

An Attitude of Gratitude

by Duane Troyer

This sermon emphasizes the importance of gratitude and thankfulness, highlighting the power of having an attitude of gratitude in overcoming challenges and maintaining faith. It explores the concept of intentionally maintaining a thankful state of mind, even in the face of difficulties, and how gratitude can lead to contentment and joy. The message encourages a mindset of humility, recognizing God's goodness, and learning to be grateful in all circumstances.

Duration: 1:18:43

Scripture: Colossians 3:15, Ezra 3:11, Psalms 100:4, Psalms 27:1

Topics: "Gratitude", "Contentment in Challenges"

Description

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Transcript

To be here again, I'm very thankful for what was shared in the opening and I think it will not be hard to tie it in or apply it to what I'd like to share today and I have a lot of things I'd like to share. Let's stand for a reading of part of Colossians 3. Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. Therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead, to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience.

And in them you also once walked when you were living in them, but now you also put them all aside. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth do not lie to one another since you lay aside the old self with its evil practices and put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the one who created him. A renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, and free man, but Christ is all

and in all.

So as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other. Whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God, whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. Let's pray.

O God, we ask you to be with us today and help us and guide us, and I pray that you would guide my thoughts and help us as we look into your words, that we could be filled with this thankfulness, this gratitude that you talked about, that we could put to death the deeds of the flesh, that we could mortify them and be conformed in your image. So help us, Lord, and we pray for your blessing on this meeting and on the rest of this day. We do this in the name of the Lord.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Several weeks ago, when I was helping Brother D. John on his property, digging in water lines and septic lines and electric lines and setting up his mobile home, one day, on one thing or another, we were having a conversation, and John made a statement that caught my attention, and it's just a pretty straightforward and simple statement. He said, the Lord is teaching us, the Lord is trying to teach us gratitude. Nothing seems very special to that.

We should all know that, right? But somehow, I guess partly because it's something I need to grow in and it's something we don't talk about much, it got my attention. It is from that statement that is birthed much of what I'd like to talk about today. The Lord is not just wanting to teach us repentance and baptism and non-resistance and the proper understanding of marriage and about not swearing an oath.

He's wanting to teach us gratitude, how to be grateful, how to be thankful. And here in Colossians 3, he's, you know, among all the things that he's describing here about the believer or the new man, or describing or instructing, it's like a description and an instruction, of the person who is raised with Christ, who seeks those things which are above and mortifies the members on earth, that you once walked in. Now you put aside anger and malice and slander and all these things, abusive speech, and you're being renewed in the image of Christ.

You're being conformed, you're being made a new person in Christ's image. You're putting on compassion, you're putting on kindness, bear with one another, put on love. And then in verse 15 here he says, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called to be one body and be thankful.

It's a command. It's a command to be thankful. And he goes on in verse 16 to say, let the word of Christ richly dwell within you with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

He's telling us to express it, to express this gratitude in songs, in praises, in hymns. And he goes on in verse 17 to say, whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. Whatever we do, both word and deed, it should be done with and in and through thankfulness to God.

That's pretty all encompassing to what we do from morning till evening and evening till morning. God is not only wanting us to be full of gratitude, in the second chapter of Colossians, Paul says he wants us to be overflowing with gratitude. Overflowing with gratitude.

That means it should be affecting our surroundings. When we have a bucket of water and we keep pouring it in and it starts to overflow, it starts to water and saturate the ground around it. That's how full of thankfulness we should be.

It should be running out of us. I know a lot of you girls and single sisters are memorizing Colossians. I really appreciate it.

It's full of this. Here in chapter 4 in verse 2 it says, devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving. That's what I want to talk about, having an attitude of gratitude.

Not just an occasional expression, not just when things go good, but having an attitude of gratitude. Something that fills us, not only fills us, but overflows from us. When we're filled with gratitude, it confounds the enemy.

The wrath and envy and malice and bitterness that would destroy us loses its power when it's up against a thankful heart. It can't even find a foothold to start attacking. James, the brother of our Lord, told us to be thankful when we're tempted.

When we're tried, count it all joy. Be thankful for that. Why? Because here's an opportunity for it to work something good in us.

So be thankful for that. Paul says in Ephesians, in everything give thanks. An attitude of gratitude should be one of the distinguishing marks of Christ's followers.

