

Six Thoughts On Being Thankful

by Tim Conway

Transcript

And I want you to biblically try to discern this, try to answer this. Ephesians 5 verse 18, what we have here is, Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery. But, and here's our primary verb, be filled with the Spirit.

Verse 18, that's our primary verb, main verb, be filled. It's an imperative with the Spirit. Now you can ask yourself, how do I do that? Obviously, this is a commandment.

This is not something we're passive in. This is not something that we just wait for God to do to us. This is not an experience that you wait for.

This is a command that you have a responsibility to do something. But just like keeping yourself in the love of God, you want to stop dead in your tracks and say, Lord, how in the world do I get filled with the Spirit? You're telling me to do it. How do I do it? Well, again, here are participle phrases.

One, addressing one another in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Two, singing. Three, making melody to the Lord with your heart.

Four, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Five, submitting to one another. You see, there's a string of five of them here.

Now, three of them specifically have to do with singing. One of them has to do with giving God thanks. And one of them has to do with submission.

Brethren, submitting to one another. That means we want to be serving one another. We want to be in a submissive way.

We want to use our spiritual gifts and abilities and our resources to help one another. We want to be submitted to means that you're lowering yourself. You're humbling yourself for the sake of the good of others.

You're giving yourself for others. So listen, if we want to be people that are filled with the Spirit, then we're going to give attention to singing. And you know, you don't have to just sing at church.

You can sing all the time. We ought to be people of song. We ought to be listening to hymns and psalms, spiritual songs, singing, making melody.

We ought to be submitting to one another, figuring out how to serve one another. But the one I'm really interested here is the giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we're going to be a people that are filled with the Spirit, we've got to be people who are giving our attention to being thankful.

That means we need to cultivate genuine, heartfelt thanksgiving. And that's what I talked about on Sunday. And I just want to, brethren, I want to give you some food for thought as we think about cultivating thanksgiving in our life, because it's so directly attached to being filled with the Spirit.

We want to be filled with the Spirit. And being a thankful people is not a minor part of that. So, okay, some thoughts on thanksgiving.

First one, I want you to go over to 1 Timothy. I know that since I've been here, I've mentioned this verse at various different times, but I want us in light of thanksgiving to stop on this thought here from the Apostle Paul. 1 Timothy chapter 4. Now, obviously, we're dealing with some thoughts on thanksgiving.

So as I read the passage, you're going to see thanksgiving jump out at you. And so first here, I want to read this quickly, and you look for thanks and thanksgiving in the passage. 1 Timothy 4 verse 1. Now, the Spirit expressly says that in later times, some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars, whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving.

There it is. By those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.

For it's made holy by the Word of God and prayer. Now, that's interesting. It's made holy by the Word of God and prayer.

Maybe we'll talk about that in just a second as to what that means. Let's follow this again. The Spirit expressly says, so God's Holy Spirit is telling us that in the later times, well, we're in those later times.

It describes now, just as it described Paul's day. The last days are from the first coming of Christ to the second coming. So here we are in these last days.

Some will depart from the faith. And they devote themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons. So, we've got a cloud of demons out there.

They've got teachings that they try to impress upon men and women. They try to come into the church and impress these things. And you see, people depart from the faith.

They depart from the truth that is the substance of believing faith. The faith. The faith has to do with that body of truth.

The apostles' doctrine, the Scriptures. And these people diverge from that. And they go after demonic things, demonic lies.

And you see, it's the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared. So the devil's taking advantage of people who have seared consciences. They didn't keep their conscience tender.

They become liars. And notice this. Who forbid marriage? See, that's the first thing.

So, this is not uncommon in false religion and in the cults. It is not uncommon for teachers to attack marriage. And you know, when you get cults, when you get Mormonism, it's an attack on marriage.

It's not forbidding. I mean, it's an attack on or a forbidding of biblical marriage. You know, they want to have multiple wives.

You've got Catholicism where they want the people in the ministry to not marry. The cults, oftentimes the cult leader gets all the women. Or he believes he's got rights to the wives of the men in the cult.

You know, the attack on marriage is because it's a picture of the relationship between God and His people. So the devil goes after that. And they require abstinence from foods.

Now, you can find that abstinence from foods. They tell you, you can't eat this. You can't eat another thing.

You got people that are involved in the different forms of Judaism or involved in even Catholicism has their times when, you know, you can't eat meat. You can't do this and can't do that. But notice this, marriage and foods seem to fall into this category of things that God created to be received with thanksgiving, but not by everybody, by those who believe and know the truth.

Now, if you just stop right there, it's a remarkable comment that Paul is making on these things. Do you see what he's saying? He's saying that God created marriage. I'm taking the things that God created here to modify both marriage and food.

But the thing is, what Paul is saying is that God specifically created an apple to be eaten by Christians who are thanking Him for it. Now, that's a phenomenal thought. You recognize what he's saying.

When you see a lost person eating an apple, you can say, hey, God created that to be eaten by me with thanksgiving. He didn't first and foremost create that for you to eat. But for me, a Christian, a person who believes and knows the truth, God primarily created marriage and He primarily created food specifically, not just to be enjoyed by His people, but to be enjoyed by His people with thanksgiving.

Now, you need to recognize this. God is very delighted to give marriage. When we think about marriage, we think about intimacy.

He gave that to mankind to be enjoyed by His people. And so, folks, every one of you that are married, whenever there is any kind of enjoyment or pleasure or intimacy or anything that makes you glad, happy, fulfilled, satisfied, you should be offering up thanksgiving to the Lord. And anytime you eat, it should be constantly recognizing, I can't believe God gave me this steak and God gave me this pumpkin pie over here.

Um, it's all to be eaten by Christians. It's to be enjoyed by Christians. It's to be, that's clearly what He's saying here.

That's the intent behind the things that He's created. And brethren, I think that, you know, Paul is just speaking about two things here. But you know, I believe that that principle probably holds.

When you see a beautiful sunset, you can feel like, wow, God created those things to bring His own people pleasure and enjoyment. God specifically designed those things to be received with thanksgiving. Brethren, we need to have a proper perspective on everything.

You see, if you actually recognize, I remember John Piper one time, I went to a Bethlehem Desiring God conference. And he was up there on the platform. And he said, he talked about eating lemon meringue pie.

I don't know if you even do lemon meringue pie here. But he said, he was talking about lemon meringue pie. And he didn't have any, but he was just acting it out.

Like he had a fork in his hand and a plate in the other hand. And he took a chunk of the lemon meringue pie and he put it in his mouth. And he just, he exploded in praise.

