

Thank You Very Much

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala emphasizes the transformative power of thanksgiving in our relationship with God and our daily lives.

Duration: 20:51

Scripture: Luke 17:11-12, Colossians 3:15

Topics: "Thanksgiving"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the importance of giving thanks to God for His unfailing love and wonderful deeds. He references Psalm 107, which tells the story of people who were stuck in the desert and cried out to God for deliverance. The speaker emphasizes that many of us have experienced spiritual deserts or times when we were deeply messed up, but God reached down and delivered us. He encourages the congregation to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and to tell of God's works with songs of joy. The speaker also reflects on his own failure to give thanks to God and emphasizes the need to incorporate praise and thanksgiving into our prayers.

Transcript

I came down here to pray, the noontime, and as it got close to the end, I opened my Bible to maybe a verse I could read, and I came across Colossians 3.15. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace, and be thankful. Now, with that group, I spoke about how God wants us to make peace always with one another. You have a question? Whatever makes for peace, that's what you do.

If it means don't talk, then to make for peace, don't talk. If it means say a kind word, then say a kind word. But what struck me, unbeknownst to the people at 12 noon, was and be thankful.

Because I know what the Bible teaches a little bit about thanksgiving, and God convicted me sitting right there, because I had just come from a pastor's meeting. We talked and talked about different problems, and we laughed together because we love each other. And then as it ended, I said, I'm gonna pray here before I go down to join the prayer time.

And I had all these petitions in my mind, and I prayed them. Pastors are aware of that. And God helped this one, and helped that one, all these things we prayed for.

And as I was sitting here, I felt the Holy Spirit speak to me, remind me of that prayer, and said, you never said one word of thanksgiving to me. All you did was ask me for things. And as I recollect my prayer, I never said thank you for anything.

Because sometimes you get so occupied with your needs, you forget to take time to thank God. I'll just run some quick verses by, the Scriptures have so much to say about this subject, that we really lose out when we're not thankful. Forget about it being rude.

God treasures our thanksgiving. It's called a sacrifice of thanksgiving. We don't have to bring animals anymore.

We live in the new covenant. We're not Jewish people living in the land of Canaan. They brought animals as thanksgiving offering.

Our thanksgiving offerings, it's suboka, so your mouth, your lips, your tongue, saying thank you, God. Thank you, God. And you know from Romans chapter one, verse 21, I think, how men began to depart from God according to Paul.

How did things get so out of hand, and the world turn against God? It all began when they knew he had created everything, when they knew he was there, otherwise how could they be there? They refused to glorify him or give thanks. And from that moment, everything goes downhill real quick. It seems like one of the departures in our life from walking with God begins usually with a lack of thanksgiving.

And we pass it off, because many times we're just so conscious of our needs, we don't think of thanking God for what he's already done, or thanking him for the everyday things we take for granted. But the Bible has this to say. Look at Deuteronomy.

This is before they went in the land. Moses told them in these two large sermons that make up the book of Deuteronomy, when you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. When you've eaten and you're satisfied, you better take time to thank God.

You better thank him and praise him for all that he's done. This is a command now from God. God says that when we enjoy his benefits, we ought to thank him for his benefits.

We live in a society now which has the lowest, I think, element of thanksgiving and appreciation of all time, at least in this country. I don't know how it is with my friends in South Africa. But forget thanking God.

People don't even say thank you to one another. If you do something nice to them, it's just give me more. Why don't you do more? Everyone's got a story.

No one has a thanksgiving. Everyone's got a gripe, am I right? Everybody's mad and I'm in the internet. This is wrong, that's wrong.

This one's wrong, that's wrong. And you don't know what's happened to me. Everyone has a story of whoa.

But hardly ever do you meet a thankful person who is just thanking God. Do they have problems? Of course they have problems. But they're remembering what the scripture says.

Count your blessings. Name them one by one. Count your many blessings, see what God has done.