We should stand out. We should be a separate people, non-conformed to the world in this area. And one of the reasons is, unthankfulness is a mark of a godless person.

You know there in Romans 1 where he talks about how the wrath of God will come upon the godless people, so they deny the Lord, and it talks about all those things that happen to them to the point where he gives them over to a reprobate mind. Well, one of the things he says there in Romans 1 is that they did not honor him as God or give him thanks. This is the mark of a godless person.

They did not give him thanks. Man's propensity is to be negative. It seems like we are hardwired to complain.

Did you ever hear of someone coming home from town, and you ask them how it went, and he says, it was great, I hit six go-lights. Nobody calls them go-lights. Even though they're just as green as they are red,

we're just negative.

They're all stoplights, right? And we complain about those. We're hardwired to be that way. That's how the natural man is, but the Lord wants us to learn gratitude.

He wants us to have a new heart. David Brazil once said that, I think he wrote somewhere in one of his books, I think he said maybe some Christian psychiatrist from India wrote this to him, and said that 80% of man's problems are from bitterness and envy in their hearts. True or not, I don't know, but let's face it, the natural man is full of these things on the inside, these things that we're supposed to be cleansed from and put to death and become a new man.

In Hebrews 13, 15 it says, Therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. The fruit of our lips, right? That's what we speak, what comes out of our mouth is the fruit of our lips. And now I want you to think about, and here it talks about offering up this, I'm not sure why it says the sacrifice of praise, maybe somebody has an explanation for that, but basically the praises to God should be the fruit of our lips.

If you can imagine how pleased God is when someone in their old self had been a murderer, he had been shedding innocent blood, his hands were stained with the blood of people, and this man repents and he becomes a new man, and these same hands now start dealing a portion to the hungry and feeding the poor. That is very, very pleasing to God. He is pleased with those hands.

Or if there were feet that were swift to running to mischief, and then the person becomes a new man, and instead he uses those feet to visit the sick and the imprisoned, God is pleased with that. Well, God is equally pleased when these lips of ours, who used to complain and grumble and just be unsatisfied, when they start thanking him and praising him, he is pleased with that. When they start singing hymns of praise, and praising God does not just mean saying, praise God and praise the Lord, right? Sure, that has its appropriate place, but sometimes you meet people and they say that a lot.

That's their phrase, like, oh, praise God, oh, praise the Lord. I don't think God is displeased with that, but I would like you to think about what might be more pleasing to God. Imagine in just this natural sense, we have a workplace.

Let's say we have a construction crew. There's the boss man and he has a handful of guys working for him. And they go out on the construction site, they're building a house, and every day the customer stops by and he walks around to look at the progress and see what's being done, and he watches the guys work for an hour or two.

Suppose these employees, for some reason or another, their way of praising the boss man would be to just often say, praise the boss man. The customer walks around and says, hey, you're making good progress today, and they say, praise the boss man. Or there's this little part that he says, I see that's a time-consuming little section there, and they say, praise the boss man.

Maybe the customer would think these guys appreciate the boss, maybe he'd be a little confused too, don't you think, possibly? But what if he went on the job site and he told the workers, you guys are making good progress today, and they'd say, you know what, that boss man of ours, he has taught us the most efficient way to get this done, he's done so good at teaching us, we just love working together. What if he said, I don't know, that part there is kind of time-consuming, and they'd say, you know what, the boss man

told us this particular part, be extra careful, this is a very critical part, double-check everything. He's so precise, he wants everything done so right.

What if he walked around the corner and the worker said, you know that boss man of ours, he only accepts the best materials. If you see a load of lumber coming out here that's not top quality, he'll send it back. The boss man is so good to us.

That customer would go home and say, man, those guys really like their boss man. They really like working for him. And he sounds like a real good guy.

He sounds like a real good guy, yeah. Anyway, just don't get me wrong, like the phrase, praise the Lord and praise God, they have their appropriate places. But praising God is something way, way beyond that.

It should be. It should be something in which we are recognizing and expressing our appreciation for the hand of God in everything. In a similar way, like, okay, it should come from an attitude of gratitude, like from the very core of our being, we really truly are thankful.

See, if we teach our children to say thank you, and we should, if our children receive something and we teach them to say thank you, they receive something and they forget it, you say, I'll say thank you. Like, you're not actually teaching them to be thankful by doing that. You should still do that because you're teaching them to be polite and we should be polite.