And I don't even remember what he was talking about or what he was preaching on. But the whole picture just sticks in my brain. That that's how we ought to enjoy life.

When you go outside and you see the sun rising, or you see the snowfall. You know what? The lost may be enjoying it. They may have enjoyed that snowfall that Ruby and I were hiking through.

Some places, knee-deep snow. But you know what? The Lord does that for His people. And He does it for His people to receive with thanksgiving.

And so brethren, you recognize the failure on our part. God doesn't fail in giving us all these things. Usually the failure is on our part to give thanks for what He's given to us.

Now I know we're thankful to a degree. But brethren, all the more you need to, I mean, that's one of the ways just to stay. You know how Scripture talks about we need to be constant in our prayer.

We need to be praying always. And not faint. One of the great ways to pray all the time is just to thank God for everything.

To be constantly really recognizing. To be thinking. What, I mean, where would I be if God really gave me what I deserve? And we can hardly enter into our imagination.

What we really deserve for the things that we've done. And for God to allow us to have these things. Brethren, we need to cultivate that.

Like I said on Sunday, that means we have to be thinking people. We really have to think. God by nature is the Father of lights.

You remember what Scripture says? If we then being evil know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will our Father give good things? The Sermon on the Mount version to those that ask. Brethren, do you recognize His children? Again, do you make the connection? It's not just to everybody. It's to His children.

How much more is He ready to give good things? Our Father is a giver by nature. He's a creator and He's a giver. That characterizes Him.

He loves to give to His children. But we just need to be thinking. When we are enjoying marriage or sitting down to eat our food, we need to think God made this for Christians.

God made this for me. Think about it. Way back when God was thinking, I'm going to make trees.

I'm going to make fruit trees. I'm going to make grain. I'm going to make gold in the earth and silver and rubies and diamonds.

I'm going to make those things. I'm going to make sunsets. I'm going to make the sun out there.

I'm going to create time and a day and night and rest. And when you think about all these things, what you need to hear is Paul's words right here. That God actually created that specifically for the sake of those who believe and know the truth.

And then it says here in 1 Timothy 4.4, for everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. Brethren, do you know what? The devil often wants to come along and tell you, oh, if you're going to be a Christian, you need to be miserable. And if you're a Christian, you can't do anything.

And if you're a Christian, you can't eat lemon meringue pie. If you're a Christian, you just have to be miserable all the time. You shouldn't think about actually enjoying marriage and enjoying food.

You need to have a frown on your face and a scowl all the time. If you're going to be a really holy person, you need to be miserable. And that's not the picture here.

The picture is this. Yes, does Scripture say I'll not be brought under the control of anything? Yeah, it says that. And so I don't want to be brought under control.

I don't want to be brought under the control of alcohol or under the control of chocolate or caffeine. I don't want to be brought under the control of any of that. But is there a place to enjoy things? Obviously, there is.

And to do it with thanksgiving. Because brethren, what promotes thanksgiving? Rejoicing in what you see. Rejoicing in what you have.

Not being dour and sour and miserable and ugly. And that doesn't produce thanksgiving. And if you try to thank God when you're just feeling all ugly inside and you don't really feel joy and you don't feel satisfaction, you don't feel refreshment to your soul, and you don't feel happy about this.

I mean, if you try to thank God when that's not the case, then it's mechanical. And God doesn't want that. He wants us to thank from the heart.

God has given us these things because He really wants us to delight in them. But He wants us to delight in Him more. He wants us to be able to be people that can fast.

He wants us to be able to delight in food and thank Him for it. But He also wants us to be able to lay that food aside because our desire for Him is greater. You see the balance there? That is the picture that we find in Scripture.

And then here's the last verse. 4. It is made holy by the Word of God in prayer. Okay, I'm going to let you all define this now.

What does that mean? What does it mean that all the food that we eat is made holy by the Word of God in prayer? Everything created by God is good, nothing to be rejected if it's received with thanksgiving, for it's made holy by the Word of God in prayer. How do you take that? What does that even mean? Obviously,

it's related to everything created by God that's good is made holy by the Word of God in prayer. What does that mean? Take a stab at it.

I don't really know what it means. I was, I mean, I was reading it the other day. I'm really glad that you're actually dealing with this because I was actually going to ask you first directly about the Scripture, literally.

And I don't know what it means, but it's interesting because it does show prayer has the ability to sanctify what we eat. I mean, you can't run away in that Scripture. And what that means, I don't know how to quite unravel all that, but it does show something quite significant about prayer itself.

Well, how about this? How about if we just basically say that what it means, I mean, remember, holy, it's made holy, which means it's made special. That's the idea of holy. It's unique.

It's other. It's basically everything created by God is good. It's in that category.

It's unique because the Word of God tells us that it is. Maybe that's what's meant there. It's made holy by the Word of God.

In other words, Paul speaking, just like he speaks in these verses, makes everything created by him holy. And the prayer part is that's where our thanksgiving is. When we are thanking God for everything that he's created, that sets it into a unique category because we're acknowledging that God has created this.

And our thanksgiving is always prayer. I mean, that would be my best stab at it is the Word of God actually tells us it's good. And by our prayer, we confirm that it's good when we thank God for it because we're thanking him for it because we appreciate it and we value it.

That's what it seems like maybe in context is the way that we make it holy. But brethren, the big thought here is this. It ought to make you thankful when you think God created this for those who believe and know the truth.

I mean, if you're a Christian and you sit down and you think, wow, when God created this food, he was thinking of his people. He was thinking of me. God knew when he created that first apple that I would eat one or the banana or a pineapple or, I mean, fill in the blank, whatever it is.

So anyway, there are some thoughts on thanksgiving. That's my first one. How about a second? Anybody want to say anything about that before I move on to the next one? Okay, the next one.

Very helpful, very useful. This one is found in 2 Corinthians chapter 9. 2 Corinthians chapter 9. Now, 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 are two chapters back to back that possess the most extensive treatment of giving that you have anywhere in your Bibles. Very helpful.

Two chapters. And I want you to hone in especially on... And by the way, the reason that Paul deals with these two chapters, deals with giving, is because he's wanting to encourage the Corinthian Christians in making a generous, cheerful gift to the needy Christians in Judea. This was a time of famine.

Paul is trying to press them. He's trying to encourage them to be liberal givers. And see, the thing is, they promised to do it.

They committed to make an offering, and now Paul is wanting them to be good to the promise that they made. And so, let's just dive in at verse 6 in chapter 9. The point is this. Whoever sows sparingly will also

reap sparingly.