Can we say amen to that? Count your blessings and say thank you. Now, when you see a child not thankful to their parents, that's hard to take. But imagine how it must be to the angels when we don't give God thanks like I did today.

Just ask, just ask. Couldn't even take one sentence to say, and God, thank you. Maybe the pastors were thanking God in their hearts.

If they did, they were better men than me because I just was so conscious of the request that we had talked about and then to get down here, pray, God, give me a word. And I'm sitting right there and in the darkness, just pray, asking God, God, help me. And he reminded me of that prayer.

You couldn't take one sentence and say thanks. And yet, I told my people, whenever I bless you and I meet your needs, take time to praise God. Don't just be asking like a leech.

You know what a leech says? More, that's only the word they have is more. Give me more, I need more. But it goes deeper.

The Bible says also in Psalms 104, enters gates with what? And his courts with what? Give thanks, that's a command. Give thanks to him and praise his name. It means that the best way to approach God in prayer, in singing or in anything, the best way to start, I tell the praise and worship leaders this over all the years, the best way to start a meeting unless the spirit is leading in some unusual way, just get the people thanking God.

Not praising God, that sometimes takes a little while. Not worshiping God unless the Lord is doing something and sometimes on a Tuesday night, I notice you're ready to worship God from the get-go. But after you're in the subway, after you have a job, after you have to deal with everything in life, you come in here rattled sometimes, don't you? Come on, tell the truth, say amen.

You come in here distracted and rattled and all discombobulated and what's the first thing we should do? Enter his gates with thanksgiving. Even if your heart isn't ready to worship him for who he is, can't you at least, can I at least thank God that we're alive today? Look, look at you, look, look. You got clothes on your back, right? I only got a half a sweater but I should thank God for this sweater, right? And how many ate food today? I wonder if we really thanked God when we ate that food.

I wonder when we said grace, if we said grace. I wonder if we really took time. No, we just assume, we just assume it.

No, this is part of my life, I'm owed this every day. But the Bible says no, when you enter and you approach God, be thanking him but you don't know what I'm going through. We'll get to that, you'll tell him everything but when you approach him, don't be coming just with that.

Be coming with God, I give you praise. Let's just lift our hands and give him some thanks. Come on, everyone, open your mouth and give him thanks for whatever.

Give him thanks for your daughter. Give him thanks for your son. Give him thanks for health.

Give him thanks for money in your pocket. We give you thanks, Lord. We thank you for Jesus.

We thank you for the Holy Spirit. We thank you, Lord. You may put your hands down.

So always remember that when your heart, it feels cold and you don't know how to start to pray, don't start to pray, just start to give thanks which is a form of prayer. Really, doesn't it make sense? You've heard this before but I say it again because I need it, as you know. It's kind of hard to be giving people more when they haven't even thanked you for what you already did.

And when we give God thanks, we not only show a proper attitude but it builds faith for whatever you're gonna ask God for because when you're thanking and remembering what he's done in the past, then you can't wait to get to that place where you can say, and now here are my new needs today but I'm remembering all that you've done for me and are doing for me today. But there's yet more. Look in the book of Psalms.

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind. Let them give thanks, let God's people. This is the part of the long Psalm 107.

Psalm 107 is about people who were stuck in the desert, they almost died, others went out to sea and the waves almost overran them and it's all these little pictures. And this is the one that people were in the desert, they were left bereft in a disaster, they weren't gonna make it but they cried to God and God delivered them. How many of you ever been in a desert? I'm not talking about the Mojave, I'm talking about in a spiritual human desert, right? How many have ever been messed up royally? Lift your hand.

I mean messed up and God reached down and delivered us. Did he not? He did. And it says what they should do.

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind. Let them sacrifice, thank offering and tell of his works with songs of joy. That's part of the reason God has given us music.

You see they're playing over there. They're hitting chords, they're notes. It's different in Asia, they have a different scale but wherever you go, there's music.

And God gave us music so that we could use it to give him thanks. That we could give him praise because he's worthy of that. Brothers and sisters, I got so convicted today.

