What if Paul and Silas would have been in there grumbling, irritated, saying, man, we're in prison again, we're here, this is miserable, it's so cold in here.

No thanks. Instead, these people listening on, like parents, our kids, they're watching us. Were the Paul and Silas there? Are they hearing us praying and singing hymns to God? Or are they hearing something different? They're listening.

The world is listening. The world is watching to see, is God so worthy and worth so much that we're going to give thanks to Him and trust Him and be surrendered to His will even in the circumstances that are very difficult and not easy? He says here, give thanks in all circumstances. All situations.

We've got a number of different circumstances and trials that some of you are going through in the church. Now obviously, does all mean all right here? No, it doesn't. He doesn't mean give thanks when you fall into

sin.

Now, when you get out of that sin and you find a pardon and you've cleared your conscience, give thanks to God that He did not cast you away. Praise the Lord for His forgiveness. Do you give thanks when people are not giving thanks? No.

If I'm in a circumstance where everyone is grumbling and bemoaning the Lord, I'm not giving thanks for them for their sinful attitude, but I'm going to be giving thanks in that circumstance for God by His grace. So all circumstances, Paul says, this is not primarily about being grateful for what is commonly called a blessing. That's easy.

Right? It's easy. But even there, we fail. As easy as it should be, even with the gifts and the blessings and the kindnesses of God that He has given us, we fall infinitely short in showing the worth of God in how we respond, our lack of thankfulness, even in those things which are incredible blessings in our lives.

We take too much for granted at different points. So here these believers are in severe persecution. They've had that in the past.

There's different things in the present. And Paul calls them to give thanks for the situations that might appear to be negative, but they're ultimately not. God's involved in them.

And Paul says right here, give thanks in all circumstances. Why? For this is the will of God. This is the will of God.

This is the grounds, the basis, the justification for Paul's command. And he's not speaking of God decreeing this to happen in that he's going to make sure it happens in every single situation. This is the commanded will of God for us as Christians.

This is a moral requirement placed upon the believer. He's giving us the duty to be thankful in all circumstances. He's putting that duty right out there for us.

And think of how definitive this is. This is one of the few passages that precisely says what God's will is for you and I. Right? You've got multiple passages that speak of the will of God. Matthew 7, Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father.

1 John 2.17 The world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. And then even in this same letter, 1 Thessalonians 4.3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification that you abstain from sexual immorality. And he goes on.

So here we have a clear verse saying this is the will of God. And those who do the will of God are the true Christians who go to Heaven. We're called to do the will of God.

And one of the clear exhortations and expressions for what the will of God is for your life is that you give thanks in all circumstances. That should put it up pretty high on the list. That He would phrase it in that specific, direct way to you and to me.

This is God's will. And again, if giving thanks is such a concrete expression that when done verbally, that the on-looking world can look and see the worth and the value of God through you giving thanks, through you adoring Him, this is obviously something that should be a characteristic in the Christian's life. This is something that God desires.

God desires His name to be praised among the nations. One of the ways the Lord's name is praised is through us verbally giving thanks. One way you can proclaim the excellencies of Christ in your conduct is having thankful conduct.

Not being like the Israelites who are constantly grumbling. And what are the Egyptians going to look at? Look, these people, their God is so good, all these people want to come back to our nation. And they're grumbling all the time.

And it's over food. That doesn't make God look like He has a worth and a value by which you should leave all to follow. Now again, the Israelites, the vast majority, were unregenerate, were dead in their sins.

So this is the will of God. This is a specific desire of God for you and I to give thanks in all circumstances, even ones that feel tough and difficult, because as you do that, it's a concrete expression to the world that God is worthy. He's worth it.

Your will is surrendered to Him. And then he says, this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. In Christ Jesus.

This command stands at the center of God's plan for His people who are in a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of those things right there at the center for you if you're in Christ Jesus. This command.

This is the will. This is the desire. This is a command of God for you.

We've got to make it personal. This is a directive from God to you. This is not for Him over there.

This is for you. This is for me. How am I doing? In my gratefulness for God? Am I full of complaint? Or am I full of thanks for the Lord in the midst of all of these things? And think of this too.

