

Don't Deny God But Give Thanks to Him

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the importance of gratitude and thankfulness in the Christian life, highlighting the connection between being filled with the Spirit and cultivating a heart of thanksgiving. It delves into the reality of hell as a stark reminder of ingratitude and the blessings we often take for granted. The message encourages deep reflection on God's abundant blessings and the eternal hope of glory awaiting believers, leading to a life marked by continuous thanksgiving and praise.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:7, Ephesians 5:18, Romans 1:21, Colossians 3:15

Topics: "Gratitude", "The Importance of Thanksgiving"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of gratitude and thankfulness in the Christian life, highlighting the connection between being filled with the Spirit and cultivating a heart of thanksgiving. It delves into the reality of hell as a stark reminder of ingratitude and the blessings we often take for granted. The message encourages deep reflection on God's abundant blessings and the eternal hope of glory awaiting believers, leading to a life marked by continuous thanksgiving and praise.

Transcript

Romans. I think there's no question that Romans is considered to be and is in fact one of the clearest, deepest expressions of the gospel. Paul, very linear thinker, not like Peter, not like John.

And in all of his letters, this is undoubtedly the masterpiece where he unfolds for us the gospel. And to master this book, nobody has. To get a firm grip of what the gospel is all about, this is undoubtedly a letter without equal.

And I preach through Ephesians, and there's marvels there. There's wonders there. I preach through Hebrews, undoubtedly.

There's a different air about Hebrews. I preach through Romans in San Antonio. It is hard to span the depths of this book.

But if you were looking for a basic outline, you know that in verse 16, perhaps you know this, it's where he says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel. It's the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. So in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. You know what's very interesting? When you get to chapter three, you find out about this righteousness.

He is not talking about the attribute of God. He is talking about the righteousness that God requires in you and me. That's it's God's righteous standard that he requires in us.

And you see, when you get to chapter three, that this is what the gospel is all about. In the gospel, you have the good news of how the righteousness that God provides is given to us, and it's by faith. We are counted righteous for basically two chapters from halfway through chapter one to halfway through chapter three.

You get the bad news. You get the backdrop against the gospel. What is it that requires a gospel? It's man's fallenness.

There is no fuller, greater, extended portion of scripture that gives us the calamity of mankind than right here. I mean, there are many other places where the Bible is very clear about man's condition, but to take two solid chapters of just showing how Jew and Gentile are utterly ruined before God, there is no more complete, extensive portion of scripture than from 118 all the way over to 320, where you get one description after another of the trouble that man is in. And so that's where I'm wanting to go today.

Now, you understand, I'm wanting to deal this week and next week with thankfulness. Thankfulness. Why would I come here? Some of you, maybe your minds are already running to exactly why I would go here, but let's dive in as Paul begins.

This is such an abrupt transition. Verse 17, in it, the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. In the gospel, the good news of the gospel reveals the reality about the righteousness of God.

And the fact is that it comes to us by way of faith. The righteous shall live by faith. There's such an abrupt transition right at this point.

Four, the wrath of God is revealed from him. Four, I mean, four is a conjunction that shows us it ties right to the thought. It's like, Paul, where'd that come from? Where'd you pull that out of? If you read verses 1-1 through 1-17, it's like he hasn't even talked about the wrath of God.

Where does this, it's almost like this comes right out of the blue, but it's not. It's Paul wanting to show us, okay, I've told you and I've given you kind of a synopsis of where I'm going with all this, but now I want to tell you about the deep problem that requires a gospel. And brethren, you know of a reality.

The gospel is never good news to anybody until they come face to face with the bad news. When you, it's very true even in our evangelism. You go to somebody and you begin starting, God has a wonderful plan for your life and Jesus died.

You know, you start going off with the good news before you've got somebody lost, before they've been sick and required their need of a physician. So what? I mean, you give them this, you know, well, I'm a good person and I think really high thoughts of me. And you want to tell me God loves me? Well, of course God loves me.

I love me. I mean, I would expect God to love me. And because they basically created God in their own image, they're not surprised that you describe a God that loves them and would send his son.

That's not shocking to them. That's not shocking to the average person who's just self-absorbed and self-worshipping. And so here's the bad news.

For the wrath of God is revealed. And you want to catch the verb tense here. He doesn't say the wrath of God will come on judgment day.

He says the wrath of God is currently revealed. Right now it's revealed. And it's revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Now, if we just stopped right there, okay, man is sinful, man is ungodly, but no, no, no, no. He wants to take this deeper. It's not enough for him just to be vague that man is unrighteous and ungodly.

He wants to show you what that ungodliness in man does. What is the real root evil here behind all of this? Who by their unrighteousness suppress. And you know that word.

It means to hold down. It means to keep back or to hinder or prevent or restrain. This is what men do.

Men by nature, restrain, suppress. Suppress is to keep down. If you're going to suppress a fire, you want to put it out.

You want to diminish this thing. You want to hold it back. What? The truth.

They suppress the truth. You know, let that sink in. We see lost people all around us.

Some in the church. They're everywhere. When you look at those people, you recognize this.

People are thinking all the time. You drive by people, you see them walking in the streets. They're there in their windows, in their homes.

