

Week of Meetings 1974-01 Luke 18:9

by James R. Cochrane

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and faith, warning against self-righteousness and the dangers of looking down on others.

Duration: 53:47

Topics: "Gratitude And Humility", "Spiritual Courage"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of gratitude and thanksgiving, particularly in the face of adversity and lack. He uses examples from Latin America, where many people struggle to find their next meal, to highlight the need for humility and compassion towards those less fortunate. The speaker also references the life of Jesus, who lived without material possessions and never owned a home, yet maintained an intimate fellowship with God. He shares the story of two martyrs, Latimer and Ridley, who faced death with gratitude and trust in God's plan. The sermon concludes with a reminder to give thanks not only for our blessings but also for the spiritual courage and strength of those who sacrifice for the Lord's service.

Transcript

Luke's Gospel, Chapter 18, and we will begin our reading in verse 9. Luke's Gospel, Chapter 18, and verse 9. And Jesus spent this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not, as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.

For every one that exalteth himself shall be amazed, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. And then I'd like you to turn to John's Gospel, Chapter 11. John's Gospel, Chapter 11.

This is a long story. Most of us are very familiar with it. I would like to break into the story in verse 35.

John's Gospel, Chapter 11, verse 35. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him.

And some of them said, Could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again, groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and the stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone.

Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days. Jesus said unto her, Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst seeest the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

And I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin.

Jesus said unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. Now if you'll bear with me for one further reading in Luke's Gospel, chapter twenty-two.

Twenty-second chapter of Luke's Gospel, and verse fifteen. Luke's Gospel, chapter twenty-two, verse fifteen. And Jesus said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come.

I trust that God will speak to us this evening through these portions of his word which we have read together. I'm not telling you any secret when I say that in the summer of 1927, I was born in the province of British Columbia in Canada. About that same time, in the Dominican Republic, an inferior officer in the armed forces, a junior officer, rose up and led a successful attack against the constitutional government.

It was a bloodless event. The respected and elderly Dominican statesman who was president was overthrown, and this young upstart became the maximum leader of the Dominican Republic. While I was growing in childhood and youth in Vancouver, he became an absolute dictator of the Dominican Republic.

In May, the last days of that month, in the year 1960, he was assassinated, as most of you perhaps know who are here this evening. His end was inevitable. The forces were building up in all segments of our society to bring his regime, which had lasted for almost thirty-three years, to an end.

Some of the factors that were prominent in his downfall can be mentioned very briefly. It wasn't many years after he came into power that he manipulated the change of the city, the capital city's name. Since colonial times, it was known as Santo Domingo de Guzmán.

He changed it, and it became known as Ciudad Trujillo, which in English means Trujillo City. Having changed then the capital name to bear his own personal name, it was a very easy thing for all other towns to place his name on the prominent main streets. His name and his presence influenced the whole country.

Eventually, he was known as Benefactor de la Patria Nueva, the Benefactor of the New Nation. But towards the end of his reign, he did his very best to achieve what he had longed for for many years, and

that was to be named the Benefactor of the Church. In this, he failed, and in the pressures that mounted against him, he was finally assassinated.

He was a man of lowly birth, of no education, but he became an absolute dictator, and I believe the man who reigned for more years than any other dictator in the long history of dictatorships in Latin America. He achieved a place of prominence from which, in his own way, he looked down on those that surrounded him, or, to use the verse we have read this evening in Luke's Gospel, chapter 18 and verse 9, the last phrase, he despised others. He built himself up into the place of power on the basis of violence, of corruption, of cruelty, of hatred, and he was known for his despoliation of all others.

Now, the man that we have read about tonight in Luke's Gospel, chapter 18, was a man entirely different from Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. He was a man who achieved great prominence not on the basis of murder and bloodshed and violence, but rather he was known, as most Pharisees were known, as outstanding moral persons. He achieved his position on the basis of faithfully fulfilling his religion and his tradition.

And finally, he, with others, from their place of moral prominence, they despised others. This is the point of departure in this short story of the two men who went to church to pray. I mention it this evening because the Pharisee had deceived himself.

