

The Fragrance of Thanksgiving

by Aaron Hurst

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having a thankful heart and giving thanks to God in all circumstances. It highlights the power of gratitude to transform our outlook on life, relationships, and situations, drawing examples from biblical stories like Daniel, Jesus feeding the crowd, and the thankful leper. The message encourages a lifestyle of thanksgiving as a foundation for blessings and joy, even in challenging times.

Scripture: Romans 1:21, Ezra 3:10, Psalms 35:18, Luke 17:11, John 6:11

Topics: "Thankfulness", "Gratitude in Adversity"

Description

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Transcript

Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life. It's in Him that we live and move and have our being. Our lives are secure in Him.

Our salvation is secure in the Lord. I feel like the Lord has given me a message to share and yet I am sobered this morning at just the reality of how frail our life is. You know, often COVID is somewhere out there.

It seems very near this morning. With my brother, Mos. Appreciate so much that update and that we could pray together for our brother Mos and others.

It's good for us. It's good for us to go to the house of mourning. Just yesterday, full term, stillborn baby was laid in the grave.

A mother looking so forward to holding her precious child in her arms and to care for it. To nurture that precious life that God took a little bud before He even took a breath in this life. So we do well, we do well to consider.

That our life is but a vapor. It's but for a moment. And then praise God to the child of God.

To be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord. Today, if you hear His voice, harden not your heart as in the day of provocation. Today, if you hear His voice, open your heart to the Lord to receive from Him life eternal.

The message that I have prepared for might almost seem a little bit out of flow with what I've just shared. And yet I believe it has a very real potential to minister the life of Christ to us when loved ones are passing, when sickness is present, disappointments in life. Job was in a deep trial, deep trial of his faith.

Whether he would worship God for his nature and his character and who God is, or whether his faith would fail in the test. And we know that Job worshiped God in the face of tremendous loss and abandonment. His own wife saying, why do you yet retain your integrity? Why don't you just curse God and die? But Job said, though He slay me, yet will I serve Him.

Hallelujah. So I believe what the Lord has laid on my heart to share today has the potential to majorly impact my life, the life of my wife, the life of my children, my family, my acquaintances. And I believe that this, its effect could be likened to a fragrance.

You can often pretty readily identify whether a person has this in reality deep in their core. And it's like a fragrance. It's like a good odor.

I guess this should be applied maybe somewhere like here maybe, you know. Maybe today some of us need to apply this after we hear the message a bit farther. Of course, you know, maybe even better before we apply the deodorant, we should get some clean and fresh body wash and we should wash away that filth.

It could also be likened to the fragrance of a flower. These aren't very fragrant yet, but I think these right here will probably open up and give off a beautiful fragrance. What we want to talk about today is thankfulness.

And as we consider thankfulness, what is it at the core? Is it a feeling? What is thankfulness or gratitude at the deep level standard, that deep core, that deep inner level? What is it? Can you tell if a person has it? Did you ever hear it said, oh, that person, they're a thankful person. God forbid, but did you ever hear it said, that person's unthankful. So what is thankfulness? What is it? How does a person receive it or attain it? Is it a gift that you just receive and is it a spiritual gift? Yes.

Is it a spiritual gift? Somebody said yes. Somebody said no. I think if we would study into the scripture, I don't believe it's listed with the spiritual gifts.

Certainly, if you have spiritual gifts given by God, you will most likely be a thankful person. Would that be safe to say? If the spirit of God is at work in your life, is it something for just an elect few maybe? No. You think it might be attainable to every person? Could it be? Yes.

Might it come as a fragrance flowing out of our relationship with Jesus Christ from in the depth of a heart that has been redeemed? Yes. Out of the heart, proceed actions, attitudes. Proverbs 17, 22 tells us, a merry heart doeth good like a medicine.

A merry heart, a cheerful heart. Have you ever seen someone with a cheerful merry heart that is unthankful? Do the two go together? Or have you seen people that are thankful and they have a cheerful countenance and heart? Yes. Yes.

A merry heart, a cheerful heart doeth good like a medicine. Oh, it's like a healing balm to the soul, isn't it? Not only to my own soul, but to my wife. Oh, if I'm complaining and I'm murmuring and I'm grumbling, that's like filth.

Oh, it has a bad odor. Well, let's just cover it up a little bit with some deodorant. I think that's a better answer.