What's the ultimate reason Paul wants them to give thanks in all circumstances? What's the ultimate thing behind him calling the Thessalonians to this reality in their life? Paul's ultimate desire is for them to pass the test of final judgment and get past this final test that they're going to face. And he keeps bringing this up in this letter. Look at these two verses.

313. It's incredible here. Paul prays for them in both of these places.

This is what's at the heart of what Paul's wanting to see in those brethren. Verse 11, Now may our God and Father Himself and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and as we do for you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. Paul is concerned that their hearts be established in holiness before our God at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and he prays almost the exact same prayer at the end in 523.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful.

He will surely do it. Brothers, pray for us. So one aspect of this heart being blameless, one aspect of this sanctifying you completely, one aspect that's going to continue in the Christian life to the final day is a thankful heart.

It's gratitude before God. It's giving thanks. It's rejoicing always.

It's praying without ceasing. These are characteristics of those doing the will of God, and the will of God is your sanctification, and this is one aspect of your sanctification. It's an aspect of it.

And it's high up there on the list. More so than we might put it. A people who's not progressing in gratitude, but in grumbling, one would be concerned about their perseverance.

And you have the Israelites. Perfect example of that. See, time and time again, grumbling was no small thing.

It was unbelief. The opposite of thanks where you're giving faith, a concrete expression of your faith before God. So let's consider some more things about this.

So, number one, how high of a value do you put on giving thanks? Like how high up there is that to you? And it should only be as high up there as it is to who? To God. Right? It should only be as high up there as it is to God. You know, one of the interesting passages, thanks is hidden throughout so many different passages, but in Ephesians 5, Paul is saying that you should not have sexual morality or impurity or covetousness named among you.

And then he says, let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking which are out of place, but instead, let there be thanksgiving. He's talking about sexually immoral people. He's talking about how you speak.

And right there in the midst of it, he's talking about what shouldn't be named among you. He's talking about what's proper among the saints. And right there he says, let there be thanksgiving.

Let there be no filthiness, but let there be in the positive thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. And I know this passage has been referred to many times recently that I can recall, but Romans 1. What was one of the first things on their list to being given over to a debased mind and being given over to homosexuality and exchanging relationships that are natural with that which is unnatural? Neither did they do what? They didn't give thanks to God.

And giving thanks to God is synonymous with acknowledging the Lord. Right? They wouldn't acknowledge God. They wouldn't acknowledge Him.

They wouldn't give thanks to Him. And isn't it interesting? Them not giving thanks is one of the things that led to being given over to a debased mind which led to all their sexual immorality. It wasn't as if the sexual immorality came first.

It was the not giving thanks led to the mind being given over which led to all of these other sins. And Paul says in 2 Timothy 3.1, understand this, in the last days, there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful.

And the very next phrase is unholy. I mean, ungrateful and unholy are going side by side. And he's got this included in this list here.

Lovers of self. Lovers of money. Proud.

Arrogant. Well, yeah, the proud man doesn't acknowledge God. He's not wanting to give praise and thanks to God that is due.

So is giving thanks such a priority to you? Again, it reveals what you value most. So both the lusting in your mind or the not giving thanks are both acts of not honoring God that should grieve your heart. Some people will say, oh, I'm so thankful this week.

I got to the end of the week and I kept purity in my mind. And praise the Lord for that. But how many times have I heard a young person get to the end of the week and rather than talking about purity, they come to me and they say, James, praise the Lord, I did not grumble once the entire week.

God helped me to have a thankful heart. That would excite me. And remember, they didn't give thanks to God and that led to all sorts of other sin.

If you're busy adoring and worshiping Christ and giving thanks for what He's done on the cross, you're not going to go and do something with your mind and give in to lust. Right? You don't need to pursue the purity. You need to be pursuing Christ and worshiping Him and giving thanks to Him is one way you can worship Him and have a concrete expression that He is your God.

You're surrendered to His will. And as that happens, you're not going to go over and do those things. You're going to have purity in the mind because you're so grateful for God.

But we have so many examples of men who did not give thanks to God. Nebuchadnezzar and even his son Belshazzar. Daniel 5.23, the God in whose hand is your breath and whose are all your ways you've not honored.