But you're not necessarily teaching them to be thankful just by saying thank you. Just like somebody is not necessarily always praising God just when he says praise God. But it needs to come from the fact that it's so much more special when the child is actually thankful and from his heart flows a thank you, right? He is actually thankful.

He's not only polite, he's thankful and polite. I want to go through a story in 2 Chronicles 20. And it's about Jehoshaphat.

And Jehoshaphat, I'm not going to read chapter 17 and 19 that talk about Jehoshaphat and what he was doing as a king, but it's pretty neat. He was bringing some really good godly reform to Judah. I mean, he was setting judges up city by city.

He was telling these judges, watch what you're doing, you're not judging for man but for God. He said, take no bribes, show no partiality. In Jerusalem, he appointed priests and Levites saying, whatever cause comes before you, warn the people that they do not transgress against the Lord.

It says that Jehoshaphat took delight in the ways of the Lord. It says he sent leaders and sons of mighty men from city to city, teaching the people the ways of the Lord. And these men went from city to city throughout the day and it says they took with them the book of the laws of God and they taught the people and fear of God came upon the people.

There were good things happening in the land of Judah. People were turning to righteousness, people were turning to holiness. And then, something happened.

Something that will always happen when this kind of thing starts happening. An attack came. The adversary, the enemy of God cannot bear such righteousness.

That old serpent, the devil, is fuming and spewing over any progress made toward godliness and holiness. And it's one thing if here and there there's a few scattered people who know the ways of the Lord, but these guys were going around preaching and teaching and people were coming to know the ways of the Lord. You can look down through the pages of history when God's people step it up.

When God's people get a vision for the furtherance of the kingdom of God you can be certain that there is another group of people stepping it up. You can be sure that there are attacks and accusations and envy and all kinds of persecution in the nation. And that's what happened.

Let's read here in 2nd Chronicles 20. After this, the sons of Moab and the sons of Ammon and others from the Minuites came to the battle against Jehoshaphat. And some came and told Jehoshaphat saying, a great multitude has come against you from beyond the sea, from Syria.

They are in Hazazon, Tamar. And Jehoshaphat was afraid and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered to seek the Lord and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.

Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem before the new court in the house of the Lord and said, Lord God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? And do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? And in your hand, is there not power and might so that no one is able to withstand you? Are you not the Lord who drove out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and gave it to the seed of Abraham, your friend, forever? And in it they settled and built you a sanctuary. In it to your name, saying, if disaster comes upon us, whether sword, judgment, death, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you, for your name is in this house. It cries out to you in our affliction and you will hear and save.

Here are the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel capture when they came out of the land of Egypt. They turned from them and did not destroy them. Now they are here attempting to throw us out of the inheritance you gave us.

Lord our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude coming up against us. We do not know what to do to them, but our eyes are upon you. Now all Judah stood before the Lord with their wives and their children.

And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jehaviel, the son of Zechariah. And he said, Listen, King Jehoshaphat, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, thus says the Lord to you. Do not be afraid, nor dismayed, because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.

Go down against them tomorrow. They will surely come up by the ascent of Ziz. And you will find them at the end of the river before the desert of Jeruel.

You will not need to fight in this battle. Understand that the salvation of the Lord is with you. Judah and Jerusalem, do not fear and be dismayed.

Go out against them tomorrow, for the Lord is with you. And Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord and worshipped him. And the Levites of the sons of Kohath and the sons of Korah stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.

So they rose early in the morning and went to the desert of Tekoa. And as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and cried out and said, Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Trust in the Lord your God and you shall be established.

Trust his prophets and you shall prosper. And he consulted with the people and appointed singers and those who should confess and praise the beauty of holiness. And they went out before the army and said, Give thanks to the Lord for his mercy endures forever.

Now when they began to sing and give praise, the Lord allowed the sons of Ammon to fight against Moab and Mount Seir, he who had come against Judah, and they were defeated. For the sons of Ammon and Moab stood against the inhabitants of Mount Seir and utterly killed and destroyed them. And when they had killed the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

So when Judah came to a place overlooking the desert, they saw the multitude and there were all the dead bodies fallen to the earth. No one had escaped. When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoils, they found a great deal of cattle and babies and spoils and precious articles which they stripped off for themselves.

