

## Living A Life Of Gratitude

A Sermon Delivered on Wednesday evening, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, by  
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What can both brighten your day and bring your relationship with God to greater heights? Discover the life-preserving power of gratitude. There is power in being thankful to God. The more we give thanks with sincerity, the more we realize just how much God has already done which gives us hope that He will do even more. Cultivate a spirit of thanksgiving and graciousness and keep it flowing every day in your life. If you can manage to be thankful in every situation, really believing that God is working everything out for your good, you will end up with victory every single time. The purpose of this message is to share on how you can release God's power by being thankful for all the great things in your life. Learn how showing thankfulness to God can create an encompassing atmosphere of His goodness that you can live in anytime, everywhere you go.

I want to talk about living a life of gratitude. That means being thankful or showing appreciation, or praising God. What's the reason people are showing no gratitude in the last days? Why are people so unthankful? If we'll stop and look around, it's not like there isn't enough to be thankful for. God has done so much for us but sometimes it's easy to forget. It's easy to lose sight that all good things come from God. Here is a verse that goes along with that idea: *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning"* (James 1:17). This is awesome! God never changes. That means He will *always* give us good things! It's hard to be thankful for something you don't remember. It takes effort to remember. That's why Scripture says in Psalm 103 that *"forget not all His benefits"*. God gives more benefits than any system or anybody in this world. Let me read to you some few verses of Psalm 103. *"Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! <sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: <sup>3</sup> Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, <sup>4</sup> Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, <sup>5</sup>Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's"* (Ps. 103:1-5). You may read the whole of Psalm 103 for yourself.

But with all these benefits, it's easy to forget the Lord. We can see a clear example of this in the Old Testament. *"Thus the children of Israel did not remember the Lord their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side".* (Judges 8:34,). [They] *forgot His works and His wonders that He had shown them. Marvellous things He did in the sight of their fathers, In the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. (Ps. 78:11-12), brackets mine.* Holding back our gratitude to God is pride. If we forget what God has done, something else we should watch out for is pride. If we're focused on self, that will get in the way of acknowledging and thanking God. *What do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?* (1 Corinthians 4:7b). It takes a humble heart to show gratitude to God. *"Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name"* (Ps. 29:2). That means doing it when I feel like it and when I don't. Living a life of gratitude is not only the most enjoyable way to live, it's also one of the most powerful ways to change your life. Remember what God has done in your life. Humble yourself and thank Him. It's a lovely thing!

Express your gratitude to God. Expressing gratitude is about showing your heartfelt appreciation to God - being grateful or being thankful. God wants us to practise gratitude every day. *"Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"* (1 Thes. 5:16-18). This is a responsibility to which we are all commanded to take. Expressing gratitude will help you start being more grateful and appreciative of the things God has done in your life. Every good and perfect thing comes from God. If it's good, it's from God, if it's bad, it's not from God. Notice good things, look for them and appreciate them. Delight in them, absorb, and really pay attention to those good things. It's always important to have an attitude of thankfulness. Express your gratitude to God or thank Him for who He is, what He has done and what He is about to do. Showing gratitude is very important to God. Expressing your gratitude to God makes things happen, it affects you, it affects God and it destroys the work of the devil.

Gratitude affects you, it affects the devil, and it affects God. It touches everything and every part of your life. Likewise, a lack of gratitude affects you in a negative way, it turns the devil loose in your life, and doesn't bless God. Don't be like those lepers who are described in the 17th chapter of Luke, having been healed by Jesus, only one returned to give thanks. <sup>11</sup> *Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee.* <sup>12</sup> *As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance* <sup>13</sup> *and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"* <sup>14</sup> *When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed.* <sup>15</sup> *One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice.* <sup>16</sup> *He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him - and he was a Samaritan.* <sup>17</sup> *Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?"* <sup>18</sup> *Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?"* <sup>19</sup> *Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well" (Luke 17:11-19 NIV).*

Your faith isn't complete without gratitude. Colossians 2:7 says that you abound in faith with thanksgiving. No thanksgiving equals not abounding in faith. Remember, there were 10 lepers, but only one returned to give thanks and he was the one who received not just the physical healing, but the salvation of his soul. Unbelievers are like the thankless lepers who receive anything and everything good from God but render him absolutely no thanks. On the other hand, we are commanded to thank him in everything. There are moments when you naturally, right then and there, feel filled with gratitude. These are moments when you say to yourself, "Oh, wow, this is amazing!" or "How great is this!" But what about those times when things don't seem to go your way? Well, the Bible says be always in gratitude (1 Thes. 5:17). The believer operates in a completely different world, a completely different realm. We can show gratitude always because of what we know to be true about God and his plan for us. And we can be thankful in everything for the very same reason. Nearly everyone agrees that thanksgiving is good. Showing gratitude is good, but very few feel any responsibility to express their gratitude to God when they don't feel like it. They think that thanksgiving is just a response to what happens and that if everything goes right, they will automatically do it. That is definitely not the case.

*"Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thes. 5:16-18).* These aren't suggestions. They are commands. Are you truly thankful? (Pause and think on that for a moment). That's a huge question. For most Christians, if they're honest, they would have to admit that their happiness is very conditional. It's sad, but it's true. Circumstances control most people's happiness. But that's the problem: True joy and happiness don't come from circumstances. The Apostle Paul gave us a great example of this. He had a vision from God that he was supposed to go and minister to the people in Macedonia. *"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (Acts 16:9-10).* Even though Paul and his co-worker Silas had a divine mandate from God to go and minister there, everything didn't go perfectly. Within just a few days, they were beaten and thrown in the worst part of the prison with their feet and hands in stocks (Acts 16:16-24).

But look at Paul and Silas's response to this: The Bible says, *"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:25).* This is awesome! After the awful treatment that these two men endured, they were giving thanks - praying and singing praises unto God. They were so loud, in fact, that the other prisoners could hear them. And if you look this up in the Greek, it literally means that the prisoners hung on every word Paul and Silas were singing. They weren't just listening with their physical ears; they were listening with their hearts. Their praise ministered to the prisoners. When was the last time your praise in a terrible situation ministered to someone? The prisoners were so blessed by Paul and Silas that when an earthquake came and the prison doors were opened and all of the chains fell off, none of them escaped. This is a great lesson that we must all learn. Decide today to live a life of gratitude.

Christ is the only saviour of the world. Have you received Him? If you will, please pray this prayer after me, saying every word from your heart...

**Dear Lord, I recognise that I am a sinner and need to be saved.  
I understand that Jesus died in my place and suffered the judgment of all of my sins.  
I believe that Jesus rose from the dead and He is at the right hand of the father.  
Lord Jesus, I surrender my Life to you.  
Come and Live in my heart and be my Lord and saviour.  
Thank You for saving me. Amen!**