Right? And even in Daniel 4, I bless the Most High. This is when Nebuchadnezzar got his mind back. I praised and honored Him who lives forever, for His dominion is an everlasting dominion and His kingdom endures from every generation to generation.

A man in his right mind, one of the first things he does is he praises the Lord. He gives thanks to the Lord. You see that in the New Testament.

When people are converted, one of the first things they're doing is thanking the Lord. They want to go tell others about Jesus Christ. At least you see that in most cases.

So, it's God's will. You abstain from lust. And it's God's will that you always give thanks.

We need to see it having that sort of priority. We need to see it having that sort of value. One way to think about it is this, what's one of our employments going to be upon death? What's one of the things upon death and departing to be with Christ, which is far better, what's one of the things it seems we're going to be employed in there in heaven? Worshiping.

Right? Giving thanks. If we're going to be doing that there, why not all the more do it now, right? Imagine all the time being spent saying, worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, wealth, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Now, let's think of some examples of false thanks.

People who their thanks, it's false. Number one, you have the self-righteous guy. Where's he at in the New Testament? Yeah, Luke 18.

Luke 18, the Pharisee standing by himself prayed thus, God, I thank You. He's thanking God. I mean, in his circumstance.

Is he honoring the Lord? No, no, no, he's not. He's being completely self-righteous, consumed with himself. He's not actually thanking God.

He's actually praising himself. He's deceiving himself. So you can say the words, God, I thank You, and be totally off.

Another example of false thanks is when it's not with your whole heart. Psalm 111 says, Praise the Lord, I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright in the congregation. 2 Chronicles 25, it speaks of Amaziah.

He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, yet not with a whole heart. Saying thanks because you're forced into it because you know it's the right thing to do, but the heart is not fully there, that's not true worship to God. Especially if those hearing the supposed thanks and adoration of the Lord recognize you're holding something back and they can discern that.

That's not a true thanks. That's a false thanks. That doesn't mean that we need to not give thanks to the Lord and do the opposite where we're so introspective and we're thinking to ourselves, boy, I don't know if I'm saying this with my whole heart.

Well, do it in faith. Forget about discerning how much of your heart is involved in it or not. But the point is, don't give lip service if the heart is not there.

We don't give thanks like a Stoic. Someone is gritting their teeth because it's the thing to do, and their ideology says things are just going to come and go as they're going to be, and we just need to take it as it comes. That's not the idea.

That's a false thanks. The believer has a difference in his giving thanks even in severe circumstances and trials. He realizes God is sovereignly in control of these trials.

And obviously, an example of false thanks is if you're just thanking God and all it is about is all the gifts and the prosperity and the material well-being that you've received. God is not some prosperity gospel God where He's a genie in the bottle and we are getting things and that's all we want is the gifts. Okay, a third thing to consider.

Why don't people give thanks? Why don't people give thanks? Number one, as mentioned earlier, they're not setting a due value upon it. They don't recognize what type of concrete expression it is when you give thanks. It's an example of worshiping God.

I mean, when someone gets up and gives thanks at a prayer meeting, if it's genuine, if it's not some show, and they're really grateful to the living God, that is a concrete expression of the worth of God that all of us are now being encouraged by and able to enter in and praise to the Lord for what He has done. Why don't people give thanks? Often, it's because they're not saved. They're not a Christian.

They're hearing things about Psalms 22. They're hearing the lyrics in those psalms. And they don't have any thanks to God for what Christ has done because they do not know the Lord.

And they've not believed in Christ for themselves. And they're stuck like the man in Romans 1 who's unwilling to give thanks to God. And God's going to step back and give them over to a debased mind.

They don't believe God is faithful. Paul says right there in v. 24, He who calls you is faithful. We have a faithful God.

He is faithful to us. Therefore, we can give thanks to Him. Why don't people give thanks? They don't acknowledge the sovereignty of God and His control over all circumstances.

The classic example is the Corrie ten Boom. If you've seen the video of the torchlighter with your children, what happens there? There's fleas in the barracks as she's in this concentration camp. And Corrie ten Boom is doing what? Was she giving thanks? At least in the torchlighter, she was depicted as being incredibly grumbly.

