

The Best Way to Say Thank You

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala emphasizes that the best way to express gratitude to God and others is by embracing and receiving the blessings they offer.

Duration: 33:30

Scripture: Psalm 116:12-13, Isaiah 53:6, Matthew 11:28-30, John 3:16, Acts 2:38, Ephesians 2:8-9, James 1:5

Topics: "Thanksgiving"

Description

In this sermon, the pastor emphasizes the importance of taking time to appreciate and praise God. He encourages the congregation to lift their hands and say hallelujah or praise God. The pastor shares a story from the musical 'Carousel' to illustrate the regret of not expressing love and gratitude. He reminds the audience that the best way to thank God is to accept and receive everything He offers, as love is fulfilled by the reception of the gift. The pastor also highlights the significance of not refusing God's gifts, as it breaks His heart.

Transcript

If you have your Bible, turn to Psalm 116, Psalm 116, verses 12 and 13. Psalm 116, verse 12 and 13 says, How can I repay the Lord for all His goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. How can I repay the Lord for all His goodness to me? Here's what I'll do, I'll lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.

Let's read it this way, this one time, okay? Let's read it this way. In the Hebrew of that Psalm, salvation is in the plural. It's actually, literally, salvations.

It's the cup of salvation. So let's read it that way, real strong, out loud. Ready? Both verses.

How can I repay the Lord for all His goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvations and call on the name of the Lord. The name of this message is the best way to say thank you. You know, repayment to people who have been a blessing in our lives is something we don't think about enough.

Don't you agree? Take, for example, your parents. When you were born, every one of us, I was born and totally helpless. My mother brought me into this world and fed me or I would have died.

Changed me, bathed me, diapers, clothes. Everybody here has someone who took care of you when you were helpless. I don't care if your mother was a good mom or a bad mom.

Somebody was taking care of you when if you were left to yourself, you would have died. And we don't need Mother's Day to appreciate mothers or Father's Day to appreciate fathers. All of us have somebody, let's take moms, who have been so absolutely huge in our lives.

Not only taking care of us, but feeding us, taking us to school, getting us started, clothing us, protecting us, shelter, bed, washing clothes, putting sheets and pillowcases, taking care of a crib before you even were conscious of what was going on around you. And if you'd leave any baby alone, the baby will die. That's you and me.

But we had moms who took care of us. The psalmist is asking a great question here about God, but let's just ask it about our moms and our dads. How can you repay your mother for all that she's done for you? We don't think about it.

Some of us complain about our parents. Some of us have a story about, unfortunately, abuse and parents not being a good contributor in our lives. And that may be so, I'm not going to deny that.

Everybody had someone who took care of you or you and I wouldn't be here today. How do you repay a mother for all the hours walking with a baby when they're sick? When you had a fever, and you didn't even know you had a fever. When you had a terrible cough, I mean, who walked with you, who took care of you? How do you repay somebody like that? How do you repay a mom? Then there's other significant people in our lives who are probably part of the reason why we're sitting here today.

Maybe a friend, a relative, some spiritual influence in our lives. A pastor, a minister, an uncle. Somebody who spoke in our lives, steered us, took care of us, influenced us toward the right way while there were other voices pulling us away the wrong way.

How do you repay people for the very fact that you know Jesus? How do you repay a person who led you to Christ? I mean, what do you give them? What amount of money, what gift would suffice for somebody who was there and you fluctuated and you went down and you were up and down? When I think of people in my own life, people who took an interest in me when I was an off-the-wall college student or a high school student and they saw something in me or they took time with me, how do you repay somebody for shaping your life and being part of the formation process that brought you to where you are today? And we can so easily become all about me, myself, and I that a lot of us, gratitude and saying thank you does not come easy to us. That grates against me to be personally honest with you because when I see people giving things and being blessed by people and not even taking time to say thank you, a little of that goes a long way with me. But I know people, they have an entitlement mentality.