They're thinking all the time. They're thinking all the time. They're being challenged by truth or deception all the time.

Men are thinking certain ways. They have certain plans. They have certain hopes, certain ambitions, certain dreams, certain direction of life, certain anticipation.

All men are thinking, oh, you may find somebody sleeping. Even then they're dreaming. Men, women, there's something happening inside our brains.

And what happens with the lost people is there is an innate something in man. And you know what it is. It's an antithesis to God.

It's a rebellion against God. It's a hatred of God. And it's seeking to suppress the truth about God.

It's seeking the truth, suppress the truth. Men don't want to know the truth. Men want to believe a lie, even lies that have to do with whether their souls are going to be saved in the end, even with regard to truths that have to do with hell and eternity and reality.

They don't want to know. Men would rather turn their heads to the truth and bury it in the sand. They don't want to know, as though that makes it go away.

It's utterly foolish, but it's what men do. Notice verse 19. For what can be known about God? Now, that's an interesting statement.

What can be known about God? Now, obviously, he's not saying that everything that can be known from Scripture can be known about God through the creation. But he's saying, what can be known about God from the creation? That's what he's talking about. He is talking about a form of revelation here.

Not scriptural revelation, but general, natural revelation. He says, what can be known? Men can know about God, and there are things that are plain to man that man can know about God if he will simply open his eyes and look around this creation. It's plain.

Why? Because God has shown it to them. You need to recognize that. God has shown it to them.

For God to show, we call that revelation. God has revealed. Do you recognize this? When God created trees to shed their leaves, to turn colors, fall off, and the next spring, there they are again.

For God to create every snowflake different from every other one. For God to create a worm that can actually become a cocoon or chrysalis and then come out a butterfly. For a bird to take flight.

Do you recognize when a peacock spreads its wings, the design and the pattern is perfectly aligned? Do you? You have to recognize something about that. Every single feather on a peacock, if you take them one by one, and they're all put together, it seems like it's scrambled, but spread them out. And see, if you mixed any of them up, it wouldn't, it would not be that pattern.

Every single feather had to be decorated exactly the way it is, with the blue spot exactly a certain distance from the end, so that when they fan out, it perfectly gives you that image. Do you see what this is saying? This is saying that God does, I highly commend, and you probably already do this, but nature videos for your children, not just for your children, for you. I mean, have you seen some of the, you just see some of the life that God has created.

It is absolutely amazing what happens. They get spiders who actually can go down to the water. You've probably seen this, and they can have a bubble that they actually breathe from, and they go down and they catch tadpoles and stuff down under the water.

God has designed them with their own breathing apparatus. It's just crazy. Of course, all the time you have to deal with the commentator who is going to tell you how evolution did this, but do you realize what this text is saying? God did this to show you.

There is such complexity in this creation. God has done this. He's designed the way that He's designed very specifically to reveal His invisible attributes.

That means He's invisible. He's invisible. You can't see Him.

You can't see His power. You can't see His glory. We don't perceive God.

We don't see that throne that they see in chapter four and chapter five of Revelation. We don't have that perception. We don't even see what Moses saw when he was hit in the cleft of the rock.

We don't see that, but God, though He is invisible, He has a characteristic about Him. He has these attributes, and they can be perceived. That means we can see perception.

It means primarily not so much with the eyeball, but the brain. It means in our thinking we can look, and we can say, wow, look at the colors, the sunset, the mountains. Those things were designed with intent to show us something about God, His eternal power, and His divine nature.

That word right there, it specifically has to do with the performance of one who you would associate with divinity. When it talks about His divinity there, this divine aspect or this divine nature, what it's saying is this. God has created in such a way that man can look at it and realize it took a God to make that.

That's the idea here. And it says that these things have been clearly perceived. In other words, what's clearly perceived is this, that man does look at it, and he recognizes there's design, there's order, there's engineering.

Listen, you listen to these supposed scientists and the supposed professional, all-knowing people out there in our universities and in our governments and those, the movers and shakers in this world, and the ones that want to they want to speak to us about where all this came from, the physicists and the biologists and the chemists and the astronomers, you listen to them. I understand this, that in college courses they have to remind the students over and over and over that this was by chance. Even though this looks ordered, even though this looks like it took intelligence, they have to remind them it did not.

You see the deception? You see the foolishness? I mean, it's like they understand that the students they're teaching are going to recognize, hey, there's intelligence behind this. And so they constantly have to remind them, remember now, this happened by accident. Or they talk about evolution as though it has intelligence.

Well, evolution designed. You ever hear them talk like that? It's like, what is evolution? It's mindless. It's a supposed process, as though it's got some intelligence, as though it's actually doing this.

But listen, these things have been clearly perceived. In other words, the divine created nature of these things is very much perceived by man. He has to suppress this.

He has to fight it. He has to keep reminding the people, because he's reminding himself too. He's not just reminding the students, listen, even though it looks like there's order, even though there looks like there's some intelligence, even though it looks like there's engineering, well, you have to remember there's not.

And they're trying to convince themselves just as much. Suppress, suppress, suppress. Undo this.

But it has been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made. And God made them, the things that have been made. God specifically designed these things to show his nature and his power.