A grumbler and having a horrible attitude. And her sister Betsy is there trusting the Lord. God has a reason for even the flea.

And so what happens? They portray it that around the time that Betsy is about to die, she overhears that the guards were not going in their barracks to do a security check on them because the guards were scared of the fleas. And so Betsy tells Corrie, you see, even God had the fleas there for a purpose. The fleas were there.

It scared the guards, so we were able to have a Bible study in peace without guards coming in and we were not getting interrupted. And so Betsy was thanking the Lord for even the fleas. And they depicted as her doing that before she knew what the fleas were doing.

She didn't just thank God when she found out the fleas were preventing the guards from coming in. That's very easy to thank the Lord when you see His purpose. It's very difficult when we don't see it as we should.

And you think about Job. You want to talk about a concrete expression of faith in the midst of a trial? Job 1.21, and he said, naked I came from my mother's womb and naked shall I return. The Lord gave.

The Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this, Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

What an expression of the worth and the value of God that Job had right there at that point. Did Job have all the answers about everything that had happened? The loss of his children? And all the destruction that had come upon him? Did Job understand all of that? No. But he didn't wait for the understanding in order to worship God, because Job understood who? God.

God's in control. If you believe God is sovereign, then you know He's working it in some way. So I don't have to wait for an explanation in order to give thanks to the Lord.

Whether you're Joseph, Genesis 50, 20, it's for you, you meant it for evil against me to his brothers, he said. But God meant it for good. What was God doing? He was going to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

But it took years and years for Joseph to see that fulfilled in his life. Why do people not give thanks? Well, they take the Lord for granted. Think about the lepers in Luke 17.

Ten of them were healed. Only one of them came back to return thanks to God. They had a supernatural healing.

And they just went on their way. One of them comes and tells the Lord, thank You for what He had done. Psalm 107, it says, then they were glad that the waters were quiet, so they've received a blessing.

And the Lord brought them to their desired haven. So what should their response be? Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love, for His wondrous works to the children of man. I mean, that should be their response.

A thanks to God for what He has done. What's another reason why people are not giving thanks as they should? They're not praying enough. Notice here, in these exhortations, they're all going together in a certain way.

He says rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. And give thanks in all circumstances.

And a vast majority of the thanks you see people in the New Testament offering, often it's in prayer. In a lot of the thanks you see in the Psalms, it's in prayer. I mean, when you step down to pray to the Lord and communicate to God, you're giving an opportunity to be overflowed with thanks right there to the Lord and showing Him gratitude.

This giving thanks goes hand-in-hand with praying always. And something to think about too is this. Some would say I'm praying and I have no peace.

Right? They're praying about a specific situation, but they say I don't have any peace. Well, Paul says in Philippians 4, he says in everything by prayer and by supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding shall guard your heart and mind in Christ. Paul doesn't just say with prayer and supplication and then the peace of God is going to come and guard your mind.

Paul says prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. So often people, why do they lack peace? They're praying to God because they're not giving thanks to God in the midst of that. And so peace, it's not coming.

Because that thanks is an expression to God, a concrete expression, something very visible that, Lord, my will is surrendered to You. You're in control. I'm trusting You.

Paul says in Colossians, continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. So we're praying with thanksgiving. One reason people don't give thanks? They avoid thinking about the difficult circumstance that they have gone through.

And they don't want to meditate on it to try to look and see how their Heavenly Father was intricately involved in that situation. Psalm 75, verse 1 says, we give thanks for Your name is near. We recount Your wondrous deeds.

We should be able to recount God's wondrous deeds even in the midst of severe trial and give thanks for those situations. Have we had difficulties? Have you had difficulties? Something maybe you do not want to think about? But God can be shown His worth. You can show others God's worth by thinking of that difficulty and being able to praise the Lord for what He has done in the midst of that.

Even if you don't fully comprehend it. Psalm 9, verse 1, I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart. I will recount all Your wonderful deeds.