Everything is give me, give me, I'm supposed to get all this. And thank you and appreciation and a note or a phone call or a hug or something like that, it's like it's foreign language to them. It's just like everything's supposed to be for us but it's not supposed to be for us.

God sends people in our life and aren't we thankful for those people? How many of folks in your life that you think back right now, they're part of the reason why you're alive and sitting here today, just lift your hand, right? Were they perfect? No, nobody's perfect. Look in the mirror, you'll be sure nobody's perfect starting with me and you. But do we say thank you? And you know what? From that musical Carousel, I always think of that line.

I thought of it this weekend as I was pondering this subject. You know Carousel is about this rogue of a guy who falls in love but he's too proud to tell the girl that he loves her. And then he gets her pregnant on top of that.

And she's in love with him but they have a weird relationship because he's so remote and independent and proud and full of himself that it's hard for him to break down and say I love you, I need you. And then there's this magnificent song in there. Longing to tell you but afraid and shy I let my golden chances pass me by.

And then he dies and he never has a chance to say thank you. Never has a chance to say I love you. Longing to tell you but afraid and shy I let my golden chances pass me by.

I just want to remind everybody here today if you have somebody who's blessed you and been good to you why don't you call them today? Write them a note. Send them an email. Tweet them.

Do something. But just say you know what? I appreciate you. You've made a difference in my life.

The psalmist is way past that. He's now addressing this to God and he's thinking of all God has done for him in his life. And he's saying how in the world do I repay God for all that he's done for me? Just think about that.

How in the world do you repay God? Because if you have any sense of gratitude you want to do something back for the person. You know we give on Mother's Day something to moms and all of that which is sad that we don't do that more during the year. Oh brothers and sisters listen.

Take advantage of every day. You don't know if you have tomorrow. Today's the only day of our life.

If somebody has blessed you you appreciate that they've helped you. Oh my goodness say thank you. Thank God for them.

Thank them. Because once they're gone you can't tell them. Once they're gone you can't tell them.

I can't tell my dad one thing right now. He's with the Lord. So let's make the most of those moments.

But now the psalmist is saying how in the world can I repay God for all the good things he's done for me? How in the world do you repay God? It's a simple thought. But let's think about it. Well the natural logical thing that we think of is if she gives me a gift and I know she's buying me something for Christmas then I'm going to give her a gift back.

You give me I give you. That's logical isn't it? That's the way we think. Somebody gives me something I should at least give them back something.

And that's fine with moms and dads little gifts and things we say and people that are significant in our lives. Thinking about someone right now. He died before I could tell him one last time that I loved him until I see Christ.

It irks me because I was prompted to call him on the very week that he died and I didn't want to bother the person and then they're gone. I could have told him one last time thank you. The only problem about giving something back to God well there's two problems with it.

First of all God doesn't need anything. You know at Christmas time you say what would somebody want for Christmas? You get to a friend you call what does he need? What does she need? What does she like? Does she like flowers? Does she like what color blouse? Does he like a scarf? And so on and so forth. But God doesn't need anything.

He's God. He's all sufficient. He is self-sufficient.

He's God. So there's nothing that you can give him like he goes oh I can't believe that's exactly what I wanted, what I needed. There's nothing that God feels like that about.

The second problem with that is this. Anything you and I could think up and conjure in our mind to give to God he gave it to us to begin with. So anything that I'm gonna dig down and get you know anything in here he gave it to me.

Anything in your house he gave it to you. So anytime we give an offering when we took that offering all you did was gave back money God gave you to begin with. So there's a problem with that isn't there? Because he doesn't need anything and yet the psalmist is looking back on his life let's say it was David.

He's looking back on all the times he was delivered out of trouble. All the times that God picked him up when he was about to fall in the pit. All the mercies and times he failed God and God was bountiful in his grace toward the psalmist.

He's thinking back to all of the supply, the food, the air to breathe, his body being strong and his being alive. All of these comes from Jehovah Jireh. The God who supplies what we need and he's trying to get in his mind how can I repay God for all that he's done for me? How can I not be ungrateful? How can I express to God? And he's running into these two problems that we just said.