He's done that. It's absolutely amazing. I mean, we were just talking yesterday in the men's ethics class just about sperm and egg.

And in the reality that becomes a human being, that God designed a man and a woman to be able to create a baby. That doesn't happen by evolution, folks. That happens by the most astounding engineering.

Do you know what's extremely interesting to me is when you go and you look at men as they design things, have you ever noticed like the divine telescopes, like the eyeball? Have you ever noticed that as they're creating robots, what are they imitating? Basically, the robots imitate life forms. They look like

grasshoppers, or they look like dogs, or they look like, I mean, they basically, the way the members on these robots move, it's designed directly after us. I mean, it takes man all this mental agony to create these things.

And then they end up copying what supposedly evolution has produced. I mean, with all their thinking, and listen, these things have been perceived ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made. So they, men, women, humanity are without excuse.

I'll tell you on judgment day, no one will have an excuse. No atheist will have an excuse, not at all. You know what? The atheist says, where is he? We get this downtown.

We get this in the city center. People say, where's God? See up on that building? I hear they just, ha ha, mock. Where is he? If he's there, let him strike me down.

You ever heard people talk like that? I have. There's, I remember watching Ben Stein interview Richard Dawkins. And he said, what if you get to the end and you meet God? And he said, well, I basically think I would say to him what Bertrand Russell said, sir, why have you taken such great pains to hide yourself? You see, that's what the atheist wants to say.

That's what the scientist wants to say. Well, where's God? Where's the proof of it? And what scripture says is all you have to do is go look in the mirror. Look at your eyeball.

Think about the fact that you continue to breathe when you're asleep. Think about sleep. I mean, think about all the things we just take for granted.

The eyes blink and they keep blinking when you're not thinking. Like that's the reality. How does it happen? Your hair keeps growing.

Your fingernails keep going. Think about you even have fingernails. Can you imagine if you didn't? You know how useful they are? Think about all the things you do with them.

And yet God created that they're not just there. They replenish themselves. There is such amazing things we take it for granted.

And because there's been such a man's wickedness seeking to suppress all these things, it's just everywhere. We do tend to take these things for granted. Verse 21, although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him.

You see, that's the verse that I'm really headed for. See, men suppress this and they don't thank God. They don't honor God.

They don't give God credit for having created all these things. They don't give him his due praise in these things. That's the issue.

And they became futile. That means worthless in their thinking. Again, think with me.

When you see mankind, humanity all around you, they're thinking, they're thinking. And what God does is he knows. He sees into the brains of everybody.

He knows the thoughts. And he says it's worthless. Men's thoughts are worthless.

Do you realize that across this city, three million people, how many Christians do you think they are? Subtract those people, all the rest of the people, their thinking is absolutely futile and absolutely worthless. Because think about it, all their hopes are going to be dashed. And there are people that come and they sit in the church and it's the same.

In the end, you have these hopes, but those hopes are going to be dashed in the end. It's futile thinking to think that there's any other way to a glorious end than by surrender to the very God who created all these things. And you know what it tells us? Think with me.

God could have made the world brown, but he didn't. You ever seen a sunset? Have you ever seen when some of these Manchester mornings, when the sun comes across the bottom of the clouds and the whole thing turns red? God could have created all that black or brown. He didn't have to do this.

Have you ever seen some of the colors? I mean, walking the woods in Texas, watching for a cardinal or a blue jay, the vivid red or the... God didn't need to make it that way. And then you hear some of the bird songs. You know what this tells us? God wants to thrill us.

God wants to... God is a giver. That's one thing that scripture is very clear about. And he loves to create things to give us a thrill.

He loves us to be in awe. He likes us to see a vast ocean or a beautiful mountain setting. He wants us to see that.

And what happens is men suppress all of that. They want to attribute it to anything and everything but God. They become futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

And oh, don't they claim to be wise, but they've become fools and exchanged. This is the great exchange. This is the suicidal exchange.

We talked about it before. They exchanged the fountain of living water for broken cisterns. They exchanged the glory of the immortal God.

Now, just let me ask you this again. Where does this exchange take place? Right here. It takes place in men's thoughts.

It's their thinking. They suppress the truth. That's how they make the exchange.

You see, they basically are exchanging truth for a lie. And that happens here. They exchange the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, animals, and creeping things.

Now, today people do this. If you go to India, you see the idols everywhere. If you simply walk into a Catholic hospital, you see the idols everywhere.

But you know, in supposed science, the exchange is exchange God for evolution, exchange God for Big Bang, exchange God for Mother Nature, exchange God for Mother Earth. These are the things that God has done. Then there's this exchange where it's attributed to something else, to someone else.

Now, notice this. This exchange, the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, animals, creeping things, therefore. You know what that therefore means? God reacts.

God does not stay passive. God reacts. What does he do? He gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity.

God gave them up to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves. I find that term dishonor interesting because men don't think so. They give themselves up to all sorts of sexual immorality.

They're happy about it. They revel in it. They don't feel dishonored.

But in fact, God has created that body of theirs. And in his eyes, they are greatly dishonoring that body because they're using it for purposes that he did not design it to be used for. Verse 25, because, now here's the reason again, because they exchange.