God reminded me that when I go to heaven, I'm not gonna ask him for a thing but right now people by the billions, billions are around the throne thanking him and praising him. And all I can do here on planet earth is ask him more, more, more, masi mas cada dia. Masi mas, Lord give me more.

No, we should join that chorus and give God praise. And not for 30 seconds and not for 60 seconds and not for two minutes. How about a concert of thanksgiving? How about taking time and saying God, you know what, we've asked you for a lot already tonight but we just wanna give you thanksgiving now and praise.

I've learned that God works many times my problems out when I'm just thanking him for what he's done in the past because he inhabits those praises and he works on behalf of his people even as they praise him. And then finally you say to me, yeah, easy for you Pastor Simbala. God's been good to you, yes he has and you're sitting there and you got convicted because with the pastors you were remiss even though you're the senior pastor, shame on you, you didn't give God any thanks.

But you don't know what I'm going through. When I get out of this, I'm gonna give him thanks. Hey pastor, trust me, when he gets me out of this, I'm gonna give him thanks.

I have another word for you from the Lord, from the New Testament, look. First Thessalonians, give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. You know the old way that it is found.

In everything, what? In everything. In everything. When things are good, give him thanks.

When it's bad, give him thanks. When you don't know what to do next, give him thanks. When there's not enough money, give him thanks.

You remember that important verse where the Bible says they gave him five loaves, two fishes and there were thousands of people to feed and he took it and he gave thanks. Give thanks, most of us would be saying, are you kidding me? Five loaves, two fishes to feed all these people? Jesus said, whatever I have, I'm gonna give thanks. He multiplies what we have when we just give thanks for what we have.

Can we say amen to that? Just thank him for what you have. No, I wish I had more if I only had more. Stop, stop, just give him thanks for what you have today.

It's five loaves and two fishes, give him praise. You can have only two loaves and one fish, so thank God for what you have. And this is serious.

I'm telling you the dealings of God with my heart today because God notices, I have to say this, when people don't give thanks. Luke 17, I think it's verses 11 and 12. Jesus is coming from Galilee in the north down to Judea in the south and he's on the borderline between Galilee and Samaria.

And as he's walking there, 10 lepers who were hanging together because they couldn't approach Jewish people and they had to yell when they got near anyone because they were contagious for the most part. They had leprosy. That word stands for all kinds of skin diseases, but it's likened most to leprosy.

They hung together. You know, you're a leper, your friends are lepers. That's the way it works.

So they started yelling at Jesus. Oh, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on us. He knew what they needed.

And he, unusually, doesn't say you're healed or anything. He says, go report yourself to the priest because whenever you were cleansed of leprosy, you had to go to the priest to show that you had been healed so he could proclaim you ceremonially clean. So as they're going in obedience to Jesus, they're just obeying what he said, their leprosy goes and they're all healed.

See, you can't put God in a box. He didn't even pray for them, didn't touch them. He touched other lepers.

This one, he just said, go and show yourself to the priest. That took faith. They could have said, wait a minute, I'm not healed yet.

I'll go to the priest when you heal me. No, they said, I'm gonna do what he says. Oh, it's always best.

Jim, remember, it's always best to obey what Jesus says. Just obey him. So Jesus has gone on ministering to people and suddenly a leper that's been cleansed comes running.

It was a Samaritan, wasn't even one of the chosen people. He comes and he yells and he thanks God and he thanks Jesus for what he had done. And then the Bible says exactly this.

He threw himself at his feet. That's too emotional for some of us. We can't lift our voice.

We would be ashamed to go prostrate. We can't lift our hands because we're so uptight and self-conscious. When you're a leper and you've been healed, you don't care much about propriety, do you? And he said it fell at his feet and he thanked him for what he had done.

And then Jesus said, wait a minute, didn't I heal 10? Where's the other nine to give me thanks? Why just this one? And then mercifully he said, go, your faith has made you whole. He noticed that nine didn't give thanks. Just saying, I'm nobody's judge.