And they spent three days gathering the spoils because there was so much. And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Blessing for there they blessed the Lord. That is why the place has been called the Valley of Blessing until this day.

Then every man of Judah returned to Jerusalem with Jehoshaphat in front of them with great joy for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies. So they came to Jerusalem, to the house of the Lord with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets. And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of the land when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel.

Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet for his God gave him rest all around. What an amazing victory. I mean, they went up against this multitude that they were so afraid of.

They had been so afraid of. And Jehoshaphat did not put his fiercest warriors and his mightiest men of valor up front in the front rows. No, he chose out his best singers.

And he put this group of singers up front. And they went out singing and praising God and singing about the beauty of his holiness. And when the enemy heard this.

And this was not battle hymn music with a marchy theme to it. This was praises for his mercy. And the enemy was confounded and confused.

They had either not the power or not the unity to go up and fight against something like this. And they just started fighting each other. And when Israel came up in the King James it says the watchtower when they came up on this place where they overlooked the valley there was nothing there but a whole bunch of dead bodies.

The enemy was utterly defeated. That's pretty amazing. Maybe one of the most amazing battles fought in Israel.

But let's take a closer look at some of the things that were happening here. Jehoshaphat he was a godly man but he was also very human. When I don't know who first saw this multitude coming was it a

watchman somewhere maybe a shepherd out keeping the sheep saw this huge multitude coming and somebody came running to Jerusalem with the word of what happened Jehoshaphat was afraid.

He was very human. And there is nothing wrong with being afraid if we correctly respond to it. Courage is not the absence of fear it's the overcoming of fear.

You know I've met people people who seem to me so so happy-go-lucky so light about about any trouble so kind of unconcerned about any potential dangers that sometimes I just wonder does this person take anything seriously? What would it take for him to be like serious about something? I've met people who were afraid but they were too proud to let anyone know they tried to fake happiness they tried to fake confidence try to make it appear like everything's okay I've met people of course that when they're afraid it just drives them into despair and they they shut up and they give up things aren't going my way it's very self-centered but Jehoshaphat was none of these in verse 3 it says Jehoshaphat was afraid and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaim the facts throughout all Judah that's a really good response when something comes up that is deeply concerning and troubling and I'm impressed I'm impressed with the unity here it says that everybody in Judah came together in Jerusalem they heard about this and they all came together and they sought the Lord it says that the wives and the children came together they all fasted they all sought the Lord with such unity for begging for God a word from God begging for protection it says they fasted in Jehoshaphat's prayer they gave recognition to God's power they acknowledged his covenant they acknowledged that we have no power against this multitude and our eyes are upon you it reminded me of that message Brother Daniel gave some time ago about how he noticed a pattern in the prayers of the people of old here's some of the things that happened they all acknowledged the power of God they all acknowledged the covenant that he has with his people and they all acknowledged their undone-ness without his help and here it says we look to you and to such to such a unified seeking of the Lord's will and protection the Spirit of the Lord gave them a very clear answer to one of the Levites he said don't be dismayed because of this multitude see the salvation of the Lord the Lord is with you and they bowed their faces to the ground and worshipped him you know I know I know we have brothers and sisters who take things very seriously who when we hear an accusation whether it be against us personally or against us as a group we don't just dismiss it lightly it affects us deeply sometimes we spend sleepless nights sometimes it makes us hang our harps on the willow for a while I'm thankful for that I'm thankful I'm thankful we don't want to be people who who are just light and flippant about what people say we don't want to have this arrogance that we can just easily dismiss any accusations as a false accusation because we're right we don't want to be those people the world would say what we need is positive thinking what we need is a bit more self confidence a bit more self esteem but the problem with positive thinking is that it always only operates on a surface level right it never gets to the very heart of the problem like dreaming about a happy outcome might calm things a little bit and they might feel better than despairing over the tragedy but it lacks realism it lacks reality there's a big difference between faith like Leroy talked about this morning there's a big difference between faith and trust and positive thinking faith is what Jehoshaphat had and it's that place in which we don't just drum up a bunch of positive ideas about how to handle something, we get real right and we seek the Lord and we do it deeply and we bring in our brothers should we not bring in our wives and our children should we not strive to be more like that you know in the 1700s the Moravians were the Moravians started in Germany I think I think there was a little bit of kind of a history that led up to the Moravians but what's kind of known as the Moravians when they started by Count Zinzendorf there in Germany and then they by the 1700s they became very zealous missionaries I mean they traveled the world over with militant strategy they sailed the seas they sailed to the Americas they sailed to the West Indies they sailed north to Greenland they went over the world to