This is the second time, first time they exchange the glory of the immortal God for images. Now they've exchanged the truth about God for a lie. And they worship and serve the creature rather than the creator.

You see where they're giving the credit. They're not giving the credit to the creator. They're not honoring the creator.

They're not giving thanks to the creator. They are giving what he, they're giving what is his to the creature. The creator is blessed forever, amen, for this reason.

25, you have a because. 26, for this reason. Back in 24, therefore, that means God is responding.

God is reacting. This is the wrath. You remember what it said in verse 18, the wrath of God is revealed.

This is the wrath. Now see, this is very interesting because often we don't think this way. We think wrath of God.

Well, you know, Sodom and Gomorrah, fire came down, fire and brimstone came down from heaven. We think of wrath like that. Isn't it interesting? God giving people over to sexual impurity is a demonstration of his wrath.

For this reason, verse 26, God gave them. Are you grasping that term? Gave. God gave them up to dishonorable passions.

Their women exchanged. First time he says impurity, that could be fornication. That could be the breakdown of marriage among heterosexuals.

The second time he distinctly is hitting homosexuality. First, the women, then the men. Women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature.

Men likewise gave up natural relations with women or consumed the passion for one another. Men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since, you get that? We've heard because, for this reason, therefore, here it is since.

You see what's being said. It's men do this and God, because of what they do, he now does something. There's a cause and effect here.

Man does something and God is responding to it. And he's responding to it, not just out on judgment day. He responds right now.

And isn't that a strange thing? The wrath of God is revealed that way. I mean, if it was fire from heaven and it destroyed all the people and sent them immediately into a burning fire inferno of eternal torment, we might understand it. But when God simply gives people over to committing sexual aberrations, impurities, what's so terrible about that? But then I'll tell you this, Ephesians 5, it says, because of these sins, the wrath of God is coming.

It's like it's a present demonstration of his wrath because he gives people over to that which is just simply heaping guilt and condemnation on these people. He's giving them over. You remember what was said, Sodom and Gomorrah are an example of what's going to happen to all the ungodly.

And when he turns the people over, it's a great expression of wrath. It says, since they did not see fit to acknowledge, they didn't see fit to retain God in their knowledge. Man stopped acknowledging God.

You see, that's what happens when we give thanks to him. We acknowledge him. People are not acknowledging him.

God gave them up. Third time, God gave them up, this time to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. Three times, God gave them up.

God gave them up. God gave them up. Brethren, I'll tell you this, you know what struck me about coming to your country at first? It wasn't specifically the homosexuality.

What startled me was that how many people said, my partner, your partner. I mean, people, look, I'm not saying America has any stretch of righteousness beyond. You're ahead of us in the breakdown.

You're ahead of us in being given over to this. In the U.S., sexual immorality among the young is commonplace. People get married.

What you find is the first step in this is marriage. I mean, all of this is an attack on marriage. All of this is a breakdown of marriage.

It's like God is saying this, marriage is a shadow. Your relationship with me is the real thing. When the bride won't acknowledge the husband, if you're going to suppress the true relationship, then I'm not going to let you have the shadow either.

You deface this. I'll see to it that that shadow is defaced as well. It's like marriage.

You have to remember what marriage is. Marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. And it's like men come along and we want to suppress the knowledge of the husband.

We want to deface this relationship. We don't want to acknowledge him. We don't want to honor him.

We don't want him in our life. We don't want that affection, that draw. We don't want to recognize him for who he is.

We want to suppress that truth about the husband. Okay, then God says, I'm going to deface the shadow. And that's what all of this is.

Every step of this is absolutely a defacing, a defilement of marriage. You look around in this land, 20% of marriage age people are married. The homosexuality is being, it's everywhere.

We go to the city center. It's everywhere. And it's in your school systems.

I mean, the breakdown is just, it's in your face. Do you ever think about this? Do you ever think about why this is? And you know what? Right here in the argument, you can draw it back to thanklessness. You see, acknowledging God and thankfulness, they go hand in hand.

I mean, that's what you're doing when you thank God. You're acknowledging him. He's in your knowledge.

Is it any surprise that anybody that would try to suppress a knowledge of God and give evolution the credit for what God has done? That's just obvious that they wouldn't thank the Lord for anything. Why are they trying to suppress God? They want him out of the equation. Richard Dawkins says it's liberating to be done with God.

Well, of course it is. When you want to live in your sin, it liberates you for a season until you die. It's not so liberating then.

God's wrath is presently revealed this way. Sexual degradation all around. This is God saying, look, you don't think you can ignore me and then go on living morally.

You do recognize that, right? When people ignore God, they're not moral. You see, communism wants to set up an atheistic worldview of paradise, but it never happens. Why doesn't it happen? Because God says, you take me out of the picture.

I'll give you over to such debasement. It'll make your head spin. Don't think the world can be moral and suppress God.

And so brethren, you ought not be surprised at what happens as the world around us, in the government, in the schools, in the media, as they want to suppress a knowledge of God. Don't be amazed that what follows is ungodliness and sin and wickedness and immorality. It all always goes hand in hand.

Do not think that this nation can kill the number of babies that it kills or America and that that blood does not shout. We can't think that suppressing this. Now, folks, you see how this connects with Thanksgiving.