And the last reason why do people not give thanks? People often don't give thanks because they can't figure it out. You can't figure your circumstance out. And so you could wrongly think, God, You owe it to me to explain everything first before I give gratitude to You.

And that's not right. Job, again, is a perfect example of a man who's willing to worship God even though he can't figure it all out. He can't understand the situation perfectly at all.

I mean, it just hit him out of nowhere. But we've got to believe that Paul who's praying that the God of peace would sanctify you completely, Paul who's wanting us to be kept blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have a God whose will for us is that we be sanctified, and He's involved in that progressively becoming more and more like Jesus Christ. We have a God who said through much tribulation you will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

We have a God who said it's been granted to you not only to believe in Me, but also to suffer for My sake. We've got to be able to believe the Lord's using this in some way to make me more like Christ. And I should be able to give thanks even if I can't see at this moment how that is being used to grow me and how that iron is being used to knock some part off that was not purified.

We need to trust the Lord. And we need to be people who are more thankful. And we should be praying for God to work that in us.

You could take verse 23 and say, Lord, You are the God of peace. Would You sanctify me completely? May my whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are faithful.

You've called me to this. Lord, would You work this in my life? Surely You'll do it because You're faithful. It can be a struggle.

George Whitefield, 1738. He had been on a ship for four months. The Whittaker.

They docked the ship. And he gave a sermon called Thankfulness for Mercies Received, a Necessary Duty. And Whitefield, at the end of that sermon, he said this, he said, you have heard how I have been exhorting every one of you to show forth thankfulness for His divine goodness.

Not only with your lips, but in your lives. But, physician, heal thyself. May justly be retorted to me.

For without any false pretense to humility, I find my own heart so little inclined to this duty of thanksgiving for the benefits I have received that I had need fear sharing in Hezekiah's fate, who because he was lifted up by and not thankful enough for the great things God had done for him, was given up a prey to the pride of his own heart. I need, therefore, and beg your most impertune petitions at the throne of grace that no such evil may befall me. It's interesting, Paul here, verse 23, he's praying for them and what was the very next thing he said? Verse 25, brothers, pray for us.

The very man who's been living these realities out and is calling them to these realities turns around to them and says, hey, pray for us. Pray that God would sanctify us completely. We've got to realize giving thanks in all circumstances is not an optional command.

It's a command to be obeyed. We need to realize that you're missing out by not giving thanks. What do I mean? For one, if giving thanks is the will of God and you don't do it, then you're not doing the will of God in that circumstance and therefore you're sinning.

And if you're sinning by not giving thanks, then you're missing the very next step of the will of God for you in that circumstance. So the Lord might have you to go do such-and-such, but because of the ingratitude towards Him that comes up in the heart, you're now grieving the Spirit by not giving thanks and you're missing that open door over there. You're not going to get over there and have that conversation because you're unthankful.

How good are you to the people in the body when you're here on a Sunday and maybe you've been struggling with grumbling and a lack of gratitude and not having thanks to God? Probably, you're sitting in your chair kind of sad wanting to get home early. You're not going around bubbly having good conversations with people and encouraging them. Because you yourself feel discouraged.

But in the opposite, if you're here and you're full of thanks to God for His goodness, you might have that conversation with a person who's struggling with gratitude towards God because of a trial in their life, and you might be the means of an encouragement to them. We should give thanks. It's good.

It's good for you. Psalm 92 says it's good to give thanks to the Lord. To sing praises to Your name, O Most High.

To declare Your steadfast love in the morning and Your faithfulness by night. I mean, it's good to get up and thank God in the morning. Thank God at night.

See His faithfulness. Acknowledge His goodness even in the midst of all of our insufficiencies just to thank the Lord. And if you don't, who will? Isaiah 38, For Sheol does not thank You.

Death does not praise You. Those who go down to the pit do not hope for Your faithfulness. The living, the living, He thanks You.

As I do this day, the Father makes known to the children Your faithfulness. If we don't thank God, if we're not overflowing with a gratitude to the Lord, is the lost world going to do that? No. And the prosperity preachers are very willing to get on television and thank God for all the cars and the nice stuff they get.

And that's no good. That doesn't show the worth of God. That makes people want to become an atheist because they see how insane that garbage is.