So you see, he's trying to encourage them. There's a reason why you should give lavishly. Why? Because God is going to give to you proportionate to how you yourself give.

Whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly. Whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully. Brethren, I'll tell you this.

You will never outgive God. Never will you outgive God. I've seen it.

I have seen it firsthand. God is so good to this promise. Each one must give as he's decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Now, he's going to give some great encouragement here. God is able to make all grace abound to you. In other words, if you give, you're one of these Corinthians and you give exceedingly lavishly, abundantly, you give to the need of Christians in another place.

He wants them to know this. God is able to make all grace abound to you. So that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

What a promise. You see what he says to people that give? He says, God is going to make all grace abound to you. Oh, when people will depart from their money for the sake of love, for the sake of Christians in other places, for the sake of glorifying God, Paul's just saying God is going to just let his grace loose on you.

And you're going to have all sufficiency in all things, all the superlatives here. It's just all grace, all sufficiency, all things, all times. You may abound in every good work.

It's just a phenomenal promise as it is written. Now, he's going to go back to the Old Testament, Psalm 112, and he's going to dig this up. He, that's God, has distributed... Oh, no, no, no.

The he is the giver. And he's speaking about us who are givers. He says, he, that would be the Christian, has distributed freely.

He's given to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. So what he's doing is he's saying, look, God is actually making promise that He'll... There's a promise here about our righteousness, that when we give, God is ever involved in just cultivating the righteousness in us.

He who supplies seed... That's God there, that he. He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You see the promise there.

We sow, God provides the seed. And as we just keep throwing the seed, whatever it is He gives to us, the word, money, we just keep giving it, give, give, give, give. And what happens? Well, he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing, increase the harvest of your righteousness.

Oh, brethren, you want to be lavish givers. I'll tell you this. You only rob yourself if you're not a liberal giver.

And like I told you this before, I'm really praying that God is going to open many doors for us to be able to give and give and give and give and to test these realities. Notice verse 11, you will be enriched in every way to be generous. In other words, if you give, God is going to see to it that you have all the more to be able to give with.

And brethren, you see this, you know what the difference is between this and the health, wealth, prosperity people? Is there's no end. You say, what do you mean? They say, give so that you can get. Paul is saying, give so that you can get, so that you can give more.

You see, it's never about just hoarding. It's never about keeping. It's about being enabled to be generous in every way.

And notice this, here's where thanksgiving comes in, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. Oh, did you see what he's saying? Through us, through who? He's saying me and you. Who's the you? The Corinthian Christians.

How does that work? You see what he's saying? He is saying that if you give your money and I come there and get it from you and I take it to the poor churches in Judea, you know what's going to happen? Those saints in Judea are going to praise God. Brethren, let me tell you this, one of the great, we're talking about some thoughts on thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is one of the main goals of giving.

You say, what do you mean? I mean, just this, brethren, I know this, we're praising the Lord over the gift that we just gave. Brethren, that ought to be our objective. When we meet needs, I hope that is in your mind how the people whose needs you meet are going to thank God.

Verse 12, for the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, it's also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. You see what he's saying? He said, yes, you want to give to meet the need of the person you give to, but you also want to give because it abounds in thanksgiving to God. And that's the main thing here.

I mean, see, that's what he's after. He's after God being glorified in this. Brethren, when we give, we're not the primary ones to be thanked.

God is the primary one to be thanked. Why? Because God has moved on us by saving us, by giving us new hearts, and then by giving us the stuff to be able to give with, he's enabled us. Brethren, none of us have anything to give except what God has first given to us.

And then if we give, it's because God made us willing to give. So the thing is, in the end, it really all the praise does come back to the Lord. I'll tell you this, if I'm in a need and suddenly God sends somebody to give to me for that need, I recognize that.

I'm thankful to the person who gave to me, but I recognize God stirred that person up right at that time to give me right at the time when I had that need. I recognize it's God's doing. And what Paul is saying is, when we give, one of the primary results is many thanksgivings to God.

That ought to motivate your giving. That ought to motivate it a lot. And then we keep reading, by their approval of this service, whose approval? Well, the people you're giving to.

In this case, it would be those saints in Judea, the churches there. By their approval of this service, they will glorify God. See, he doesn't want to let this go.

Verse 11, it produces thanksgiving to God. Verse 12, many thanksgiving to God. Verse 13, it glorifies God.

And why? Because of your submission flowing from your confession of the Gospel of Christ and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others. You see, God is glorified. Why? Because it's showing the power of the Gospel in your life.

What He's done. How He's transformed you. And notice one other great benefit here.

Verse 14, while they long for you. You know what happens when you give to people? Their affection for you is stirred. And they pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.

Brethren, there are so many reasons to give. Why? Because God loves a cheerful giver. Why else? Because when you sow bountifully, you'll reap bountifully.

Why else? Because God is able to make all grace abound to you so that you have all sufficiency in all things, at all times, in every good work. Why? Because He causes an increase of the harvest of your righteousness. Why else? Because God gets thanks.

He gets many thanks. And because the power of the Gospel is put on display. And the people you give to will have an affection for you.

And the people you give to will pray for you. Brethren, I hope you can see how Thanksgiving fits into giving. So again, just some thoughts on Thanksgiving.

Any thoughts on that before we move on? Okay. Well, how about the next one? Thanksgiving is one of the goals of salvation. Look with me at 2 Corinthians 4. Same book.

Just go forward in 2 Corinthians to chapter 4. Brethren, I'll say this. I know that I heard, like last Wednesday, I heard some of you guys talking about just simply being happy that the Gospel was being preached, even if nobody got saved. And I said, well, I had some thoughts on that.

And well, I want to share those now. Should we be content to simply have the Gospel preached without seeing sinners saved? Just simply because preaching the Gospel glorifies God and that's all that really matters. Well, that may not be the whole picture.

2 Corinthians 4, I want you to see something here. Just get a feel here. Notice the verse 15, because this is where Thanksgiving shows up.

For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people, it may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God. And I think that's so key. Brethren, there's no question from considering marriage, from considering food and giving, thanksgiving is not a minor part of any of these things, nor is it a minor part of salvation.

So you see verse 15, grace extends to more and more people, it may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God. What's the context? Okay, the context is this, let's go back up to verse 3, 2 Corinthians 4, 3. If our Gospel is veiled, do you see what he's talking about? Veiled. Verse 6, God who said let light shine out of darkness, has shown in our hearts.

To some people it's veiled, to some people it's revealed. It shines in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Verse 7, we have this treasure.