You shouldn't surprise us that men who want to suppress the truth about God, stop acknowledging God, stop thanking God. But what is so surprising to me is how much God takes notice of it. It's like for it to be here.

You think about this, as Paul is describing the brokenness and recklessness and fallenness of mankind for him to say, you know what's a real crime in the midst of it? They don't honor him and they don't give him thanks. You say, isn't thankfulness such a minor thing? Being a thankful person, thanking the Lord for your food before you eat it, waking up in the morning, thanking God, going out and praying and actually having a decent amount of praise in your praying rather than just petitioning and asking him for things. Brethren, God takes notice.

That's very obvious. And it ought to surprise us to what degree God takes note. I mean, God's wrath is being revealed when men exchange the creator and attributes everything to chance.

And then, of course, they don't bow their heads. They're not bowing their heads. They're not gathering around the dinner table with their family and bowing their heads and praying.

Brethren, I saw a YouTube video that was basically called something like, why is the color blue so rare in nature? See, I like stuff like that. It's intriguing to me, kind of the engineering mind. But the guy actually says that evolution created blue in certain birds and butterflies using physics.

You see, he's created a video. He wants to be very scientific. He wants to tell you and analyze all this.

He wants to sound very wise. Do you recognize how foolish he just sounded when he said evolution uses physics? He's just personified it. That is utterly foolish.

And then he said, I mean, without skipping a beat, he says, evolution used physics. And then he says, they used engineering to solve a biology problem. And I thought, how is he speaking singular about evolution? And then he went plural to they.

Well, it was obvious and he has a picture of a blue bird right there. The whole, he's talking about the birds. The birds used engineering to solve a biology problem.

Do you realize? I mean, and he's saying that as though he's very wise and very intelligent and very learned. Brethren, blue, you take a butterfly. Have you ever seen the kind of blue on a butterfly's wings that when you just change the angle of it, it seems like it shimmers.

It changes in the blue intensity based on the angle. They took this thing down to the molecular level there that the surface of the butterfly wing is literally covered with just an infinite number of little projections that look like Christmas trees. And the thing is, they are designed with these openings so that when light comes in, it captures all the colors except blue and reflects it back.

And depending on the angle at which you look at it will depend on how much of the blue is actually being reflected back to you. It's these kind of things. They're absolutely amazing.

I mean, the blue in the wings of butterflies, it's so complex. It's such a scientific wonder. And then you get fools who recognize this is a miracle of physics and engineering.

Oh, but evolution and the birds did it. It would be laughable if it wasn't so insane. Men are slitting their own throat.

Listen, the God who made these things shows his goodness. Can you imagine? He designed this with eyeballs to see that butterfly wing. And he designed a sun out there to cast light down on it to send it back to our eyes.

And then he connected these eyes with this brain for us to be able to process that and look at that. And if that wasn't enough, I go back to that reality, that beautiful butterfly that now has the ability of flight. It came from a worm.

And somehow it transformed. What do you think God is doing? You know what we call it? Metamorphosis. That's the kind of word that you use when somebody goes through the change, the transformation, into becoming a Christian.

God's power and nature are revealed through this. And so, oh brethren, thankfulness. Let's just think of some thoughts on Thanksgiving.

What is it? Well, it's me recognizing that what I have, I've received from God and expressing my gratitude and appreciation for it. Listen to scripture. First Corinthians 4.7. What do you have that you did not receive? Nothing.

That's exactly what Paul was looking for. It was a rhetorical question. He doesn't even answer it because it's obvious.

If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? The rich, they boast. People with a lot in this world, they boast all the time. People that are born and endowed with great abilities, with great IQ abilities, thinking abilities, they boast all the time.

First Corinthians 15.10. By the grace of God, I am what I am. John 3.27. The apostle John writes of John the Baptist that he said, a person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. James, you know this.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above coming down from the Father of lights. What Paul is telling us in this chunk of Romans 1 is that, you know, one of the marking characteristics of the lost man, of mankind by nature, he doesn't have gratitude. He's thankless.

He doesn't want to acknowledge God. And God is telling us here about how desperate man's condition is. And God marks this down.

You know what characterizes them? They don't give me thanks. But then what happens? God reaches down. He touches a sinner.

He saves them. And suddenly what happens? They look up. Suddenly their eyes are open.

We sing a song. Heaven above is softer blue. Do you sing that? You see, that's what happens when somebody gets saved.

We suddenly see, Ruby was saying, look how blue the sky is. Look how blue the sky is. I think there's something about the further north you come, especially in this season when the sun is deeper south, it turns the sky bluer than what we're accustomed to down in the southern climes.

And again, it's God putting that kind of color there. It's him doing this. But what happens when you become a Christian is you suddenly, your eyes are open to it.

The grassy ground, it's, I mean, it's sweeter green. Suddenly you just look around and you see everything. And it's wow, wow, my father's made this.

God made that. God made those mountains over there. God put the peak district.

Now that was nice of him to put the peak district right here by Manchester and then send us over to Manchester. But it's, you know, the scripture says, and leaping up, he stood and began to walk and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. You remember who this was? This was the guy at the beautiful gate.