Let's confess our murmuring and complaining and wash and be cleansed and sanctified with far more than body wash, but this is just for illustration, with the blood of Jesus. Have our sinfulness of unthankfulness and murmuring and complaining be washed deep into the inner core. You see, the deodorant's a little bit like saying, I'm sorry, please forgive me, but not really putting on that garment of praise, that thankfulness of Christ.

Well, is thankfulness, a thankful heart, is that an option for the child of God who's been born again? Is it optional? I mean, I can just sort of, I mean, come on now. My circumstances in life have been pretty bad. If you'd know what all I just faced this week, you'd be hanging too and you'd be complaining and murmuring also.

Really? So do the circumstances of life determine my thankfulness? I'm afraid too many times I am affected by my circumstances of life more than I should be. Maybe that's why the scriptures teach us to offer the, and I'm leaving the word out, of thanksgiving. What is it? Sacrifice.

I will offer to be the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Psalm 116, 17, I will call upon the name of the Lord. You know, there's a higher plane to live at than just being blown about by my circumstances and my feelings.

Right? A man who has no control over his own spirit is like a city with a wall broken down and, you know, all manner of evil thoughts and frustrations and even bitterness and anger can come in. But oh, you have control over your own spirit by the power of the Holy Ghost. And when we begin to offer up a sacrifice of thanksgiving, what tends to happen? Come on, brother, sister, you know.

You've experienced it. What happens? Joy starts to come. We focus on God and on his faithfulness and his mercies and his blessings and we begin to give God thanks.

Yes, thanksgiving. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. I was so blessed as we sang that this morning.

Be thankful unto him and bless his name. You know, the Bible is filled with over 100 references to thanksgiving. We won't look at them all this morning.

We'll look at a few. In 1 Thessalonians 5, he tells us, Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning some of you. Did I misquote it? This is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Yes, concerning you and me. In everything give thanks. In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

So many scriptures. Paul wrote to the Romans, to all that be in Rome, Romans 1, 7, Beloved of God, called to be saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all.

Another very parallel scripture, there'll be quite a few of these. In Philippians, Paul says, To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons, Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.

That sounds very similar to Romans. I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all. And if you look at Paul's opening salutation to his letters to the churches, he often says something along this manner.

Oh, he thanks God for them. It's real practical here this morning. Are you thankful for the people in your life? Paul writing to the Romans, to those called to be saints.

First, I mean, it's just like bursting out of his heart. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all. Are you thankful? Okay, now remember, what is the definition of thankful? What is it? Call something out.

What is it? What is truly, true gratitude? What is it? Can somebody tell me? Help me out. You Bible scholars, you saints of the Lord, acknowledging a giver. Okay, yes, that's an expression of thankfulness.

We're looking at what is it? Is it an emotion? Is it a conviction? What is it, Timothy? An attitude. Oh, I like that. It's an attitude.

What is thanksgiving? Oh, sometimes it's a choice. They both said it at the same time. A choice, yes.

Often, it boils down to choice. Acknowledging benefit received, yes. Oh, this is good.

Some more. This is growing. Expression of humility.

Acknowledging all that I have, yes. Gratitude. What was back there? Appreciation, yes.

This is good. This is good. In the back.

A spirit, okay. Could it be a spirit about us? The joy of the Lord, yes. Worship, praise God.

A worldview, ah, yes. A destination. A sacrifice, yes.

So, I'm sorry? Surrender, yes. Oh, thank you, Jesus. I should have a scribe up here writing all this down for us.

Anybody remember what Paul was talking about in his sermon last week? What was it about? Remember, remember. So, if I'm thankful, I show appreciation. Did I hear that? Yeah.

If I'm thankful for the people in my life, how do I relate to them? Appreciation. Honor, perhaps. Humility.

Humility, like we heard in our lesson this morning. You know, God is exalted high above all, and we are humble underneath. Oh, an attitude of gratitude.

It's like a fragrance. I don't want anybody to start sneezing here, but have you smelled it yet? It's a beautiful fragrance. It's like a, it's like a healing balm.

Have you ever noticed that? The temptation is there. Say, boy, I'm sure going to pass up a good opportunity to complain here. I'm going to praise the Lord anyway, and give thanks.

And your whole outlook begins to change. Right? Yes? All right. Thankful for the people.

I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. I want to tell you something, husband.

You cannot afford the high cost of thinking evil thoughts toward your spouse, towards your wife. You can't afford to think about him even. You see, it begins even in our thoughts and in our heart.

Because as a man thinks, so he is. It's amazing. But praise God we have a weapon.