That is, he believed that material possessions, that cultural heritage, that ecclesiastical privileges, automatically indicated that someone or anyone, and this man in particular, had the sign of divine approval, that God was with him. And because of that, he was a man filled with pride, and on this particular Thanksgiving Day in his own history, he went up to the church, he went up to the temple, to give thanks to God. I would like tonight, very kindly but forcefully, to emphasize that cultural, material, social privileges do not necessarily indicate the approval of God.

This is something that many of us in the Western world, perhaps, have failed to perceive. And we think of our heritage, and of our blessings, as some special indication that God is for us, and that he is blessing us. You may remember that the Apostle Paul, that great champion of the Christian faith in the first years of the Christian church, wrote to his friends in Philippi, and he said, And I know how to be a beggar, and I know how to abound.

To put it in contemporary language, he knew about affluence on the one hand, and dire poverty on the other hand. He'd been to both extremes many times in his life. But Paul in no way indicates that his poverty was the result of a spiritual decline in his life, any more than he indicates that the abundance that at certain times he experienced was the result of a spiritual high.

As a matter of fact, he's very clear whether in poverty or in affluence, he knew how to be contented, for his contentment was never linked to the things that he had. It was linked, rather, to his intimate, personal fellowship with Jesus Christ. Thus, when he was very poor, when he was very hungry, he was a contented man, just as he was contented when there was abundance of material things round about him.

In the world in which we live today, we can look across the Pacific Ocean at one of the most remarkable nations in the world today, Japan, that has experienced in recent years an industrial change and development almost unequalled in the world, and in no way can we consider Japan a country of Christian heritage. Most of you here this evening in your own lifetime will remember the communist revolution in Russia, and today, in scientific technology and in military might, it stands second only to the United States

of America. Its power, its technology, has nothing to do with its belief in God, for as all of us know, it is an atheistic society.

Most of us in recent months have become acutely aware that a small group of powerful men in the Middle East hold in their hands tonight almost the control of the economies of the world, and in no way are they Christian men, nor in any way can we say that they have that sign of divine approval. I emphasize this tonight because this man, the Pharisee, blessed with a tremendous tradition, for it was to the people of Israel that God gave what the Bible calls the oracles of God, the message of God. The people of Israel that had been created in the sovereignty of God as the channel through which the Messiah would be born into the world.

This man with this rich heritage came to the place where he thought he had superiority over all the other people of the world, and even over all of his contemporaries in his own society, and he went up to church to give thanks to God that he was not like other men. One final illustration on this point, for I come to you tonight from Latin America, and in Latin America I move every day of my life amongst people, some of them who have no way of knowing where their next meal is coming from. People whom God loves with the same love that he loves each one of us here tonight, that whatever we have in no way makes us special over other people in the world, the vast majority of people in the world who are in poverty and need tonight.

But the Lord Jesus is the outstanding example. All of his life in this world was lived in intimate fellowship with God, and the Lord Jesus said the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man does not have a place to lay down his head. As far as we know, he never owned a home.

He was never surrounded by material possessions. It would appear that at the hour of his death, all that he properly owned were the clothes that he wore. Thus, affluence or material blessings in no way is anonymous recognition that a man is enjoying divine approval.

The Lord Jesus did, and he had none of it. God shattered the heavens, and he said on one occasion, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, but he had no place to put down his head. No home that was his in the sense that your home is yours.

He was the person in the history of our world that his whole life was lived in fellowship with God, well pleasing to God, but there was no expression of affluence that surrounded him when he was in this world. Thus, the farce, as he comes up to the presence of God, is very, very mistaken. On one occasion some years ago in the Dominican Republic, Mr. Stunt of Echoes of Service of Bath, England, visited us, and he was with us in our home in La Vega at that time.

And in the course of my usual activities, he went with me one day through one of the very poor areas of that city. The streets were filled with children, many of them without any clothes, and many of them with signs of malnutrition, and most of them dirty. And as we walked that street, I said to Mr. Stunt, I've often wondered how you can explain that I was born in a Christian home, and brought up from my infancy in a Christian church, and was taught and trained by godly men and women.