And silver and gold have I none, such as I have, give I thee. And he jumped up and he's jumping and he's leaping. And why do I even bring that in? Because that is a perfect picture of what happens when somebody suddenly gets saved.

Yes, this man was healed, but we get healed. And suddenly it's, it's, our eyes are open and we're leaping and we're praising God. But what happens? Well, we still look around this old flesh and we still feel, we feel it.

We feel these fleshly lusts. They wage war against our soul and we feel it. We feel the tug.

And so what happens is Christians sadly forget. And you know what? A lot of times we, when we first get saved, our eyes are open. Everything's new.

Our thanksgiving is rich. The praise is on our lips. Everything is so exciting.

But then time goes by and you need somebody like the apostle Paul to come along to the Colossian believers and say this, listen to this, be thankful. That's what he says. Colossians 3.15, be thankful.

That's an imperative. He commands us to be thankful. That right away ought to, something ought to resonate with you.

When you're being commanded to do something that it feels like ought to come from the heart. But scripture does that. Scripture commands love.

It commands thanksgiving. It commands these things that if they're done without feeling and without heart are nothing. So it's obviously not commanding them in some dry, unemotional, uninterested, disconnected way.

Certainly it's not calling for that, but it's being commanded. Now listen to this. You keep reading here.

Be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, spiritual songs with thanksgiving in your hearts to God. See, it's not just some surface politically correct, socially right thing that you do.

Not just because it's proper. Not just because your mom has threatened you. You better go thank grandpa for the gift.

It's not that kind of thing. It's in your hearts. And whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

And you know what? You and me, we know the difference between thanksgiving that's genuine and when it's mechanical. We know it. We smell that out.

And that raises the question, how can Paul command gratitude from the heart? How can anybody make themselves feel thankful? That's the question. It's one thing to say thanks. It's one thing to know that I'm supposed to properly show gratitude in order to be polite.

But it's another thing to deeply feel appreciation. Now, I want you to turn to this text. What time we got? We still got a few minutes.

Turn to Ephesians chapter five. I want you to see something here. Something that's very well worth your while in thinking about thankfulness.

Thinking about thankfulness from the heart. Being a deeply thankful people. Ephesians 5.18. Before I specifically talk about how do we deeply feel appreciation, I just want to show you something.

I want to show you a connection that I think is really substantial. I've been thinking that I might develop this and maybe preach a whole message on it when I go to San Antonio. There's something here.

Look at this. Ephesians 5.18. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled. Here's another imperative.

A commandment. Be filled with the Spirit. Now, think.

Think. Be filled. Notice the tense.

It's present continuous. It means I'm supposed to be doing it, and it's a command. This is not passive.

This does not say sit there and wait for an experience. See, sometimes we think about, you know, we go to the book of Acts, and you see they were being baptized by the Spirit. Different things were happening.

Day of Pentecost. No, no, no. This is not the way Paul's speaking here.

This is not like that. This is not an experience you wait for. This is something you are commanded to do, and here's the thing.

I've told you before about verb participles, and I think it's important for you to notice this. A verb participle is basically a verbal adjective, and you get a number of them here. Four of them that modify be filled, and I want you to see this.

If you don't know what I'm talking about yet, just hang with me. Watch this. Be filled with the Spirit.

That's your primary verb. That's your responsibility. That's a commandment to you.

Be filled, and I know if you're like me, you read this off the pages of Scripture, and you say, I don't know how to do that. Be filled with the Spirit. I mean, the Spirit's a person, and it's a person that's invisible to me, and I don't know where he is, and I don't know how to get to him, and I don't know how to have him fill me.

I don't know what that looks like. Paul, how can you just... I love it when Scripture commands us to do these kinds of things, because it really ought to make us stop and check our step and say, Lord, what in the world were you inspiring Paul to tell us? How am I supposed to do this? I know how to fill myself with water. I know how to fill myself with dinner tonight.

I know how to eat that way, but you're telling me about spiritual things, and I don't know how to do this. Well, that's where your verb participle comes in. You say, what do you mean? Just this.

The main verb is be filled with the Spirit. It's be filled. Verb participles, these verbal adjectives modify this.

Notice them. Verse 19, you can always tell a verb participle, it ends in ing. You see, it modifies.

So, be filled, addressing one another in Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Be filled, singing, and making. You see them? Addressing, singing, making, melody to the Lord with your heart.

Verse 20, giving, thanks, always. There's our thanksgiving. Giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Submitting. You see all the ing verb participles here? You say, well, yeah, we see them. That is Paul telling you.

Do you want to know about being filled with the Spirit? It's connected to these things. Brethren, we're dealing with Thanksgiving right now, and what I want you to see is there is a very close connection between being filled with the Spirit and thanksgiving. And I can tell you this, thankless people are not filled with the Spirit.

And clearly, this is something Paul's telling us to do, that a Christian can actually be not so filled with the Spirit. In fact, you know what? In the same book, he tells us that you can grieve the Spirit. In another book, he tells us you can quench the Spirit.

The reality is that our relationship with the Spirit is not always the same, and there are things we can do actively in our life. And some of it has to do with submitting to each other. Some of it has to do with the way that we sing unto each other.