Number one, God doesn't need anything and number two anything you give he already has. So now comes this revelation. The psalmist says out of nowhere well I will lift the cup of salvation and I will call upon the name of the Lord.

And you know in Passover it developed into a tradition it's not in the scripture but it's a tradition among the Jews that the cup on Passover night is lifted by the head of the home before he drinks it. Paul talks about communion the cup that we take and what it represents before we drink it down. You know as in the verse my cup runneth over that God has so blessed me that my cup is running over.

Well using that imagery we come up with this amazing truth. The psalmist says how can I repay God for all that he's done for me? Oh I know what I'll do. I'll lift up the cup of all his blessings and I'll drink it down.

In other words the best way the realest way to thank God for all that he's done is to drink down all the blessings that he has for you. All the things that he has available right now that makes God happier than anything else. Anything I give him he doesn't need it.

Anything I give him he already gave it to me to begin with. But the psalmist now says here's what makes God happiest I will drink down and not refuse. I will hold it and I'll take it down and I will devour all the blessings that God has for me.

Because that's the best way to say thank you to God. Because he's unlike anybody else. And think about that.

Instead of giving God says no you want to make me happy? Take. That's unlike anyone in the world. Because there's nothing I can give him that he doesn't already have or he supplied for me.

The psalmist now says no. I'll take the cup of salvation and I'm going to drink it down. I'm going to take advantage of all the blessings he has for me.

But isn't that exactly what love always does? When Christmas comes this coming Christmas God willing I should see Christmas. And I have my let's just focus on I have six grandchildren. When I come to Christmas and if I spend it with them and we're all together in a room do you think come on brothers and sisters do you think I want a gift from one of my grandchildren? Do you think I want Levi now? He's 24 months, 2 years, 2 months old.

Do you think I want Levi to give me something? Well of course not. What makes me happy on Christmas? That they take what I gave them and they open it up and they're happy. That's what makes me happy.

And if they refuse the gift they ruin my Christmas. Am I right or wrong? By the way I was just with Levi on Friday night. I took him out to eat in a restaurant.

He's acting so much better. I used to get indigestion whenever I took him out to a restaurant because he'd be throwing food. But he's so polite now.

He was saying thank you to the waitress like a hundred times. Every time she brought something thank you he would look over there. He's talking a mile a minute.

He must have not liked my prayer that I prayed over the food. We were just about two minutes into eating and he went Papa let's pray. So I said I already prayed.

And he went no pray. So I said okay. So I said how cute.

I'm going to make him pray. I want to look. I want to watch this.

So I said okay let's pray. And I was looking out the side of my eye to see how he was going to pray. And he just looked at me and he went close your eyes.

Boy rebuke me little legalistic preacher. Made me close my eyes. Do you think at Christmas time do you think I want anything from a two year old boy? No.

What makes love fulfilled? Not getting. Giving. How can I repay the Lord for all that he's done? Open up your arms and take what he is offering you.

That makes him happier than anything you could ever say or do. That's the only thing that love is fulfilled by. The reception of the gift by the person that's loved.

Love doesn't want. Love rejoices in seeing the one you love happy. And receiving all the good things.

In fact the worst thing you can do to hurt somebody is refuse the gift. When I was a well I was a teenager. Just early teens.

Very nasty young man. And my brother fell in love with this girl in the church that we were going to. And that was totally messed up for me because he used to play ball with me.

He used to take me out to the park. And now he's going out with this girl to Prospect Park and they're kissing all over the place and doing those things. And I'm like can we go out to Park Circle and hit fungus and play baseball? No I'm going out with my girlfriend.

I was like no. That's messed up. That's not right.

So I didn't like this girl. I was young. I was jealous.

Nasty little kid. So she tried to win me over because she knew I didn't like her. She was a nice person.