How that happened to me, instead of being born right here, in this filthy street, in this little town of La Vega. He didn't answer for a little while, and he walked on, and then he stopped, and he said, Jim, the only possible answer is linked to the sovereignty of God. Then we walked a little farther, and he stopped again, and he said, but Jim, remember that privilege brings responsibility.

That's what the Pharisee had missed in his life. All of his culture, his heritage, his ecclesiastical privileges, and his material blessings had so occupied his mind that he had lost all sense of responsibility. And he stood in pride and self-sufficiency to offer a hypocritical prayer of thanksgiving to God.

Let me notice tonight with you briefly his prayer. It begins in verse 11. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

This is often because status by negation. And whenever you build up a status on the basis of negation, you put the grace of God completely outside of your life. Now, this is something that is so common in the world today that we live with it day by day, many of us, and are not really conscious of what it means.

But you build up your status personally, or as a family, or as a church, or as a nation, by looking out in others and thanking God you are not like them. That as we mentioned this morning, you've achieved this, you've done the other thing, and you look down negatively on the others and you build yourself up onto the top of a pyramid from which you look down on all others, despising them as the Pharisee did. And that type of status denies the grace of God.

Now, tonight, those of us who are here, maybe some of you are sitting back and thinking, well, there must be some way that we can acknowledge in the presence of God and give thanks that we're not extortioners, and that we're not unjust people, and that we're not adulterers. And, of course, there is. But not like the Pharisee did.

The Pharisee spoke from a heart full of pride, for the Bible clearly says he despised the others. It's an entirely different matter when adulterers cross our paths, or when we're touched by unjust people, or by extortioners, or any other type of evil, malicious people, and in a spirit of humility, we acknowledge before God that but for the grace of God, we might well be in the same position. Thus we notice and we give thanks for the difference.

But we give thanks recognizing the presence and the evidence of the grace of God in our lives. The Pharisee completely denied any activity of the grace of God. Those of us who are here tonight, and I speak as one of you, for my wife and I, in our middle age, are seeking to build a little home in Santo Domingo, and we have our family.

We thank God for meals day by day, for clothes to wear. We thank God for all of these things, and we look around on the world, and we're surrounded, believe me, in Latin America by corrupt men, by malicious men, by immoral people. Remember that the Lord Jesus, He was separate from sinners.

But He was recognized as the friend of sinners, who could sit down with people in their need, and seek to communicate to them the things of God. But the Pharisee, he despised them. Thus his attitude was wrong.

Then you'll notice also in verse 12, that he is excessively occupied with himself, with that satisfaction of self. Just a few words are written, I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess.

Most Jews practice some form of fasting. Pious Jews fasted at least twice a week, Monday and Thursday of every week. Now this man did not necessarily do it in private.

Here he is in the church building, and most likely praying out loud, and thanking God that twice a week, Monday and Thursday, he fasted. And also he mentions that he gave tithes of all that he possessed. Not

just as the law required.

You may remember Deuteronomy chapter 14, in that three year cycle, they were to give tithes of all that they had in connection with their crops, and with their livestock. Certain things are mentioned specifically, corn, wine, and cattle. But the Pharisees, they went even a step farther.

And the Lord Jesus talks about it in Matthew chapter 23. I'm going to read the verse to you tonight. They not only very carefully tithed their crops of corn, and their harvest of grapes and wine, but they went farther.

Matthew 23 and verse 23, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithes of mint, and anise, and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law. They were so strict in their tithing, that of those insignificant items of herbs, they carefully set the tenth part aside for gossip. The Lord Jesus did not condemn them for doing that, for verse 23 says, These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Thus, with great care, the Pharisee gave his tithe, and he faithfully fasted before God. Paul the Apostle was also a Pharisee. And when he gives his testimony in Philippians chapter 3, he acknowledges that he was a Pharisee, and then he goes on to say, And in the things that touched the law, he was blameless.