I told you about my own shortcomings. I wanted to hear if there's some of you, he's noticing after all I've done for you, why don't you come back and just give me thanks? Why aren't you praising me more? In everything, praise me. In everything, give me thanks.

Don't wait for the answer to come. Thank me already before the answer comes. It'll speed up the answer and it'll help you to wait.

The best way to wait for an answer is to be thanking God, not biting your nails. Give him thanks. That's how I failed God today.

But I have good news, he's full of mercy. I told him right there, he knows that. Forgive me, Jesus, forgive me.

I never gave you thanks in that prayer. Remember Philippians 4.6, be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with. Don't even bring your problems to God unless you're gonna mingle it with praise because he's worthy of it.

Is he not worthy of it? So up in the balcony there, maybe God's brought some conviction on some of us. He convicted me today, but I'm happy he did because I'm a better person when I'm thanking God. I usually am a thankful person.

He's given me that grace, to be honest with you. I think, I'm thankful, I'm not a complainer, thankfully. But today I failed him and he was quick to tell me, couldn't you have said thanks? And maybe that's the word for some of you.

Maybe I'm not the only one. I know you're overwhelmed by this and that and that, that, and this, this, and all that like the choir sings. But in everything, give him thanks.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving. Just be thanking him, thank him in a bus. Thank him in a shower.

Thank him in the drugstore. Thank him in the subway. Thank him when you're walking.

Thank him when you lay down tonight. Just give him thanks. Is it not right to give God thanks? I mean, every breath we take, we should be, thank God, thank you for one more breath.

One more breath. We're gonna end praising God and thanking God. No more petitions.

I want anybody to ask God for anything from now on. You go home, you can ask him for what you need. But right now, we're gonna focus on one thing.

We're gonna give him thanks. And we're gonna give him praise. And we're not gonna do it for just a minute.

We're gonna do it for a few minutes and take time to praise. Anybody here, God has been extra good? And while I was talking, you were reminded like you owe him a little back thanksgiving. You owe him, you know back rent? How about back praise? Back thanksgiving, right? You wanna do some catching up? Oh, how many love to thank God? How many wanna thank God? So anybody here, any men, any women, get out of your seat and say, pastor, I'm like you today.

I wanna give him thanks. Come on, come out of your seat. Come right out of your seat, come up here.

I wanna give him thanks in front of everyone. I'm not ashamed. Come right up, come from the balcony.

Listen, we're not gonna be here till 10 o'clock tonight. You come and give God thanks. Right up to the edge, my friend.

Right to the edge, that's good. Yeah, come on. Pastor, he's been so good.

I wanna give him praise tonight. Don't ask him for anything. If I see any of you looking up and saying, help me, help me, help me.

No, I wanna see you saying, thank you, thank you, thank you. I love you, I love you, I love you. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

I praise you, I praise you, I praise you. Okay? Just praise him. See what God will do.

Give him praise. Give him thanksgiving. Open your heart, open your mouth.

Let's use our voice. Lift your hands if you'd like. We give you praise.

Give you thanksgiving for everything. Todo, senior. Gracias por todo, senior.

We praise you, Lord. We give you thanks, Lord. Hallelujah, Lord.

Father God, we thank you. We praise you. We thank you for our brothers and sisters.

Thank you for this church. I thank you for the microphone I'm wearing. I thank you for the podium.

I thank you for background singers. I thank you for Jamal on the keyboards and the rest of the band, Michael on the drums. We thank you for every good gift that you give us.

Lord, help us not to be ungrateful, spoil little children, always asking for more and never saying thank you. Help us not only to give you more thanks, but help us to appreciate people. And the littlest thing anyone does for us, help us to have the right spirit to say thank you.

I appreciate that. Thank you very much. Make us polite and loving, because by this shall all men know we're your disciples because we love one another.

Have your way, we pray in Jesus' name. And everyone said, amen. Greet one another.

Greet my friends from South Africa.

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