I just didn't like her because she was taking my brother from me. He's six years older than me. One Christmas boy you're going to be disappointed in me when I tell this story.

I'm just thinking this through here. One Christmas James we're opening presents there and she gives me a basketball because she knew how I was crazy for basketball. But she didn't know how to buy a basketball.

Guys you know there's basketball and then there's basketballs. Well instead of buying a real basketball she bought like a cheap balloon kind of basketball. Right? So I opened the box and there's this basketball but it wasn't.

She didn't know. She didn't know from basketball. I looked at it and it was a balloon.

It looked like a pumpkin of some kind. And I picked it up and put it back in the box. I just waited and then I walked over to her, nasty as can be.

And I said you call this a basketball? Here take it back. Oh yeah. Aren't you glad I got saved somewhere along the way? And she broke into tears.

Oh it was a big scene. My mom and dad beat me until they beat the tar out of me. Why did that crush her? Because she cared about me and I didn't receive what she gave me.

That's the way it is with us. He's giving. We ain't taking.

That's what breaks his heart. Did you know some of you right now today you're breaking his heart. You're all focused on yourself but why you're breaking God's heart it's not because you're not giving him He don't want you.

What do you have that he needs? Nothing. What's breaking his heart is he has this abundant supply for all of us and we're living on emergency supply. We're trickling eking out an existence and he's got rivers of living water but we're too proud or too unbelieving to take it.

And that's what just breaks his heart. When do we find Jesus crying? He looked at Jerusalem and he said, Oh Jerusalem Jerusalem how many times I would have gathered you to me but you wouldn't let me gather you. You wouldn't let me put my arms around you and protect you and now you got a mess coming at you now you're going to have desolation come because you didn't know your day of visitation you didn't realize how much I love you and what I could do for you and you rejected me.

That's broken love. Listen, when you offer something to somebody and they don't take it that breaks your heart. We went to Grand Rapids a lot of years ago.

When we got off the plane, we came into the boarding area and now we were deplaning we saw people crying, people bent over and we saw balloons. It was surreal. I wondered what was.

So I said to somebody what are the balloons? What happened? And they said some guy was in love with this girl and the girl got off the plane with her mother. She was coming back and he got the balloons, got it all set up. It was the days when you could go to the boarding area before 9-11 and he knelt down and she got off, pulled out the ring and said would you marry me? And she said no.

Brothers, never do it publicly unless you're sure. You know what I'm saying brother? No. You don't want to go there.

And the girl just said no. She burst out crying. She wasn't ready.

Took off with her mother they told me and the guy was left just crushed. His friends were around him. Why was he so heartbroken? Because what he had was not, wanted to give, was not accepted.

That's the way it is with God today. In other words, you're walking around with no peace. You have no peace today.

He's the giving God. He has peace for you but you won't receive his peace. What do you think? He wants you to have no peace? He loves you.

He sent Christ to die for all of us and now he wants us to have peace. Wants us to have joy and it's available right now today but for whatever reason we won't take it. That breaks his heart.

You want to repay him for all that he's done for you? Just take what he's offering. Don't turn the gift away. The Bible says if anybody lacks wisdom let him ask God who gives liberally and that's really a poor translation because what it says there is the giving God who gives.

All God is about is giving. He's always going out like when I'm with Levi. I'm never thinking one second with any of my grandchildren what do you have for me? That's unthinkable.

How would I want something from, including my wife and my children? Why would I want something from them? I love them so much. All I want to do is give. The only way they can break my heart is to turn my gift away.

That's the way God is. He so loved the world that he what? What breaks his heart? That the son he gave is rejected. There's a young man who grew up in this church not doing good, wasn't listening now he's older.

His mother just came and told me today he's going to be in jail again. Third or fourth time in jail. Does he have to be in jail? No.

Is there salvation and a new life for him? Yes. Will he take it? No. That's what breaks God's heart.

That's why he wept over Jerusalem. I have what you need. Why won't you take it? If you're not a Christian here today, it's only because you're rejecting the gift.