spread this good news that they were infatuated with that they were addicted to may I say and they made many many sea voyages and a lot of times they just went with merchant ships that were going back and forth anyway but it got to the point where they had their own ships they had Moravian captains sailing their own ships little Moravian communities on sea that went back and forth and carried Moravians and merchandise that's how how zealous they were I sometimes dream about like us getting getting a zeal for communities all over the world having our own jet brother Max is our pilot I'm sure there's more to it more to it, a lot to it but I just like reading those stories and they were if they sent people to the South Indies or the West Indies and there was lots and lots of sickness a lot of those people died within a few months and they sent more those people got sick and died and they sent more there was no giving up anyway one of the one of the things that they had a consistent testimony of on sea was that when the storms would come and the ship would shake and the billows would roll and the water would cover the decks while other sailors were cursing and swearing and screaming these Moravians were called to leave they sat together singing hymns they were at peace in one of those voyages Captain Garrison after they were in this storm and Captain Garrison was was convinced that nothing short of the storm stopping was going to have them hit the rocks and he was really concerned but Count Zinzendorf was on that voyage and he was completely at peace this captain went down to look for him he was down there in the cabin there and he said it's alright it'll be alright and the storm did stop and Captain Garrison went down and asked Count Zinzendorf he went by Brother Ludwig as a Moravian but asked him like how can you be this way and Brother Ludwig said he's known the Savior for 20 years and he said I've learned whenever I'm in a crucial situation I examine myself to see if I'm at fault if I find anything in myself that displeases my Savior I make it right and thereafter or if I don't find anything I'm okay with the outcome that's faith many of you may have heard about this but on one of these merchant ships that was going across the sea John Wesley was on that ship and so was a little group of Moravians and this is what John Wesley wrote in his diary that day it's on January 25, 1736 and Wesley is on board a ship bound to America and observes the Moravians in the midst of life-threatening storms he said at seven I went to the Germans I had long before observed the great seriousness of their behavior of their humility they had given a continual proof by performance by performing those servile offices for other passengers which none of the English would undertake for which they desired and would receive no pay saying it is good for our proud hearts and their loving Savior had done more for them and every day had given them occasion of showing a meekness which no injury could move if they were pushed struck or thrown down they rose again and went away but no complaint was found in their mouth there was now an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear as well as from that of pride and anger and revenge in the midst of the songs were with their service began the sea broke over split the main sail in pieces covered the ship covered the ship and poured in between the decks as if the great deep had already swallowed us up a terrible screaming began among the English but the Germans calmly sung on I asked one of them afterwards was you not afraid and he answered I thank God no and I asked but were not your women and children afraid and he replied loudly no our women and children are not afraid to die from them I went to their crying trembling neighbors and pointed out to them the difference in the hour of trial between him that fears God and him that does not at twelve the wind fell and this is how he ends his diary that day he says this was the most glorious day which I had hitherto seen see how non-conformed to the world these people were and how much conformed to the image of Christ they were somewhere along the way these people had a heart transplant they had mortified anger and malice and unthankfulness and grumbling and they had learned gratitude you know this word this word heart I think we often have an inappropriate interpretation of that we sum it up as our emotions you'll hear people say my mind said yes but my heart said no um that's that's not a biblical way to look at the word heart the scriptural meaning of heart totally includes our thought life it