To cast down those thoughts. Our weapon is mighty through God to the pulling down of those evil thoughts, those strongholds. You don't have to think evil of your wife.

Wife, you don't have to think negative, bad thoughts about your husband. He never this. He always does.

You know, you don't have to. You can bring those thoughts into captivity. And you can cast them down in the name of Jesus.

And you begin to thank God for your spouse. Oh, I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Ah, yes.

So let's be honest with ourselves. What happens in my heart when I think about every one of you? Is there an uprising of unholy feeling in the breast? Unsanctified motions that want to start clamoring for your attention and for your allegiance? Yes. Thankful for my spouse.

Thankful for my daddy. Hallelujah. I am so thankful for my daddy.

I am so glad he's my dad. Ah, first of all. Lord, thank you.

You preserved my dad, my mom alive. They woke up this morning with health and strength. And they're busy about the house.

And they're packing my lunch. And they're washing my clothes. And oh, thank you, Lord, for my mom.

Thank you, Lord, for my mom. She reads Bible stories to me. She doesn't scold me when I fall and hurt my knee and need a band-aid.

And it needed washed up or whatever. Oh, thank you. She doesn't tune me out when I'm struggling in adolescence.

She listens to my heart. And she shares wisdom with me. Oh, I'm so thankful for my mom.

Hallelujah. You know, that attitude. I mean, I just got to spray this a little more.

It's just like a fragrance. Oh, it's beautiful. It's like a healing medicine.

It's like a balm. Oh, it just makes my marriage an oasis of blessing. It makes my family, my home just a joyful, happy place to be.

When there's gratitude and thankfulness, I'm so thankful for my big sister. Even though I think she's a little bossy sometimes. I bless God for my big sister.

My little brother. My big brother. He always gets to do everything first, but I'm so thankful.

He's leading the way. He's paving the way, and I can just come and follow behind. You see, I was the youngest in the family, so I had seven others pave the way before me.

Thankful. Praise God. It has the power to totally transform your life.

Thankful. I'm so thankful for my cousins. My aunts and my uncles.

Even uncle, I won't say his name. Almost did. Yes, I can learn something from that uncle.

Maybe I think he's a little bit too strict or eccentric or whatever. But I'm thankful for my uncle. I'm glad they aren't all the same.

Different character, different color, different personality. I'm thankful for my grandpa and my grandma. Oh, I spent a lot of years with my grandpa Snyder.

I never got to meet my grandpa Hearst because he died when my dad was 14. But oh, Grandma Hearst, she was feisty. A little lady that barely weighed much over 100 pounds, maybe 120.

But a heart that was just huge. We go visit Grandma Hearst. Every week, very faithfully.

Thankful. I thank my God for you all. Hallelujah.

My employer. My boss at work. My neighbor.

The one who lets his dog run on my property. Yes, I'm thankful for my neighbor. I'm thankful for my teacher.

I'm thankful for the elders, the deacons. I'm thankful for my brothers and sisters in this church. Hallelujah.

I'm thankful that I'm in the body of Christ. I'm thankful God brought me here. I'm humbled to be here.

I think I'm telling you the truth, as far as I know my heart. I really am. I'm really humbled to be here.

I get to serve with a beautiful ministry team of various differing gifts. I get to share together with those gifts and those blessings. I get to fellowship with you all.

I wouldn't know you if it weren't for Jesus Christ. It's amazing. I'm thankful for my Lord Jesus Christ and his body of believers.

Yes, I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Yes, praying always with all prayer, supplication, thankful, giving of thanks. My thankful in the hard times, thankful in the good times, thankful in the trials of life, thankful in the blessings of life, thankful for the sunshine, the beautiful day, thankful for the rain.

Yes, I'm thankful for the people in my life. We have a lot of examples in scripture of thanksgiving, and we'll look at just a few. Now, when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, that whoever would make a petition unto any other God save this big ugly idol, he went into his house, windows being opened in his chamber toward Jerusalem, and he kneeled down upon his knees three times a day and gave thanks before his God as he did a four time.

Wow, you're laying your life on the line, Daniel. Don't you know this? Don't you know that there's a lion's den for those who refuse to obey the king's commandment? Thankful. We're going to bring this to a close

here real shortly.

There's a lot of other scriptures. I want to look at one. I want to consider our Lord Jesus, and then also look at one other one.

But our Lord Jesus, when there was a crowd there on that hillside that day as he was preaching, and he said, what are we going to do? The people are hungry. They're fainting. We can't send them away.