See, he's talking about the Gospel. This is all Gospel talk here. We have the Gospel in jars of clay to show the surpassing power belongs to God, not to us.

When he goes down he talks about how he's persecuted and carrying about the body of death, and death is at work in them. He says in verse 14, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise up us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. It's all for your sake so that as grace extends to more and more people, it may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God.

Anyway, you see, he's just talking about the Gospel and how it's veiled to some people and it's revealed to some people and it's in these jars of clay and he shows just how much clay he is and he's constantly faced with all sorts of persecution and being struck down and all of this, but he says that this grace of the Gospel is extending to more and more people and what happens in the midst of it is it increases thanksgiving to the glory of God. Now brethren, undoubtedly if the Gospel's preached and nobody gets saved, we know that God is going to be glorified in the destruction of the damned. We know that.

We know that there is a measure of glory that comes to God when the Gospel's preached and nobody's saved. But brethren, this thanking, this thanksgiving factor in salvation is not a small one. I want you to look at Psalm 50.

Let's go back to the Psalms. Let's look at a couple of these. Psalm 50.

In Psalm 50, verse 23, it says, "...the one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies Me, to one who orders his way rightly, I will show the salvation of God." But my point is this, the one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies Me. Now, you need to remember this. Christians are the true priesthood.

We are a holy priesthood. All believers are priests under the new covenant. All of us are priests.

And what does a priest do? A priest offers sacrifices. In the New Testament, we find that we are the people that bring our offerings, our sacrifices to the Lord. And the offering of thanksgiving, that sacrifice is glorifying to God.

So I want you to see that. Now another text. Psalm 106, verse 47.

106, 47. This is basically a cry for God to save. Psalm 106, verse 47, Save us, O Lord our God.

Gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to Your holy name and glory in Your praise. Now brethren, we don't start with ourselves in Christianity. We always start with God.

But our desire to see people saved should resonate with this theme. Brethren, we should not be content to simply have the gospel preached. Our desire should be that God is praised.

Our desire should be that the thanksgiving being offered to God be increased. When I think about David, David wept tears that people didn't keep the commandments of God. Why would he weep like that? Not primarily for the sake of the people, I doubt, but because God was being dishonored.

Brethren, that ought to be one of our desires. I don't know about you all, but I know that that's one of the very desirable things about seeing people saved is that they're in a position where they're glorifying the Lord. They're in a position where they're pleasing Him, where they're offering praise to Him, where their hearts are towards Him, where there's a gladness that they have to want to worship Him and praise Him and thank Him.

When people legitimately, genuinely, deeply are showing gratitude to God, that is so encouraging. As I said on Sunday, that is such a barometer. It's such a measuring stick.

It's a gauge to where people are at. Well, you want one of the great measuring sticks for discerning true Christians from false Christians. I mean, if we've got anybody here that's wrestled with, am I in? Am I out? Ask yourself about this.

Ask yourself about Thanksgiving. It is such a perfect test for where a person is at. Because when God saves somebody, He produces thanksgiving in a person.

False religion doesn't produce that. Why? Because false religion basically produces people trying to perform. And as long as people think, well, I've got to do this next thing to please God or God's going to get me.

And that's basically what's behind all of false religion. It's this sense of, I've got to do this. I've got to do this or God's going to be unhappy with me.

I've got to do this or He's going to frown at me. I've got to do this or I might go to hell. Or I've got to do this.

But brethren, thanksgiving is such a mark of genuine... There's a thrill in the soul over what God has given. There's a recognition about God's kindness. And brethren, I just say this, thanksgiving is one of the goals of salvation.

It's a primary goal of salvation. We want people thanking the Lord Jesus Christ. We want people thanking God the Father for rescuing their souls.

And that's what true salvation does. I mean, brethren, but we've got to cultivate it. Any of us that have been genuinely converted, we know what our first love is.

We know the excitement. We know the gratitude. We know the thanksgiving.

And all that is so much to be desired. So much to be desired that Jesus is not content to have our first love die out. Because first love goes hand in hand with delight and joy and thanksgiving.

People whose love dies, joy dies with it. Thankfulness dies with it. It becomes mediocre.

It becomes humdrum. It becomes just status quo. Brethren, we should so desire that God would save a whole band of new people to raise... Brethren, it would not be wrong for us to want to see people in Manchester City Center saved just so that when we sing on Sundays, it's more glorious.

Not just to our eardrums, but to God who's watching and listening. To have a place of people whose hearts are so overflowing. That is, brethren, you can't get away from it.

The One who offers thanksgiving as His sacrifice glorifies Me. And so, Lord, gather Your people from Manchester that they may give thanks to Your holy name and glorify You in their praise. That should be our desire.

Yes, we can have a desire for the people. We can have a passion for souls. But we do need to really think about people praising the Lord.

Brethren, I don't know about you, but I find that incredibly desirable to have a church full of people praising the Lord and whose hearts spill over with it. And that gladness of praise just overflows. So marriage, food, everything created, we need to be thankful.

He created it for us to be enjoyed by us with thanksgiving. In our giving, it should be a primary motive to produce thanksgiving to God in those we give to. And brethren, we ought to be looking for ways to give that are calculated to magnify God's thanksgiving.

And then thanksgiving is a massive goal of salvation. When you're praying that God would save, this ought to be one of the things that you're putting out there all the time. Lord, when you're not saving... I mean, as the churches... You recognize what's happening in this land.

There was a day when the churches were full. And you know what that meant? That meant in prayer, in singing, as they were making melody in their heart, you had praise going up across this land. But as the churches diminish, as the old saints die, and they're not being replaced by new converts, you know what's happening proportionately in this land? You know what's happening as a percentage basis of the population? More and more people who don't praise God.

Those that make up the heavenly choir of the militant church, they're disappearing. Every Sunday, there's fewer and fewer people in this land. Every week passes by these old saints.

We just came from this Reformation Revival Conference. It's all old people. It's people that probably were there when Martyn Lloyd-Jones preached at that conference.

And what's happening? They're dying. Ruby and I met a sweet old lady. She was telling us, yeah, she used to come with another friend.

They come from up Newcastle way, north of there in Scotland. But they used to pick this woman up on the way down, but she died. She died since the last time this conference met, which was waylaid one year because of COVID.

But brethren, do you realize what's happening? If that doesn't make you all the more earnest to pray, to think that God is being insulted, God is not being praised in this land, that ought to cause you concern. That ought to be reason to motivate you to pray that God would save. So another thought would be this.