But one of the things is giving thanks, striving to be a thankful person. You know what? Being filled can presently, continuously go on. Being filled with the Spirit.

To be filled means to be under the influence of because what does he compare it to? He compares it to being drunk with wine. When you're drunk with wine, it means you're, we call it being under the influence. He wants us under the influence of the Spirit.

And I'll tell you this, if you want to cultivate being filled with the Spirit, then you want to cultivate gratitude in your life because they both go together. And it's hard to know whether what he's saying mainly is if we're filled with the Spirit, these things flow out of that life. Typically, what it means is this is how you approach being filled with the Spirit, by giving yourself to these other things.

It seems like that's the connection. It seems that you do this as you think through your blessings. Brethren, let me tell you, you saw it in Romans 1. Where was all this happening? It was happening up here.

It's in the thinking. And it always comes back to that. If you are actually going to be a people of gratitude, you've got to be a thinking people because people that don't think, don't think.

That's the connection. There's a thinking that results in thanking. There's a thinking that brings us to the place where we recognize God is indeed the creator and everything that is created and everything that I have and every good gift and every perfect gift and nothing, nothing has ever come to me except it's been given to me from heaven.

What do you have that you have not received? The reality is not a single thing. And so often we, you know what happens, we get to the place where we feel like, well, we're deprived. You know, we glum and cast down.

We don't have something that we think we should have or we don't have something that somebody else has. And brethren, gratitude comes from thinking. We complain.

You know what ingrate means? It means ingratitude. It's a rough word. You call somebody an ingrate.

But brethren, this all comes down to a matter of truth. When we don't feel gratitude, it's because we're out of step with the truth. Those people in Romans 1 who didn't thank God, they, what did they do? They

exchanged the truth for a lie.

You see a thankless person, goes hand in hand. That person is going after lies. And brethren, this is a great gauge.

Gratitude in your life, gratitude in your prayer life. How much do you thank in your prayers? How much is, it is so easy for us to petition, but how much do you thank? You see, if you're going to be a person that's going to pray with thankfulness, you have to be a thinking person. People who want, they're desirous people, they're hungry people, or even lusting people.

When people go with the desire, with the hunger, with the appetite, give me, satisfy me. You have to be, you have to go beyond that. You have to be a person that's thinking.

You have to, you know, we do sing a song, count your many blessings, name them one by one. Well, you know, we can sing that. It's, but you have to stop and really think sometimes.

What do I have? This is one of the things about just recently when, or this is one of the things about last night when we heard our sister tell us about what's happened over the last 24 months. Because you know, when you hear it all together like that, it's like, wow, we're a really blessed people, aren't we? Or just recently when I was over there near Nottingham and Jeff interviewed me and I had, I had been thinking and to sit there and recount all those things. And it's, it's just, it was so fresh on my mind when I met with Andy on Monday.

And it's, I'm just saying, we're some of the most blessed people on the face of the earth. You just, you have to, from time to time, recount these things. I know, I know that oftentimes, you know, just having somebody come up and give their testimony again.

And you hear these kinds of things. It's rather than these are such a, it's such a gauge. Paul is clearly making the connection between being filled with the spirit and thankfulness.

You want to gauge how filled you are with the spirit? Look, how much do you complain? How much do you murmur? How much are you discontent? How much are you just, how much does that characterize your life over how much gratitude is there? You can gauge. It's a great measuring device, how much you're actually filled with the spirit, how mature you are, and how in tune with reality. Because people that exchange the truth for a lie, they end up not in reality.

So they end up thinking all sorts of things that aren't even right. Many ask, few think. And brethren, I'll tell you this.

If, if you just think for a second about hell, let me tell you something about hell that maybe you don't think about a whole lot. You have people there right now. You have people right there, right now, just like Luke 16.

The man, the rich man dives in Lazarus. He's, he's in the flames. He desired a drop of water.

People are in that place right now. Scripture speaks about that. There's a holding place.

It's a place of punishment, waiting the day of judgment. Peter tells us about it. These people are never going to get out because all they're going to do is go from there to the lake of fire.

Death and hell are going to be thrown in the lake of fire. Judgment day is the dividing line. Torment forever, weeping, teeth gnashing, no rest.

Why are they there? You say, well, we don't know. What have they done? What did they do? What terrible crimes have they committed? You know what God says, the soul that sins shall die. The wages of sin are death.

They sinned and now they're getting the wage. Sin is paying the wage. What have they done? You think about those people.

Let me tell you something about them. There are a lot of people in that place right now who weren't as bad as you. They were better than you.

They were kinder than you. They were more giving than you. They didn't do all the things you did.

No, there's some that are, yeah, Hitler's there. Mussolini's there. We know.

Horrible people are there. But you know what a lot of people, they were pretty moral people. They were pretty upright people.

They were church going people, but they didn't have Christ. But you know what? They're there. They don't get a drop of water.

You, we can go back right now. We're going to get tea. We're going to get coffee.

You can get a whole glass of water. You can get a whole pitcher of water. They see we drink.

We don't even thank God for glasses of water. I'll guarantee you, you drink one of those. You bring three people up from hell right now and you stand them over here.