Fainting. And while there was a lad there with a couple of loaves and fishes, you remember the story? And Jesus said, make the people sit down. And he took those couple loaves and fishes, and he gave thanks.

And then he break them and gave them out. I think there's a lesson in there for us. There's an application there for us.

An attitude of gratitude, a thankful heart. Out of a thankful heart, out of a rejoicing, overflowing heart of gratitude comes the blessing of the Lord. And we give thanks for what we have, and not what we don't have.

Complaining about the lack, falling into the temptation or the sin of jealousy or envy. But no, we give thanks for what we have. Jesus gave thanks.

Even that night when he was to be betrayed, he took the cup and the bread, and he gave thanks. Well, there was ten lepers who heard Jesus was coming into this village, and they lifted up their voices and they cried out with a loud voice, Jesus, Jesus, have mercy on us. And when Jesus saw them, he did something sort of rather unexpected, maybe.

You know, these ten lepers, well, Jesus, when you healed the other leper, ah, you touched him, didn't you? Now you're telling us to just go. Go show yourselves to the priest. But they obeyed, and they went.

And as they were going, they were healed. As they were going to show themselves to the priest. Now, in the old covenant law, in order to be declared clean from your leprosy, after you were cured, you had to go show yourself to the priest.

So they might have connected that. You know, we're going to go show ourselves to the priest, thinking under the old covenant there about the purifying and the cleansing. But it says, as they went, they were cleansed.

And then one of them, when he saw that he was cleansed, he turned around and went back to Jesus. I don't know how far he had gone already down his journey with his other friends to the priest, but he turned back, and he went back to Jesus, and with a loud voice glorified God. And he fell down on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks.

And he was a Samaritan. And of course, we know Jesus said, well, where's the nine? Weren't there ten cleansed? Is only this stranger come to give glory to God, only this one? Then he said something to him. He said, arise, go thy way, thy faith has made thee whole.

He returned to Jesus just full of praise and thanksgiving. And he got a blessing I believe that the other nine didn't get. Because he came back, Jesus said unto him, thy faith has made thee whole.

Now, leprosy was a very dreaded disease. It could cause your fingers to fall off. It could cause your nose to become partially eaten away.

And it was a very, very awful disease. Those nine lepers that went and saw that they were healed from their leprosy, I don't know if they were made whole as in perhaps this one, maybe the fingers came back, maybe the nose grew back. But he does say, thy faith has made thee whole.

Those other lepers may only have received a physical healing where this leper, he experienced salvation. His faith in the Lord Jesus Christ made him whole. Well, I think we are going to bring this to a close.

Just give a little summary. Does God desire that we give him thanks? Yes, it is repeated and repeated and repeated in scripture. One of the signs of the last days and of the great falling away is that when people who know God, but they do not glorify him as God, and they do not give him thanks, that's found in Romans 1, 21.

Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, and professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. In 2nd Timothy 3, it tells us that in the last days, perilous times will come. It gives a list of awful sins that we would not want ever to be partakers of.

But then he throws right in the middle of that list of horrible sins, unthankful. People will become unthankful. Let's be of those who give God thanks and praise for his wonderful blessings and his provision.

I'll close with this scripture out of Ezra, of an example of God's people rejoicing in the Lord and giving God thanks. Ezra 3, verse 10, And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the princes in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the son of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord after the ordinance of David, king of Israel. And they sang together by chorus in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord.

Because he is good, for his mercy endureth forever. And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and the chief fathers, who were ancient men and had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was before their eyes, wept with a loud voice and shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout for joy from the noise of weeping of the people.

For the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off. Oh, when the foundation of the temple was laid, they dedicated themselves to the Lord with thanksgiving and blessing and praise is the foundation of your house, a foundation of thanksgiving. Are you a thankful person? Psalm 35, 18, I will give thee thanks in the great congregation.

I will praise thee among much people. Somebody mentioned that this morning. What is thanksgiving? Many times it's a decision because of who God is and who I am in Christ.

If you wait for the feeling, you'll be up and down. But if you bless and thank God for his faithfulness and steadfastness, you can be a thankful person in all things. And the scriptures tell us, in everything give thanks.

For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Thank you for your attention. Let's pray.

Father in heaven, I pray that you would take this word and I want to be the first partaker of the fruit. I have the capability to murmur, to complain, but Lord, I want to be partaker of the fruit of thanksgiving and praise. And Father, I pray you would bless this congregation in Jesus name.

Amen.

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