In all of the smallest items, he carefully fulfilled his tradition and his religion. It's beautiful to notice that it was after he was touched by the grace of God, he saw himself as he really was. And then he wrote some years afterwards to Timothy his son, and he said, I am the chief of sinners.

You only know that when you've been touched by the grace of God. Thus, this man, the Pharisee, we find his excessive satisfaction with self. But then, going back to verse 11, notice again the last phrase.

It begins, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, and it ends up even as this publican. How he carefully separated himself from the men who were most disliked in that society, the publicans. Most of them were Jews, and the higher of the Romans, and they collected the taxes from the Jews for the Romans.

Disliked and hated by most of their Jewish brethren. The Pharisee gives thanks to God that he's not like this publican. But that in itself is an expression of his indifference, of the lack of sensitivity, for you'll find in the Bible that the great men of God never separated themselves from the people of God in their hour of need, and even in their hour of sin.

I'd like to leave with you tonight just two or three thoughts in this connection. Nehemiah, chapter 1, you read these words, remembering that Nehemiah belonged to that select group of people, very small in the Old Testament, about whom nothing negative is recorded. Men like Joseph, Nehemiah, Daniel stand out as great men in the word of God.

Now God very carefully, in other cases, the case of David, writes down what was wrong. The shady, the immoral acts of David are all recorded. But here are one or two men about whom nothing bad is recorded.

Nehemiah is one. Nehemiah 1, in verse 1, the words of Nehemiah, the son of Hatchaliah. And it came to pass in the month of Shushlu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, that Hananiah, one of my brethren, came.

He and certain men of Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach.

The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, and said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him, and observe his commandments. Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servants, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee.

Both I and my Father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandest thy servant Moses. Now I've read this portion to you carefully, for as we've already mentioned, we have no record of anything wrong in the life of Nehemiah.

The very opposite is true. He is one of the men who rises up to seek to put right what was wrong with the people of Israel, and the city of Jerusalem. But when he comes into the presence of God, he does not separate himself from those that had sinned, but he unites himself with the whole people, and he says, We have sinned, I and my Father's house, we have dealt very corruptly against thee.

It is a sign of pettiness, of smallness, when like the Pharisee, you turn your back on the publican. It's a sign of greatness, and of spiritual sensitivity, when you unite with those that are in need, and you pray with them, as one of them, and for them. Nehemiah is not alone.

Daniel is the great statesman of the Old Testament, and you'll find in Daniel a prayer almost identical to Nehemiah's prayer. And once again, Daniel says, and there's nothing recorded about Daniel that I know of that is negative. He's one of those great men of the Old Testament.

But in his prayer, he too refers to the sins that we have sinned, and the things that we have done, as he prays for the people of God. The most remarkable illustration of all is the illustration of the Lord Jesus. You may remember that John the Baptist came with a ministry of repentance, and in his strong, forceful, not to say violent way, he pounded that message of repentance before the people, and then he listened.

And from all the segments of society, they came down to the River Jordan to be baptized by John and his disciples. And in one of those mornings, in the line that waited to be baptized, the Lord Jesus took his place. And when John saw him, he was startled, and he said, No, Lord.

And the Lord spoke to him, for John had said, I should be baptized by you, and you come to me to be baptized. And the Lord Jesus answered, Now suffer it to be so not, for it becomes us, taking his place amongst the people in their need, it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness. And then John took the Lord Jesus, and he baptized him on that occasion.

The Lord Jesus participated in the baptism of repentance, but he had nothing to repent on. He did not stand on the other side of the river and watch the sinners come down to be baptized one by one, and thank God that he was not like them. But he came over, and he stood with them.

He identified himself with them in their need, just the shadow of that day when he would go to the cross and fully share our need by taking on himself our sins and dying for us at that place. I emphasize again tonight that spiritual greatness never, never tolerates discrimination. Beginning with the Lord Jesus, with great men like Nehemiah, Daniel, we find that they sensitively share in the needs of the people as they come before God.

This callous, hard Pharisee. Thank God that he was not like all of these people, and especially like this publican standing near the door. On this Thanksgiving day, God grants that our Thanksgiving will be of a nature totally different from the Thanksgiving of the Pharisee.