It's a gift. No, no Pastor Simba, I'm not worthy. I got that.

I'm not worthy either, but a gift is a gift. If you have to be worthy, then it's not a gift. Then it's payment.

God's not paying anybody anything. He's giving gifts. Come on, let's put our hands together.

You're here today, you have no peace. You think God is in heaven saying, I don't want them to have any peace. I want them to be miserable and depressed.

Of course not. He has peace. He said, my peace I give you.

But what's faith? Look, here's what faith is. Here's what faith is. Hand me my Bible.

Faith is this. I take it. Here's what unbelief is.

Stick it out. No, no, I can't. That's all.

God is Give me back my Bible, sister. That's what God is all about, giving. Some of us have been brought up so religiously wrong that it's amazing.

You got to earn it, don't you? What, are you going to wait for a feeling? I got news for you. He's giving now. Before we knew Christ, He came and died for us.

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. So if you have to earn gifts, why did He give His Son when we were yet sinners? No, no, I got to pay the price. I got to do that.

Where do you find that in the Bible? It's all by grace, I read. It's all by gifts. That's why in heaven, nobody's going to be walking around and say, I'm so glad I'm here.

Let me tell you what I did to get here. Are you kidding? She's going to be on her face, prostrate, saying, worthy is the Lamb. Come on, let's put our hands together.

Worthy is the Lamb. Worthy is the Lamb. Worthy is the Lamb.

So you have no peace here today. You want to make God happy? You want to repay Him? First of all, how many have a lot that God's already done in your life? Just lift your hand up. How many of you would love to repay God in some way for all that He's done for you? Alright, He's telling us now.

Lift up that cup of salvations and drink it down. Take what He's offering, because not to take it breaks His heart. I wish somebody would have told me that when I was younger.

My religion was all about earning. Are you good enough? Have you read enough Bible? Have you done this and done that? Well, when are you going to be good enough to get something from a perfect God? No. His hand is out.

He even touched a leper, which you weren't supposed to touch. The Old Testament, the lepers had a scream and let everybody yell, leper, leper, unclean, unclean. And when one came to Jesus, he could have just spoken a word, but he said, no, come here, let me touch you.

If he can touch a leper, he can touch you and me today. Are you lacking joy? You're only lacking it because you're not taking His joy. No, I'm going to be straight with you.

If I'm lacking joy, it's not because of anything wrong with God. It's because I will not take in the joy of the Lord. Are you lacking wisdom? Are you lacking strength? Oh, I'm so weak.

It's on you. It's on me. It's not on God.

Bible says God gives strength to His people. Oh, no, but I'm so weak. I don't know if I can make it.

Look, if you think that makes God happy, that breaks God's heart. Our pity party is breaking His heart. For the Bible says, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

You think if I had what Levi needed and I see Levi without the things that he needs in life and I'm there able to help him, you think that makes me happy? See, Levi sad, Levi depressed, Levi without clothes, Levi without whatever? No, that will break my heart. That's how it is with God. That's why unlike any other human on the earth, God, the only way you can repay Him is not to go out, is to just give me everything you have.

I want everything. And God says, oh, good. That's what makes Him happy.

Like when you give a Christmas gift, you see the kid opened up and go, oh, Papa, Papa, I can't believe you got that for me. That's Christmas. For it is more blessed to and God is the one who's saying to us, take what you need.

You depressed here today? Lacking strength? Lacking peace? Lacking power in your life? Oh, that's the way to make God happy and to call upon His name and the word called there means to just open your mouth and praise Him out loud. And I was noticing when we were praising God, I opened my eyes for a little bit and I noticed some of you, you have trouble, don't you? You have trouble opening your mouth and praising Him out loud, don't you? That's odd, isn't it? We jabber with people. We boast on everything we run into.

We talk about our country. We talk about where we're from. We talk about a good roti we ate.

We talk about a sale we saw at a store. We're jabbering. We're tweeting.