1 Thessalonians 5.18 Now, obviously, if you've already looked at it, you see it deals with giving thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. But here's one of these portions of Scripture. This is the... I've got a heading here that says final instructions and benediction.

As Paul is closing out this letter, he's going to give some rapid fire, bang, bang, bang, bang instruction. Really helpful, really useful. Notice what he says in 1 Thessalonians 5.12. This is where basically his finishing thoughts.

You just want a collective thought of an apostle's instruction. If he was winding up a letter to us, I mean, if he was writing to Grace Fellowship Manchester, if he'd lived in our day, and he was just wanting to give us some good, healthy, solid instruction, or any of you, whatever churches you're in. Think about the tone.

Think about the emphasis. And this is inspired language. This is what God wants us to know.

We ask you brothers to respect those who labor among you. He's talking about leadership. Respect the leaders and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.

Esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. Need to be striving for unity.

We urge you brothers, admonish the idol. Some say unruly, disorderly. That's the idea.

We urge you brothers. Now these brothers may be those who are actually in leadership. Maybe the whole church.

You remember last time I talked about the rebuke. We need to be people who admonish the unruly or the idol, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays evil for evil.

Always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.

Give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the spirit. Do not despise prophecies.

Test everything. Hold fast what's good. Abstain from every form of evil.

So there you have it. Just rapid fire, exhortation. And one of the things right in the midst of all of this is this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

What? To give thanks in all circumstances. Now this isn't just giving God thanks for all things like everything He blesses us with. This is in all circumstances.

This means when God gives, thank Him. When God takes away, thank Him. When God brings that which is enjoyable, thank Him.

When God brings trials, thank Him. And listen, you won't thank Him unless you're thinking like I talked about Sunday. You have to be thinking about what all these things really are.

Trials are good because they produce righteousness. If we really have an eye to see things as they are, all things work together for our good. You need to have the eye that sees from a biblical perspective, from a God-given perspective.

Every single thing that God gives us in this life is good. You may want to get married and you may be single. But let me tell you, at this point in time, it's good.

There are many things that we can have in life that we feel like maybe you're married and you wish you were single. But these things are good. God often puts us in circumstances that if we could write the script, we would make it a different circumstance.

But it is the will of God. That's the thing. There are a number of things in the New Testament that are expressly said to be the will of God.

Now, obviously, everything in the New Testament, everything in the Bible that God would have us to do and give us instruction towards is the will of God for us. But there are some places where God actually tags that. He attaches that description.

This is the will of God. And one of those things is thanksgiving. Brethren, you get the feel that thankless Christians are, that's very distasteful to the Lord.

And so again, we need to be cultivating this. Because we want to truly be able to thank God. And as I was saying on Sunday, brethren, if we think about hell for a moment and we think about what we really deserve, let me tell you something.

If you're single and you're struggling with your singleness, I would just ask you this. Would anybody in hell gladly come out of hell and trade places with you and be single in a second? And they'd be thankful for it. You're in a situation perhaps where, you know, maybe you don't have the job you want.

Maybe you don't have the money you want. Maybe you don't have the house you want. Brethren, again, just ask yourself this.

Would anyone in hell trade places with you and leap for joy? You better believe they would. So brethren, we need to recognize what we deserve and all the things that we have. And it really helps to think and think biblically.

If you're ever in any circumstance that you can't thank the Lord for, you automatically know. It's the will of God for you to be thankful in that situation. And the only reason you're not is because you're being selfish.

You're being, you're pouting. You're feeling like you deserve more. You're feeling selfish.

You're not thinking properly. So if God tells us to give thanks in all circumstances, obviously it's because we should give thanks. And every situation is thank-worthy.

And brethren, if glory lies before us, and even the worst circumstances like Job went through are meant to purify us and make us more like Christ, the only reason that we wouldn't give thanks for that is because we really don't value the things that are most valuable. Righteousness really is, you know, money doesn't prosper. Money doesn't help you.

Money doesn't, money isn't going to answer for you in the day of judgment. But righteousness will. Righteousness is a very valuable thing.

So brethren, very quickly here. I don't know how much we give God thanks for each other. This is a fifth thought on thanksgiving.

Just listen to this, Paul to the Romans. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. Romans 6, 17, thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed.

To the Corinthians, I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus. Ephesians, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

The Philippians, I thank my God in all my remembrance of you.

Colossians, we always thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ when we pray for you. Thessalonians, we give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers. Timothy, I thank God whom I serve as did my ancestors with a clear conscience as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.

Philemon, I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers. Now, you know what? You could say, well, Paul was writing a letter to Christians, and so of course he had to put a salutation and say something. No, you're missing it if that's what you think that this is.

Don't you hear what he's saying? He says, we always thank God when we pray for you. We give thanks to God always for you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers. Brethren, do you recognize one of the massive realities about Paul's prayer life is that he constantly was thanking God for other Christians, thanking God for other churches.

Brethren, I have a feeling that if the truth be known, if every one of us could put up on the big screen, if tomorrow night at the prayer meeting, we could show how many times over the last year you've actually thanked God for other Christians or other churches. Brethren, I have a feeling that number might be... it might be kind of shameful. It might be something that would embarrass you.

Brethren, we need to cultivate this. Let me just ask you all, what could you do in your thinking? What can you do to actually help you be genuinely thankful for God's people, even in, I mean, in our own church and in other places? I'm looking for you all to answer this. Give me ideas here.

I think one way is seeing how others serve others and you could, you know, thank the Lord for His grace in their life in that way. And obviously, you know that if you're bringing it to Him, you want to be genuine because you don't, you know what I mean? You don't want to be saying it, but you don't mean it, but sort of building on that and find little things that you can, or qualities that you see in others that you can think, this is a grace in them and, you know, start building from there. Right.

We can be thankful when we see the grace of God at work in others. We can be thankful when their spiritual gifts, they use them to benefit you. And it really is.

Brethren, one of the reasons to use your gifts to serve others is precisely for this, that God would be thanked for you. It's kind of like Robert Murray McShane. You know, he talked about living so as to be missed when you're gone.

Brethren, one of the things we can do is we can try to be ourselves the kind of people that others would be thankful for. I mean, the reality is that, and listen, you're not, that's not selfish. For you to want to be the kind of person that other people are thankful for, that's not selfish because what you're doing is you're wanting God to receive the thanks.

And McShane's right. We should live to be the kind of people that will be missed when we're gone. And you know what? If you actually are the kind of people that will be missed when you're gone, because that's the kind of influence that you had in people's lives.

Dorcas, Tabitha, what happened? When she died, all the widows wept. Why? Because she served them and took care of them. That's what they told Peter when Peter came and raised her from the dead.