You think they'd be pretty grateful for a glass of water, even a drop of water, a teaspoon of water. They'd be extremely grateful. Why aren't we? You see, rather than we take it for granted, a lot of times you just have to stop and think, stop and think.

The vast majority, and you know what the reality is, people out here in this world and in here, in the walls of this church that do not know Christ, their number of days, their number of glasses of water is limited. And every day it's getting smaller and smaller, and it's going to run out. I'll tell you, hell is one of the biggest wake up calls to ingratitude when suddenly it's all taken away and you recognize, I took it all for granted.

Never again, never again will I know water in my tongue. Never again will I see a sunrise. Never again will I hear the laughter of children.

Never again will I walk out on a spring day and breathe deeply of the fresh air. Never again, never again will I sit in front of a fireplace and just feel the heat. Now I'm in the fire.

Never again will I know rest, wake up with a soft pillow under my head, either hearing the rain gently falling outside or the birds singing. Never again. Brethren, hell is a rude awakening to our ingratitude and all we take for granted.

You have life. You have being. You have family or health, marriage, a church.

We have transportation. We have some degree of heat. There is the blue sky.

There are forests and streams. We've got the ability to think and work out problems, to be creative. Some can paint, some can play instruments, and some can build.

We have a variety of food, and we all have clothing on, and we have eyes and ears, and we have the word of God, and there's the spirit of God, and the son of God, a way to escape the wrath to come. He causes his son to rise on the just and the unjust, and he did that. He caused the snow to fall.

I mean, you think about just looking out the window and seeing that snowfall. There's coming a day for the lost, the people that don't give thanks to God, when they will not see snowfall ever again. They'll not feel that snowflake fall on their nose, or be able to run around, and have fun, and throw snowballs at each other.

The time is running out, and men have so much, and they just take it for granted. But we Christians, I mean, on top of it, we've got furniture, and fireplaces, and gardens, and pets, and shoes, and computers, and phones, and friends, and jobs, and school, and the brethren, all these things. Look out to the full moon.

There's stars. There's holidays. There's all this, and then there's God's patience, and God's long-suffering with us, and God's compassion, and the fact that he never leaves us or forsakes us.

He bears with us. He does all this for his name's sake, for Christ's sake, for his mercy's sake. We hear Paul say, thank God for the unspeakable gift, and there's a prospect of glory before us.

You know how David says it, he brought me out into a broad place. He rescued me. He delights in me.

As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. You know what the scripture says, that Lord our God is in our midst, and it says he will exalt over you with loud singing. Brethren, you know what hope we have before us? We have the hope of glory.

We have the hope of judging angels. We're going to sit on Christ's throne with him. We're going to be in the place of a bride.

Your hope is permanent. Your hope is certain. Your hope is forever.

Your inheritance is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven for you. This is the prospect that stands before us. It's there.

It's certain. It's coming, and then what we don't want to forget is all these realities. We deserve hell forever, and yet the reality is, for Christ's sake, God has dealt with us in a way that is not according to our sins.

If you don't thank him, you're not thinking. That's the reality, and when you think about God looking out across, it's like God is so pleased to give to us, to have us look at him and say, wow, this is amazing. You're amazing that you would even make this and give this, even after the sins we've committed to have such mercy on us.

Thank you, and this is the very loop. This is forever. You come to like Ephesians chapter 2 verse 7, and what Paul says is that through all the coming ages, he is going to show his immeasurable grace and kindness.

Through all the coming ages, he is going to show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness. He is just going to heap kindness. One age, it's an age of kindness.

The next age is an age of kindness. The third age, we're talking ages, not days. We're talking like millennia of ages through all eternity.

It's God. He's going to use his almighty creative power to figure out how to just pour on us, and then what's the response? Well, you see, it's, I mean, in heaven, what are they doing? You look at Revelation 4 and Revelation 5, it's all honor and glory and blessing and thanksgiving. Brethren, it is just going to be this continuous, infinite circle of him lavishing and us praising and him lavishing and us praising, and we're going to find our hearts content.

We're going to come to all, we're going to be so satisfied to overflowing to come to the realization that this is exactly what we've always longed for. This, to be in this position where God is giving and we are full of gratitude and worshiping him, it is going to bring such satisfaction to, it delights him, and it is going to bring us to perfect place of satisfaction. I mean, this is it.

This is the prospect of glory before us, and I know I've gone long, so we'll pray. Father, we just ask you to please forgive us for our ingratitude. Lord, we know we're guilty, far too guilty, especially when we are the most blessed people on the face of the earth, those of us in this place that know Christ.

Lord, you've lavished all of mankind. You feed mankind. You cause your rain, your sun to shine, but oh what you've done for those of us that you've redeemed.

Lord, I do think of the song that speaks about, oh, such guilty silence. Lord, we don't want our voices to be quiet when it comes to singing your praises. Lord, help us.

Help us to be remembering people. Help us to think right. We want to be people filled with the Spirit and filled with this kind of thanksgiving, thanking you for everything and all things.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for that unspeakable gift that you've given us, the greatest gift of all, that you didn't withhold your own son for our sake. Thank you. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/wrWLkOjPwec.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tim-conway/dont-deny-god-but-give-thanks-to-him/>

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