Let us move then just briefly to the Lord Jesus. The chapter we've read from this evening in John's Gospel, chapter 11, would seem to be of all occasions the most unlikely for a prayer of Thanksgiving. For as you will remember, it is a story of death, of sorrow, of tears, of perplexity, and the Lord Jesus comes to that town and he meets with Mary and Martha.

All of us tonight are familiar with the story. Down in verse 40, Jesus said to Martha, said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe, thou should see the glory of God? He had referred to this back in verse 4. When Jesus heard that, he said this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. That deep conviction in the Lord Jesus, that at this most tragic hour, let me emphasize, it was a tragic hour for the Lord Jesus.

For in the humanness of the Lord Jesus, when the Bible says he wept, it means he wept as you and I weep when our loved ones die, when a friend is taken from us. The Bible also says in this chapter on two occasions, John makes this comment in verse 5, now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lasser. There was no doubt about that.

And then farther down the chapter in verse 36, then said the Jews, behold how he loved him. Those who knew the Lord Jesus like John, and the strangers who were gathered together that day, they all knew that Jesus deeply loved Mary, Martha, and Lasser. So in that human situation, dark with death, pregnant with sorrow and moral suffering, the Lord Jesus is present, and he is convinced that it will be for the glory of God.

And as he looks at the people, down in verse 41, as the stone is removed, Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. Now this prayer of thanksgiving on that particular occasion is the proclamation of his intimate fellowship with God. He thanks God for a work not yet seen.

It had not yet happened. But the Lord Jesus, surrounded by people in that eastern way that were wailing and crying, raises his voice in thanksgiving to God. For in that dark hour, the glory of God would be seen.

And in the sorrow and in the midst of tears, he raises the note of thanksgiving. Then you'll notice that in verses 41 and verse 42, you have that sense of his participation in the working out of God's will. I can't pass over that tonight.

This, I grant, is a special case. It is a case of death that needed resurrection. The Lord Jesus had said, I am the resurrection.

He had what was needed on that occasion, for he is the fount of eternal life. And as he stood at that moment in the presence of death, the need was death, but the need was life for Lazarus. And Jesus had that power.

And as he stood there, confident that God would work, there is that recognition that he is sharing in the working out of God's will. And he gives thanks to God for it. Now, I need not labor the point tonight.

But any thanksgiving that does not involve a reaching out to help those that surround us in need, has a hollow ring. The Lord Jesus was there in fullness of life. And yet, what was needed was life for Lazarus.

And on that dark hour, as you know, he called in a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. You know, others shared with him in that great work. And secondary things.

They removed the stone. And when the Lord Jesus gave life to Lazarus, he came out bound, hand and foot, even his head was wrapped in the grave clothes. And they had to take them off, as the Lord Jesus did, loose them and let him go.

But the source of power belonged to the Lord Jesus. And on that occasion, he shared that power with those who were in need in their sorrow, and especially to Lazarus, in death. You know, the world today, perhaps even more than many of us who are Christians, are conscious of the tremendous need in the world in which we live today.

In Rome, just a few days ago, an international conference met to deal with the problem of hunger in the world. There are literally hundreds of thousands of people starving today. And we are told on good authority that there are potentially millions of people who will starve in the next few years.

Those of us, then, who live in a land like the United States of America or Canada, in so many ways, can never raise our thoughts of thanksgiving to God without at the same time, in some way, reaching out to help those in need. That is, to participate in what is the will of God. The New Testament running through is that unbroken line of exhortation to good works over and over and over again.

Now, we pause today to thank God. We thank God for our families. We thank God for our homes.

We thank God for our jobs. We thank God for the material blessings he has given to us. Above all, we thank God for our spiritual heritage, for new life in the Lord Jesus.