Brethren, Dorcas may sound like an undesirable name in these days, but I'll tell you, you all together want to be like her. You want to be the kind of person that is missed when they're gone. Why? Because that kind of person is going to be the kind of person that God's going to be thanked for while you live.

And even after you die, the remembrance of you. Brethren, you need to ask yourself this. How much would people miss you if you were gone? How much is your life impacting other people? I mean, this is one of the ways that we can help cultivate this.

But what else? Any other thoughts? Just, brethren, sometimes it's a matter of information. I mean, you know, I don't know if you all are thankful, but you haven't met them face to face. But I would venture to say this.

Your ability to be thankful for them is probably going to be proportionate to what you know about them. Learning about people in other places. You know, one of the things about the church here, not really having a whole lot of outside contact in the past, it makes it very difficult to thank the Lord for churches in other places, especially if more what's being cultivated in the church is a competitive mindset or the mindset that, well, we're the only ones with the truth.

You know, it's we've got the truth and nobody else does. Or you're in this competitive mindset where you can't be thankful about others because you're jealous and you're envious and you always want what they have. But brethren, there's enough of the grace of God to go all the way around.

We should be very happy when other people have it. And so one of the ways to cultivate thankfulness is to seek to kill jealousy and envy. And one of the starting places to kill that is simply to recognize it's there and take it before the Lord and bow your head in shame but confess it and ask and admit it.

Oh, that is so healthy. That is such a healthy place to start. And listen, I'm not talking as... Listen, I'm as competitive as the next guy.

I mean, I grew up playing sports and I had a bunch of friends and we were competitive. And typically, leaders in churches are naturally competitive people. And it's something you have to kill.

Al told me that he used to watch these Reformed Baptist conferences and he said when all these pastors would come together, he said it was like a pack of dogs and they ate each sniffing each other. And brethren, we've got to try to kill that. If you're really going to be thankful for one another, you can't be just envying what they have and jealous of what they have and hateful and not wanting them to have success and not wanting them to have the grace of God.

That's one place where it starts when you just recognize... I'll tell you this. There was a guy whose ministry, it was small, it was struggling, and he was so jealous of Spurgeon. And you know what? He recognized it and he took it to the Lord and he confessed it.

And he began to pray for Spurgeon, thank the Lord for Spurgeon. And you know what? When he started doing that, God began to bless his own ministry. And so that's one of the things.

Brethren, you need to be thinking about... One of the things that helps thanksgiving is just to be thanking God for them. It's like once you start thanking God for Christians, then they end up being on your mind more, so that you end up thanking God more for them. But just if you see some kind of impressive Christianity or God is using somebody somewhere, or somebody is being an example, brethren, what

does anybody have that they haven't received from the Lord? And you can be thankful for it, that God is at work, that God is doing these things.

And brethren, when you see God giving somebody else something that you don't have, thank the Lord, but you can plead at the same time, Lord, please, while on others you are calling, please don't pass us by, please don't pass me by. Brethren, I think you will find that one of the paths to being filled with the Spirit of God, and like we looked at in Ephesians 5, is by seeking to cultivate this. You being filled with the Spirit and you cultivating thanksgiving, they go hand in hand.

Don't forget that. Okay, just one last one. And this, if everybody would turn to Romans 14, most of you all know what Romans 14 is about.

But here is one last thought. We've had two, three, four, five, six thoughts. This is the sixth thought on thanksgiving, but a very necessary one, very helpful.

Brethren, do you realize thankful people are happy people? They are joyful people. They are Spirit-filled people. And that's how God wants us.

Not miserable Christianity. That's the devil's kind of Christianity. That's not the God-given kind.

But in Romans 14, this very well-known chapter, you know, it deals with the gray areas, Christian liberty, should we eat? Should we not eat? Should we observe the day? Should we not observe the day? I just want you to see something here. The idea of thanks shows up in verse 6. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord.

Since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. That's crucial. That's absolutely crucial.

Do you see the difference? What's the difference? The difference is one eats, one doesn't eat. But beyond that, there's no difference as far as the thanksgiving that is being given to God. Brethren, do you realize when it comes to Christian liberty, God says for freedom, you've been set free.

Brethren, when we think about our different liberties, when we think about taking or not taking, brethren, thanksgiving ought to be one of the primary factors. It's just like God loves a cheerful giver, but God loves the cheerful, thankful Christian who comes to his convictions and comes to those convictions freely and thankfully. I mean, you want to be the kind of person that is... Brethren, you want to be the... Listen, you want to be the kind of Christian that can say, you know what? I don't have to drink alcoholic beverage and I'm thankful to the Lord when I drink my whatever, my water, my tea, my coffee, and I'm thankful for it.

And I don't have to drink that. And if you feel the liberty to sit down and have some kind of ale or some kind of glass of wine, then do it thankfully. You see, sometimes when we get into these areas of life, again, we can get this idea, well, the person that doesn't do these things, well, they're just miserable and they can't do anything and they walk through life and all they are is just this sour looking... Oh, Christianity is just this horrible thing and it's all about thou shall not do this and thou shall not do that.

And obviously, look, obviously, God has given us these things as a righteous standard. He's given His law to protect us in ways of holiness. And you ought to be thankful for that.

You ought to be thankful for God's righteous standards. They're good. But in all these gray areas, brethren, one of the ways you want to just measure this is what can you do that's not by compulsion? In the same way God loves a cheerful giver, God loves our cheerfulness when it comes to these gray areas about life.

And you want to be a person that can... You know what? You can study Scripture. You don't want to go against your conscience. Scripture isn't saying violate your conscience and be thankful.

No, we ought to be people that can walk hand in hand with our conscience and be a thankful people. Thankful in what our faith tells us we're allowed. And it says in verse 22, the faith that you have, keep between yourself and God.

Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. Whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats because the eating is not from faith. Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

So we need to be people that live in faith. We need to be people that have confidence. We have a trained and an in-tune conscience with what we do.

And when our conscience tells us, hey, I know God's will. Even if it's a gray area, Paul wants us to be people of conviction. He wants us to be people fully persuaded of doing what we do because we've studied Scripture and we believe it's what we ought to do.

And we ought to be able to be thankful. You get vaccinated, be thankful. You don't think the vaccination is the right way to go, be thankful.

You think that you should be a vegetarian? Well, you can be thankful. You don't think you should be one? Be thankful. You think you can drink wine? Be thankful.