totally includes our mind it's not exclusively our thought life but it totally includes it um it is our entire inner being it is our thought life our will our conscience and our emotions that is what our heart is and we do well to think about this because the word heart is hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of times in scripture right um it is what is at the core of our being and guess what God wants to give us a new heart do we believe that do we believe that he wants to give us a new thought life do you believe he wants to give you a new will and new emotions and a new conscience do we believe that that's what he means when he says he wants to put in us a new heart if we think if you don't believe it if you don't have faith he won't if we think this is just how I am I'm a bit pessimistic in my personality I'm just a bit negative I'm not the kind of guy that really expresses praise or thanksgiving it means you don't believe God right um how can you believe anything he says how do you believe that he created heaven and earth and that he sent his son to save us and you say well the scripture says so and I say well the scripture says he wants to give us a new heart but without faith as brother Leroy said if you don't believe it if you don't believe that he can change your way of thinking if you don't believe that he can change your will and your very inner being then he won't and I thought about this Leroy talked about there were surely lots of other blind people lots of other sick people who did not get healed why? because they did not believe it and I have a feeling that many of those people might have believed that Jesus did actually do this to some of the people but it wouldn't work for me as I believe and we might be inclined to think well God did help that guy have an attitude of gratitude but I can't have it really? it means you don't believe it it means you don't believe that the Lord can give you a completely new hauling over of how you think of the things that you desire or will to do I'm not saying this is something that happens one day like the image I get in Colossians there is that we are being transformed into that image if we are not destined to be our old negative grumbling complainers that we naturally are we are not destined to be that we do not have to be that we believe that we do not have to be that the eternal kingdom of heaven will be filled with people singing and praising and saying holy holy lord god almighty day in and day out that's what's going to be going on let's ask ourselves how would heaven be like if we were there as we are now do you think just being in paradise would finally change us or would our unthankful and hurtful ways change paradise into hell all over again of the early Christians it is said that they sang at their worship services at the table behind the plow and in the vineyards Clement of Alexandria wrote we cultivate the fields praising we sail the sea singing hymns in the early 100's they had their before dawn meetings they came together before the sun was up and there were two reasons one was it was dangerous to be a Christian to be known as a Christian you could leave your head for that the other reason is many most of the Christians were slaves and common laborers they had to work for their masters in the fields day in and day out their masters gave them no leave to go to a worship service so they just got up earlier and they came together in the dark before dawn and they worshipped god together I just love this beautiful simplicity of simple peasants and slaves and farmers coming together because they just want to praise god together they had no scriptures they could barely read most of them but they could express their gratitude together in the 1500's the Anabaptists sang themselves into the hearts of many they wrote hundreds of psalms they sang them to familiar folk tunes and it was an effective means of spreading their convictions and as the persecution and bloodshed intensified so did the flow of their songs a few hundred years earlier the Waldensians did the same thing they were accused by the church of composing religious songs in their mother tongue and teaching them to the children on the streets and converting many adults in closing let's remember Jehoshaphat and his singing army when we face this battle in our minds remember we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness and spiritual weakness and therefore our weapons of warfare are not carnal that's not what we're up against when anger, when bitterness when envy, when jealousy or just plain discouragement when these things are trying to attack us they're like the Ammonites and the Moabites