We're texting. We're emailing everybody. But when it comes to just taking time to drink in everything God has for us and just to say hallelujah to God.

Lift your hands with me, everybody. Just say hallelujah or praise God. Say something to God right now.

Everybody in the building. I praise you God. In the midst of everyone Lord, I embarrass myself if need be to praise you out loud, Lord.

Let others mock us. We praise you out loud, Lord, for you are worthy. Let's close our eyes together.

Who's here today? Pastor Cymbala. I This is amazing, Pastor. The best way to say thank you to God is to take everything he's offering.

This is amazing. I don't have to dig into my wallet and that's not the ultimate. We should give back to God.

We should do a lot of things for him to express our love. But the number one thing that satisfies his love I will lift up the cup of salvation. All the many blessings he has for me.

Just think, in this building right now God has everything you need right now. Right now. Whatever you need today, it's here.

He doesn't have to go back to heaven to hatch it up. It's right now available. He's just saying, who will have the faith to receive it? Look, here are the excuses I've given in my life.

I'm not good enough. See, I got this false concept of God's holiness not balanced by his grace. I'm not good enough.

Brothers and sisters, you'll never be good enough. If you're waiting until you're good enough, Satan will have you in a snare. You'll be waiting forever and never receive anything.

Just come the way you are today. Pastor, life's been so hard. Listen, you can't focus on how hard it is.

Focus on how great he is. And how much he loves you. If you think about your life, you're going to get depressed.

Think about his goodness. Think about his love. If he sent his son, why wouldn't he help you now? He already gave his best.

Everything else is the icing on the cake. Whatever you need today. You got a broken heart.

He'll heal it. Yes, he will. Because if you say he won't, then he wants us to go around with a broken heart.

What parent would love their kids with a broken heart? No one. When you love someone, you want the best for them. You'll minister to your deepest needs inside.

Oh God, open the eyes of the people so that they'll see how loving you are and how great you are. Open our eyes. If you're here today and you say, Pastor, you've encouraged me from the Word of God, I need something from God.

I need something from God today. And now I'm going to reach out and take it because that's what makes them happy and that's what I need. I need strength.

I need peace. I don't have any peace. I don't have any joy.

I'm a nervous wreck. Battling depression all the time. This is not God's plan for your life.

Come on. Arise and take what God is offering you today. Take that cup of salvation and drink it down.

If you're here today and you need something from the Lord along the lines I've said, get out of your seat right now. Come and stand like this lady. Lord, we thank you today that the best way to say thank you to you is to drink down the cup of salvation.

We fumbled around trying to express our thanks to you. And it's good that we give money. It's good we lift our hands.

It's good we do all those things. But the best way to make you happy how shall I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me? We receive from you today the grace that we need. We receive today.

Let's just all lift up our hands like this in a receiving position. We receive from you. We receive strength.

We're not going to be weak today. We're going to be strong because you give strength to your people. We're not going to be depressed.

We're going to be full of joy because the joy of the Lord is our strength. We're not going to be agitated. We're going to have your peace because you're the God of peace.

Forgive us, Lord, for living with clenched fists instead of uplifted hands that receive every day, every hour, what you have for us. Oh, God, save us from this idea that we have to earn something from you. Help us to enjoy your love and receive your gifts because that's what makes your Father heart so happy, Lord.

Bless your people today. And we love you, God. We love you.

We thank you so much, God, for all that you've done. We thank you. Everybody, just lift your voice and begin to thank Him.

We thank you, Lord, for salvation. We thank you for your mercy. We thank you for your patience.

We thank you for all the things you've done for us, God. Nobody knows what you've done for us, Lord. Let's put our hands together and thank Him.

Thank Him. Thank Him out loud. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord. Lord, let your face shine upon your people now. Give us a good day of receiving every hour from you, everything we need today.

Bless the rest of the day, we pray it in Jesus' name. And everyone said... Say hello to five or eight people. Come on, turn around.

Bless somebody.

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