You don't want to drink wine? You don't think that that's something that's pleasing to God? Be thankful. Again, this is a great measuring device in all of this. We want to be a people that can be thankful and show gratitude with whatever it is that we allow or we don't allow.

And it's definitely Thanksgiving is a great measuring stick in the gray areas of life. Anyway, you see it there. You see it in verse 5. It says, each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

And I'll tell you that, that kind of fully convinced, that kind of conviction will produce thankfulness. Why? Because the Christian ought to want to do God's will. And the idea is that you become fully convinced in your own mind what you think is pleasing to the Lord and what's not.

And so you can do it with Thanksgiving. And I'll tell you this, Christian, you don't have to be worried about somebody else that has a different conviction. You being able to do it with Thanksgiving to God is the issue.

And remember, Thanksgiving to him is the issue. I guarantee you this. The guy who drinks his glass of wine and praises the Lord is far more pleasing to him than the person who abstains, is judging the person who does it, and is angry because he just feels that he can't do anything and he feels like he's in this bondage.

Which one do you think is more pleasing? Listen, if somebody wants to give up the lemon meringue pie because he's got self-control and he can thank the Lord, you know what? You can thank the Lord. I don't have to eat that. Why? Because I'm a new creation in Christ.

God has done such things in me. I've got self-control and I can thank the Lord for that. I don't have to have coffee.

I don't have to have that piece of lemon meringue pie. And I can be joyful. And as I watch you over there eating it, I can rejoice with you.

But then, you know what? Being like John Piper and being able to eat that lemon meringue pie and do it to the praise of the Lord. Brethren, one of the things that you have to constantly remember is 1 Timothy chapter 4. God created these things to be enjoyed and to be taken by people that have faith and to be done so with thanksgiving. Going through life and just seeing how much you can do without, seeing how minimally you can live.

Brethren, they actually accused Jesus of being a glutton and a wine-bibber. Now look, that doesn't mean that there aren't seasons to fast. That doesn't mean that there aren't seasons to go without.

It doesn't mean that we may not want to go without something so that we have more to be able to give with and to be a cheerful giver so that God gets thanksgiving from that. There are all sorts of sacrifices and deaths to die in living the Christian life. We don't get away from that.

But oh brethren, there is so much to be enjoyed. And we ought to feel this freedom to fast and a freedom to feast and to be people that can do both and to not constantly feel this cloud over us like, oh, I have to feel guilty because this is just too enjoyable. God has given us these things to be enjoyed and He takes great satisfaction, great gratification in thankful people.

Again, not loving His gifts more than the giver. That's idolatry. We have to shy away from that.

But brethren, this is the picture of life here, the Christian life as it's described in the New Testament with regards to thanksgiving. So I don't know if you've ever done just a topical study on thanksgiving like this before. But brethren, this is so profitable because this is the will of God for us.

And we are not the people that tend to be too thankful. It's just the opposite. Well, anything else? I was thinking there about thanksgiving in terms of what you were talking about, about as a test.

I was thinking what you think of this, Tim, about, you know, when we kind of have that introspective test of thanksgiving, maybe we could, you know, we look at our own thanks and our own Christian lives and prayers. I wonder if our current thanksgiving can reveal what we most cherish as well. Do you think it's a good way, a good test to see where our hearts are, what our hearts cherish the most, if that makes any sense? Is there a sense in which that can be also kind of a gauge, you know, like, oh, I'm, you know, yeah, I thank God.

And then, but you don't want to, you know, you can say like, you know, obviously we never give, we never do, we're never perfect in all of this. But I kind of think, is this a good way to say, look, okay, when I look at scripture and I look at Paul's thanks and all his epistles, and I see, is there a way of building a framework of thanksgiving and measuring our own framework against scripture? I don't know. What do you think about that? Does that make sense? Well, on the one hand, I think this.

We ought to, like, I think we can examine ourselves in a number of different areas here. For one, think about the things that tend to produce the greatest amount of joy in you when you receive them and ask yourself, does that correspond to gratitude to God? I mean, you, we can, it's kind of like, what would be the most exciting thing you could give to your child? Okay, you might think, well, a candy bar, that would make them really happy, a bowl of ice cream, that would make them really happy, a brand new toy. But we all know about children that don't show gratitude for the things that most excite them.

So I think that would be one of the starting points is to ask ourselves this, what is it that really, that really excites me that happens in life? And then ask myself, do I spontaneously thank the Lord when those things happen, or I'm given those things? That would be one thing. I guess another thing would be this, to try to narrow down in my life, what do I thank God for? And then try to kind of think about all the things that you don't thank God for. And why don't you? And a lot of times it's just, we don't think, it's almost we take for granted that certain things are the way they are.

And I think with some of us, we might figure out, well, yeah, there's a pool of things that we thank God for, or at least sometimes. And then maybe there's some things we never think to thank Him for. I would also say this, I think that this is a massive, I think it's one of the things that you really want to use as a battering ram in your prayer life.

Lord, we, large petitions, we bring to you, I mean, we're coming to a king, we're bringing large petitions. We want to see you give large answers because we want a large chorus of thanksgiving. But you know, when you use that kind of motivation or that kind of argument in your prayer, it isn't very weighty if the reality is that you just basically aren't a very thankful person.

I mean, to be saying to God, please, Lord, grant us this, that our joy may be full. Grant us this, that there might be just a shout of thanksgiving come from this church. I mean, one of the things is this, I have really, really desired that God would do something with regards to a building for the sake of the praise that would come forth from this church.

But you know, as I pray that, the reality is that if the majority of people in the church are not already a very thankful people, that's almost a lame argument for prayer. If I'm saying, Lord, grant this to us so that the church would be thankful. But if a lot of the people in the church are not really living lives that are expressing a whole deal of thankfulness, then there isn't a lot of leverage with regards to that appeal to the Lord.

And I suspect it's kind of like this. If you have two children and one of your children is just full of ingratitude, they don't thank you for anything. And the other is extremely thankful.

You give them the least thing and they're very thankful and they want to come and hug you. I mean, which one are you going to be more inclined to want to give to? Well, I think there's no question. I think thankfulness, it opens the door to it opens the door to all sorts of things, but not a fake thankfulness.

This has to be something that's actually cultivated at a heart level. And this is why I say, you know, doing an inventory, really asking yourself, do you thank the Lord for things that you're excited to get? Do you thank the Lord for some things and not for other things? Why is that? Really just to think about just to think about how much it seems to me that if we're to thank God in everything, which is the will of God for us in all circumstances and in everything, it says in Colossians, then it seems like there would be this constant stream of thankfulness being lifted up to the Lord on a regular basis. It would be one of the ways that we

commune with God on a regular basis.