and the people of Mount Cedar that came against Jehoshaphat let's face it honestly let's fall on our faces before the Lord let's examine ourselves for things that displease the Lord and make these things right remember the salvation of the Lord rise up and praise Him with our lips, loud and high like these singers did and sing of the beauty of His holiness and may we all come up there to that watchtower and look down over this enemy and see the multitude of dead bodies looming around in Ezra in the book of Ezra it's talking about how the exiles were starting to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and as soon as they had the foundation laid for the temple they had this celebration and this is what it says in Ezra 3 chapter 3 verse 11 and they sang together by chorus in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord because He is good for His mercy endures forever towards Israel and the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid now if they could rejoice with such rejoicing and such gratitude over that foundation that was laid for the temple that in less than a thousand years got destroyed again should we not make the earth swell over the laid foundation of a kingdom that cannot be shaken and as Paul says other foundations can no man lay than what is laid and that is Jesus Christ and brother Dijon said may he keep that gratitude and may we learn God be with you I'll open it up for comments and corrections anything else you want to add I'll express my gratitude for for what you shared Dwayne I confess I came here this morning kind of discouraged maybe you'd say something like that feeling weak in faith and then I guess Dwayne helped me recognize I was just being unthankful and fortunately that's easily remedied I'll quickly try to tie in Leroy shared about faith this morning something that was pointed out to me a lot of years ago that really stuck out to me that there's two times that Jesus complimented or spoke highly of people's faith and one time Leroy mentioned it as a guy that said I'm not even worthy that you should come under my roof is that right? yeah and then the other time was the lady that asked for help and Jesus said no and said that he came for the children and he shouldn't give it to dogs and he basically called this lady a dog and she said even the dogs get the crowns and he marveled at her faith and the common quality between these two people is humility and the person is throughout this correlation between having this faith that Jesus even marveled at and humility and I don't think it's too hard to see how that humility is tied to to thankfulness I think when we're unthankful it's because we're feeling entitled like we deserve what we're getting and if we're humble we recognize that we don't deserve we don't deserve much so everything we have is worthy to be grateful grateful for and not taken for granted so a couple of stories I'll try to share them quickly I probably shared them both before one is about the story goes there was a king and through whatever circumstances he adopts a poor boy and has him to become the prince and every morning the servant comes in to wake up the prince and take him to breakfast and every morning the prince says okay, thank you for waking me up, please stand outside the door and I'll be right with you and he takes a few minutes and he comes out the door and this happens for years and finally one day the servant gets up the courage and he says, what is it that you do every morning when you ask me to stand outside the door and the prince says well I kept the clothes that I was wearing the day that the king found me in my closet and every morning I take off my royal princely pajamas and I put on my old my old pauper clothes and I look at myself in the mirror because I don't ever want to forget where I came from I really liked that story and then another one is kind of a testimony I had a friend whose job was to take care of a young man in his twenties who was stuck in a wheelchair and he couldn't move somewhere in here from the neck down and I was with my friend and talking with this guy this young man just had a great attitude he just had a big smile and whatever and I just marveled like man this poor kid, he's stuck in a wheelchair he has to ask for help, everybody has to help him with everything and here he has such a good attitude and I asked him about it somehow because of his disability he would go to meetings and he would meet with other people that had similar disabilities that were paralyzed to different degrees and he said I go to these meetings and I've met all these people

that have different levels of disability that having suffered neck or spinal injuries and he says the thing I've noticed, everybody no matter where they're just so you know depending where your injury is on your neck or your back people will lose the ability to feel or move from that spot down and it can be very intricate like you can depending where the injury is will affect how much movement you have depending where it is and so he said no matter I see this all the time no matter where somebody's injury is they always wish they had a little bit wherever it is even a guy that's just like can't move from his neck down he just wishes oh if I could just shrug my shoulders or a guy that can't even do that and barely move his head imagine if you couldn't turn your head and you're stuck in a chair it would be easy to think oh if I could just turn my head from side to side oh if I just had that everybody just wants a little more so basically they're not being thankful for where they're at he was able to recognize like if I was a little worse off I'd wish I'd tell myself oh I'd be so thankful I'd be so happy if I just had what I had now so he just intentionally put himself in that position so he could be thankful for where he was the similar aspect in those two stories that I shared is that these two guys intentionally were intentionally maintaining a thankful state of mind it wasn't an accident they did like the kid the prince he exercised himself and put on these old clothes to remind himself this man stuck in a wheelchair had learned how to make himself be thankful by kind of pretending he was worse off he'd be thankful that's kind of the point that I want to make I think there's this idea that that the new heart that God gives you the spirit that he gives us which might just make some people just automatically just be thankful people and I think that I think the truth is that part of our part of our conversion is recognizing the truth of where we are and people are often really thankful when they're converted they see oh boy I'm a sinner and God's goodness to offer me life and so that's like your conversion experience and then I think like the walking out daily walking out of faith is partly an intentional reminder of our lowliest state and I think that intentional reminding is what will help us to be to be thankful there's so much bad stuff going on I think so many bad things that can go on in anyone's life are going on that you're just bound to be discouraged unless you're intentionally unless you intentionally focus on the good things and there is so much to be to be thankful for and it's not carnal to just intentionally remind yourself about that I really appreciated that so many so many things that you shared I was thankful for there really is a power in the attitude of gratitude there is a strength there I was kind of sitting here thinking how if every one of us in this room could lay hold of that like he just shared, my brother Dwayne just shared it there I think there's a good chance every single one of us in this room could overcome the world it's it's one of those things that if you can lay hold of that it's gonna it's just such a power behind it it can do so many things in your life and I just really appreciated that it made me think of the scripture in Psalms so while I sing praise unto thy name forever that I may daily perform my vows I thought about this how just when we're in that place it enables us to do the things that we have to do we're in that place of thankfulness over the years I realized that God teaches us gratitude amen, he does want to teach us gratitude but one reason or one way how he teaches us gratitude is not by giving us what we want but by taking it away it's not it's not because you get everything you want that you learn to be grateful for things it's by not having them and then when you do get them you'll be grateful for them and it makes you kind of I don't know how to tie it all together but Jesus asks us to give up everything you know and then and then in his time he gives them back to us with a proper understanding of how to treat those things which would be to be grateful for them Paul also said in every state I am something like in every state that I am in I have learned to therewith be content whether he's a baster he's abounding, he has learned to be content it's like he had laid hold of that gratitude that thankfulness and whether he had stuff or he was in a place of comfort he knew how to rightly divide it and be thankful for it but not set his heart on it and if he had nothing he knew how to rightly divide it and be thankful and just he had that proper that proper mindset and when you were sharing about the mind and the heart it made me think of the mind of Christ you know