We're the ones who need to be thanking God in the midst of our trials, in the midst of our sufferings, in the midst of our divorces, miscarriages, whatever it might be, even if you can't fully see what God is working out in it. For one, you know He's working in it at your sanctification. And He wants to sanctify you completely.

He wants your whole spirit and soul and body to be kept blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And He who calls you is faithful and He will surely do this. So how can we be more thankful? You know what? Just beholding Christ more.

Think of that psalm, Jesus, thank You. Your blood has washed away my sin. Jesus, thank You.

Your Father's wrath completely satisfied. Jesus, thank You. Once You're in a me, now seated at Your table.

Jesus, thank You. And Paul says, thanks be to God, that we who are once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which we were committed. Paul is constantly giving thanks.

We used to be a slave of sin. A slave of grumbling. A slave of not having gratitude.

I used to be that very ungrateful child who didn't get the video game he wanted at Christmas. I mean, I was just totally put out by that. How could my parents not discern this is what I wanted? I shot so many signals.

And there I am just complaining. And guess what? Being given over to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. I didn't acknowledge God.

I didn't give thanks to God. I was headed down a path to hell. But thanks be to God, He sought me out.

He opened my eyes. He showed me. The Father showed me His Son.

Christ died on that cross in my place. And you know what? Whatever thanks you have as a new Christian for the glorious doctrine of justification, we don't want to lose that reality the older we get into faith. The last thing we want is all these glorious doctrines to become so common where we don't give thanks.

We should pray, Lord, hit me anew. Hit me afresh with reality of what You have done on that cross. Albert Barnes, he said about this verse, A man owes a debt of obligation to God for anything which will recall him from his wonderings and which will prepare him for heaven.

Are there any dealings of God towards men which do not contemplate such an end? Is a man ever made to drink the cup of affliction when no drop of mercy is intermingled? Is he ever visited with calamity which does not in some way contemplate his own temporal or eternal good? Could we see all? We should see that we are never placed in circumstances in which there is not much for which we should thank God. You see, if we have eyes to see it, we have so many reasons to be thankful to God, even in some of the most severe circumstances because those circumstances have been provided by a Father who cares for us and He's promised that for those who love God and are called according to His purpose, all these things are working together for our good. So what's God's will for 2021? Well, one way to look at it is God's will for you is that you give thanks in every circumstance.

And as you do that, your children are listening, the world is listening, and as things might get darker, who knows what will happen with this transition in government, but we've got to give thanks that God's put us here for such a time as this to honor Him, to show His worth, to magnify the Lord. I mean, you think of that psalm, magnify the Lord with me. Well, one of the ways what giving thanks is doing is the psalmist said, I'll give thanks and magnify the Lord.

So let's magnify God by keep giving thanks and worshiping Him and having concrete expressions that our children see, that the church sees, that your co-works see of thanks be to God for this and that and that, especially in the hard times, because that's what's going to impact those people all the more. Yes, thank the Lord for the blessings, but we need to be able to give thanks to God even for the most difficult of circumstances that try our faith. Amen.

Father, Lord, we do just thank You. Lord, there's so much You have done in this last year that totally misses our sight. It can feel like looking at a bunch of computer code and not knowing a certain type of language that is in the code, and therefore we miss out on seeing something glorious that led to something far greater being done.

Lord, forgive us of whatever ignorance we have. Lord, if there are things that You have done that You had such an intricate way of dealing with it and we just missed the message, we missed seeing what You were doing, and we didn't give You the thanks and the honor, we didn't have that concrete expression of thanks to You for that specific thing You did. Lord, forgive us.

Lord, help us to all the more adore You and worship You and give thanks. And Father, we thank You again for Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that we can have His righteousness on our account. Lord, what a gift.

Lord, that gift is incredible. Lord, it's beyond our comprehension to fully grasp what You have done. But Lord, we want to see more.

We want to see more of Your glory. We want You to show us great and mighty and hidden things that we have not known. And so, Lord, would You do that in 2021? We thank You.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/4ONMmV2_L1w.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-jennings/gives-thanks-in-all-circumstances/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net