We're constantly thanking Him. You know, you're in the workplace and you're able to accomplish something, something works. Like I know preparing a sermon, if all of a sudden the thought comes to my mind and I feel like, wow, I think that came from the spirit of God.

I mean, there's a place to be thankful as I'm studying and I come to recognize some of the glories of the gospel. And there's a place just to stop and just thank the Lord for the glory of this. There's a place to thank the Lord for, I mean, you don't want to be heartless, even like when it comes to meals, it's almost an accepted thing.

Christians bow their heads when they pray over their food, but you know, it can become mechanical. You want to stop and really think like about first Timothy four, wow, this food, God specifically had me in mind, one of His children when He created this and He created this very specifically for me to enjoy and eat of it with thanksgiving. But yeah, I think in all these things, we just have to be self-reflective.

I mean, we need to be thinking people. And brethren, I tell you, no matter how hard the situation gets, if you simply come back to asking yourself that question, would somebody in hell just like leap for joy to change places with me right now? You know what the answer would be? I don't care what is coming, what sickness you have, what God has taken away, what difficulty, how hard your marriage is, you know, what kind of pain you might be wracked with. Even if you went through a Job experience, the reality is if you were in hell, you would trade places with Job in a second.

So I think really realizing, really thinking, brethren, we've got to think about what our sins deserve. If there's something to make a person full of gratitude, it's just thinking about, wow, God has not given me what I deserve, and He's given me all sorts of things I don't deserve. That's a really good way to put things in proper perspective.

Yeah, I was going to say that I think that's the key, always to think that, well, to know that you always receive more and are better than you deserve. Because truly, if the Lord actually gave us what we deserve, we would be in hell tonight. And so yeah, the very fact that we are not there, and the very fact that we can actually breathe and enjoy life and everything else that comes with it, and then actually are promised heaven or God's gracious presence, that's always, as you said, whatever.

It doesn't matter what's happening. I just want to read one verse in Revelation chapter 7, actually two verses, verses 11 and 12. It says, all the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever.

Amen. And I was just thinking, I don't know if you mentioned it in your, in tonight, but yeah, it just struck me when I was reading it one time, because it's actually holy angels that give thanks. And holy, those angels, they never fell.

They never needed to be redeemed. They never, Christ or the Son of God never shed his blood for them. And yet they constantly, perpetually throughout eternity, they give thanks to God for the very fact that they are created, that they exist, that they can behold his glory.

And yeah, so that's something that struck me. Then how much more ought we to be thankful who are literally sinners saved by grace, who deserve hell yet are given heaven. And that right there is the reason

that I believe that when the angels sing, that it is going to be glorious altogether.

But when the redeemed church breaks forth in singing, it's basically going to drown out the angels, because there is going to be an element of thanksgiving and praise. And, you know, some of it will have to do with whatever kind of voices the angels have over against the glorified race of humanity. But we will have cause to shout thanksgiving on a level that the angels simply don't have.

And you can't get around that. The angels don't deserve. I mean, look, God created the angels.

Is God not free to do with his own whatever he desires? Certainly is. But you know, his very nature is he's a giver. That's his nature.

And so it shouldn't surprise us that he created angels and he gives them all sorts of things too. Who knows? I mean, eternity will tell what God gives to an angel. We don't know what he gives to them.

But certainly we have reason to praise God at a level that no angel will ever know. No angel will ever be able to enter into. Yeah.

In Revelation chapter 4, it also says they give him thanksgiving. And that's from the four living creatures there. But thanksgiving is definitely one of the strains of the heavenly chorus.

And brethren, it's unimaginable. And when it all breaks in upon us, and once we see him face to face, we won't be able to contain ourselves. I think heaven is just going to be a place of spontaneous eruptions of thanksgiving.

And brethren, this idea of a gloomy sitting on a cloud playing a harp, get that out of your mind. This is going to be the kind of thanksgiving that altogether just saturates the soul. It's all consuming.

It's where you feel a gratitude and a joy within that you would be more miserable if it didn't break out. It's going to be a release. It's like when inside you just want to shout because you're so excited about something.

It's like being at your favorite football game and your team just scores. There's something in you just has to express. And if it's contained, if it's not allowed out, then it makes you more miserable.

It makes you, let's just say it makes you less joyful. That's the way to say it. But it'll be that way in heaven.

We will spontaneously just erupt in thanksgiving because we wouldn't be able to do anything else. And it's going to be altogether all consuming and so satisfying and such. It's just, we will never grow weary of praising the Lord.

It will be so satisfying. It will be so altogether just in relation to our souls, to be able to thank God for the things that we have. And brethren, it's like I said on Sunday, when you read Ephesians 2.7, Ephesians 2.7 in my estimate, I don't think you get glory beyond that passage as far as the future.

There are others that are probably equal to it. But when you say that through all the coming ages, the immeasurable riches of the grace of God expressed in His kindness is going to be lavished on those that are in Christ. It's just who can even think of all the praise that is going to produce.

You see, God is not one who simply wants us to praise Him in a vacuum. God is very much in the business of giving and heaping upon us. Why? Because He longs not only to hear us praise, but He longs to see us delight and rejoice and to have what He gives.

It's like a parent who just loves to give to the children. I mean, how much more? You see, that's what Scripture says. We know how to give.

We being evil, how much more? See, this is just pulsates in God to want to give. He is the Father of lights from whom every good and perfect gift comes. He is a giver.

I think what we're going to do is we're going to see God create and create and create and give and through all the coming ages. The sound of it is that we're never going to tire of this. There's always going to be some new wonder, but we can't even conceive of it.

It's like at the men's ethics class on Saturday. I said, Tim Jones had a fire in the fireplace and while we were waiting to get started, I said, you know, to some of the guys sitting there, we would not even conceive of what fire is if we hadn't seen it. If somebody just tried to describe it to us, I think there's going to be things like fire, that it's just so mysterious.

God's going to reveal things like that over and over. He's going to be staggered. He's going to take us just from one level to the another stratosphere, just upward, upward.

You've heard sometimes it described as upward and inward, onward. All eternity is going to be like that. It's not going to be some static boredom.

It's just going to be, brethren, I'll tell you this. You don't want to miss it. Nobody here, you don't want to miss heaven.

It's just not about missing hell. You don't want to miss heaven. It is altogether beyond description in the pages of Scripture as to just how glorious, an eternal weight of glory.

And that's our hope. And that's something to be thankful for.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/EE1L7u3Kg84.mp4>

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