But if we thank God for all of those blessings, without reaching out in some way, materially and spiritually, to help those who are less fortunate, there is a hollow ring to our thanksgiving. The Lord Jesus, I thank thee, Father, that thou hast heard his dependence on God, his fellowship with God, his active participation in the working out of God's will, in that manifestation of the glory of God. And not only that, but the last part of verse 42, or the beginning of the verse, I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

In this thanksgiving is the yearning, the strong desire, that those standing round about will participate in these blessings, will come to know the Lord Jesus, the Savior and Lord. Thus, we pause today to give thanks. I think as we do to this audience tonight, there is a recognition in the hearts of all of us that by the grace of God, we walk in fellowship with God.

We thank God for them. We thank God for the opportunity of serving him. And we thank God that as his will is worked out, that others will see and believe and come into fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

Now, in closing, we go back to Luke chapter 22, and here we come to perhaps the highest level of thanksgiving. Most of us are also very familiar with this portion of the word of God. Luke chapter 22 and

verse 17, And Jesus took the cup and gave thanks.

Now, that wasn't an automatic thanksgiving, as we give thanks for our meals. It wasn't an automatic benediction or thanksgiving, as the Jews were used to doing in their religious festivals. It was a word of thanksgiving in which the Lord Jesus fully understood what the cup meant.

It meant sacrifice. It meant death. And he took that cup in the presence of the disciples, and he gave thanks.

In the book to the Hebrews, we have these words, For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame. He did not shrink back. He did not turn away.

It is true that he prayed, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done. Before he prayed that prayer, he had taken the cup.

Later down in the chapter, in that little Jewish ceremony, he takes the cup again. He speaks clearly of his blood, that if it is referenced to violent death, it would be a redemptive death. And as he takes the cup, he gives thanks.

Now, referring to it tonight, none of us in this auditorium know anything about suffering on this level which is unique to the Lord Jesus. It is also true that we know so little of suffering in comparison to the way so many have suffered for the Lord Jesus. Let us give thanks for that, for we should never look for suffering.

But as we thank God for the pleasant circumstances that surround us, let us remember that many of our brothers and sisters in China tonight know all about what that cup means. Many of my Latin American people in Cuba know what that cup means. Most of you are familiar with Christian people in Russia that know all about what that cup means.

They have taken that cup and they have thanked God for the opportunity of serving Him. As we thank God then for our pleasant circumstances, we must remember those who belong to us, who are members of us, our brothers and sisters in other places in the world tonight who have taken the cup and who have followed in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus and who have given thanks for the opportunity of serving Him and suffering for Him and many of them of giving their lives for the cause of the Lord Jesus. I read the verse again.

He took the cup and gave thanks and said, take this and divide it among yourselves. Those of you familiar with English history will remember the two great martyrs, Latimer and Ridley, who died under the queen known as Bloody Mary. And when they were taken out to the place where they were to be executed, it was Latimer who turned to his friend Ridley and he said as follows, Be of good cheer, Master Ridley.

We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out. That is, as they walked together, they knew what it was to take the cup and they took it and they thanked God and they went to their deaths. And any of you familiar with history will know how much God blessed that nation, England, and through England, especially spread the gospel around the world.

In that previous generation of men who went to the four corners of the world with the gospel of the Lord Jesus. So tonight, not that I detract from giving thanks for the good things that we have, but let us in our thanksgiving remember those of spiritual courage and strength who in the sovereignty of God are not surrounded by the things that we have and yet in their circumstances they thank God for the Lord Jesus

for the opportunity of service and even of sacrifice in His service. It is easy in our society today to give thanks the way that the Pharisees gave thanks.

My plea this evening as we close is that not only on Thanksgiving Day at the end of November, but that during all the days of our lives we will give thanks rather in the spirit of the Lord Jesus and that we will look forward to the moment when we shall see Him face to face. Sing with me now in closing a beautiful hymn that I discovered in your hymn book this evening. Hymn number 12.

When all thy mercies, O my God, my rising soul surveys, transported with the view I'm lost in wonder, love, and praise. Ten thousand thousand precious gifts my daily thanks employ, nor is the least that cheerful heart to taste those gifts with joy. Hymn number 12.

We will remain seated as we sing this hymn. When all thy mercies, O my God, ten thousand thousand precious gifts that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9990.mp3>

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