all those things that you were sharing that's really what God is trying to teach us what Christ is trying to give us is his mind and the mind of Christ is to have that that thankfulness and that gratitude at all times and whether we're abased or abounding to be thankful and that's really a blessing Thank you Yeah, how many times do any of us when we run into temporal problems that we want immediately to come up with our own manifestation of a temporal solution like the way that that King like he just right away it's like there was a fast and everybody was fasting it even reminds me of when Jonah walked through the city for three days declaring the judgment of God and the King right away just went into sackcloth and ashes and declared fast in the at least the one that I have there's the hymn of the the three Jews the three Hebrews when they're thrown into the fire and they're singing in the furnace it might not be in the Masoretic but it's in the but at the end of it, it's quite long actually but at the end of it, it says now Nebuchadnezzar heard their singing and he marveled and rose up in haste and saw his nobles he marveled that these people are in the flames and they're singing Psalm 100 make a joyful noise unto the Lord all you lands serve the Lord with gladness come before his presence with singing know ye that the Lord he is God it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves we are his people and the sheep of his pasture enter into his gates of thanksgiving and into his courts of praise be thankful unto him and bless his name for the Lord is good his mercy is everlasting and his truth endureth to all generations the thought I had was serve the Lord with gladness come before his presence with singing and then where it says enter into his gates of thanksgiving I mean the thought is like you would enter into the gates of thanksgiving but the thought is also like maybe that's what opens the gates so that you can enter for the beauty of the earth for the beauty of the skies for the love that's from our earth over and around us lies Christ our God to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise for the joy of human love brother sister parent child friends on earth and friends above for all gentle thoughts and mild Christ our God to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise for a church that evermore liveth with holy hands above offering up on every shore his poor sacrifice of love Christ our God to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise for thy self as gift divine to our days so freely given for that great, great love of mine peace on earth and joy in heaven Christ our God to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise for worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness in the beauty of holiness in the beauty of holiness of holiness to the Father above in him mercy be joyful all ye people and magnify Jehovah of glory oh come before his presence and glorify his name oh worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness in the beauty of holiness in the beauty of holiness of holiness to Jesus our gracious redeemer we praise him for he loved us and brought us to his salvation oh glory oh come before his presence and glorify his name oh worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness in the beauty of holiness in the beauty of holiness of holiness to the spirit the holy redeemer we praise him for the Father and the Son our Savior oh glory oh come before his presence and glorify his name therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and from the sinning on his right arm everlasting joy shall be upon their heads therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and from the sinning on his right arm everlasting joy shall be upon their heads they shall obtain gladness and joy and sorrow and mourning shall be away therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and from the sinning on his right arm everlasting joy shall be upon their heads and families all along the hill shall find many friends and soldiers try and rest on battle where the night shall veil the glowing skies against the foe impaled below the shrinking earth faith is a river we know that overcomes the world faith is a victory faith is a victory oh glorious victory that overcomes the world his banner over us his blood our sword the word of God we travel the road that sings of love with shouts of triumph high I think they like a whirlwind's breath swept on o'er every field the fate I wish they conquered then they're still our shining shield faith is a victory faith is a victory oh glorious victory that overcomes the world to him that overcomes the foe thy strength shall be his before the angels he shall know his name confess in heaven that overcomes the hills of night our hearts with love of faith will vanquish all the hosts

of night in Jesus glory name faith is a victory faith is a victory oh glorious victory that overcomes the world
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