

Expressing Appreciation

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the transformative power of appreciation in relationships and spiritual growth, urging believers to express gratitude genuinely and regularly.

Duration: 21:38

Scripture: Matthew 8:10, John 1:47, Ephesians 1:16, Colossians 3:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Topics: "Gratitude And Thanks", "Christian Appreciation"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of appreciating and expressing gratitude towards others, highlighting the need to overcome the tendency to criticize and find fault. It encourages filling our hearts with appreciation rather than accusation, following the example of Jesus who appreciated even those society deemed unworthy. The message stresses the significance of expressing thanks to those who serve us, including parents, elders, and spiritual leaders, as a reflection of living a new covenant life like Jesus.

Transcript

Why does the Bible say that we have to appreciate those who serve us? Doesn't God alone deserve all the glory? And yet there are a number of verses which tell us that we must appreciate those who serve us, and not only those who serve us. I appreciate little children. There are many people here, including children, wherever I've seen something good I've appreciated.

Appreciating others is so contrary to our nature. Our natural ability, which we've got from Adam, in which some of us excel, is to criticize others and to find fault. Haven't we all become pretty good experts at it through the years? And then one day we realize that's bad.

And we cast out the demon of criticism and accusation. And so we don't want that anymore. And we keep our house empty.

We don't criticize. Eight demons come back in. It's like these people who try to go on a diet.

See, I'm determined to become thin. And they go through something for about a month and they really lose weight. See them six months later, they're heavier than they were before.

It's like Jesus said, eight other demons come in. And the only way to keep those demons out is to fill the heart with the opposite of criticism and accusation. And if any of you have a problem with criticism and

accusation, I would encourage you to develop, to fill your heart.

Don't just drive the demon of accusation out. Fill your heart with appreciation. Start with appreciating your husband, your wife.

I'm sure there must be at least one good thing in your husband or wife, right? At least one? Say that. Don't flatter. Don't tell lies.

Speak the truth. Say good things to your parents, you children. Learn to thank your parents.

And you parents, learn to appreciate your children. I'm sure there are many good things in those children. Jesus was a master at appreciation.

He could look at an unconverted, godless, military man who had killed so many people, a Roman centurion, who didn't know anything about the Bible, and say to him publicly, I have never seen faith like this in anyone in Israel. That's in Matthew chapter 8. Somebody could have gone to him and said, Lord, don't say that, it'll puff up his head. Or somebody would have gone to him, you know, there are a lot of stupid people like that who would go to him and say, oh, the Roman centurion, I hope you didn't get puffed up by all that was said.

All people are not like you. You get puffed up. The other person doesn't.

Don't think everybody's like you. Jesus, do you think Jesus would make that man sin? He was demonstrating the opposite of the satanic nature we've all got from Adam of never expressing appreciation to our children, or our parents, or to elders, or brothers, or sisters. And if we say that we're going to live a new covenant life, we've got to live like Jesus.

We've got to learn to appreciate one another, and especially those who serve us, like our parents, physical parents, spiritual parents. There's nothing wrong in that. And parents, when your children appreciate you, accept it.

Don't slight it and say, oh, that's nothing. That Roman centurion didn't say that. And Jesus said, you've got more faith than anybody I've seen in Israel.

He humbly accepted it. He didn't make a big show of false humility and say, oh, no, no, no, no, no, I'm nobody, like a lot of people when they say that. It's all false humility.

We've got so much of the spirit of accusation and so much of the spirit of false humility. We've got to get rid of it all and be natural, like Jesus. And he could look at another totally unconverted person, this time a Jew called Nathaniel, and say to him, say publicly for everybody to listen, there's a man in whom there is no hypocrisy.

Boy, if I heard that, I would have framed it up and put it in my house. Jesus said, no hypocrisy. Not only that, Jesus also rebukes.

He looked at Peter and said, get behind me, Satan. I think I would have framed that also, get behind me, Satan, and keep it up there for me to remember that if I'm not careful, if I seek my own, he will rebuke me. He loves me.

He rebukes me. He appreciates me. We must correct our children.

We must appreciate our children. So if you found, now you've got to be honest here with yourself. If any of you found a little disturbance in your heart, whenever you see somebody else being appreciated, say to yourself, I've got a little bit of Satan still in my heart.

I've got a little bit of hell still in my heart. I've got a little bit of that old Adamic nature still in my heart. Lord, please help me from today onwards to get rid of it.

I want to be more like Jesus. Who can appreciate even an unconverted military man. And who can appreciate an unconverted Jew.

Who can say to Peter, blessed are you, Simon. Human beings haven't taught you this. My father in heaven revealed this to you.

Can you imagine hearing such words from Jesus? Even to churches that had some mistakes. He says to the church in Ephesus, which had lost its first love, I know your works. You've been so patient.

You kept the doctrine pure. Can you appreciate people who've done some things wrong? Brothers and sisters, many years ago, I made the life of Jesus my study. I studied the Bible to study the life of Jesus.

And that's how I learned to appreciate people. Many, many people have got emails from me of appreciation. Especially on their birthdays and other times.

And even verbally. You know where I learned it from? Jesus. But I have seen so little of it in believers.

That's why they have so many other problems. Just try appreciating people from today. Not just me.

There are so many good people around you. The Roman centurion was not a spiritual leader. You don't just appreciate such people.

We must learn to develop the habit of valuing and appreciating. Particularly those who have served us. We teach our little children to say, say thank you, uncle.

Say thank you, auntie. Even when they get a little sweet. And we get so much more.

And we don't appreciate. What are you teaching your children? To be a hypocrite? Or just to be civilized? I think a lot of people teach their children to say thank you, say sorry. Because they want a good name that we brought up our children right.

Let not that be your aim. I hope your aim will be not for you to get a name as parents. That we taught our children to say thank you and sorry.

But that your children will learn to appreciate. In each other as brothers and sisters. Something good.

And particularly character. I don't want to appreciate girls saying what a lovely dress you got. That's, I wouldn't say that.

Jesus never said that. Because that's saying, oh, your father is so rich, is it? That he can get you such good clothes. And that poor village girl, her father is not so rich.

He can't get good clothes. Don't be so foolish to praise people for their clothes. Or, oh, you're such a beautiful girl.

You have groomed her for disaster. Let the worldly people say that. What about all the other girls and boys who are not good looking? Did the devil make them? I wouldn't say that.

God made everyone. He made everybody's face. And I will not go and praise a little girl because she got some good features.

Because the molecules were arranged in a certain way that look attractive. It's a chemical thing. That's all I say.

I want to appreciate that child. If she shared her toys with another child. Oh, that's good.

Because then anybody can. That was so good the way you shared your toys with someone. Dear brothers and sisters, in this church we have taught people to become like Jesus.

Have you become a little more like Jesus in this area after sitting here for so many years? Let's learn this. We're trying so many high, high things. Let's start with the small things which we can easily do.

You haven't got victory over anger? Don't worry. It'll come. You haven't got victory over dirty thoughts, love of money? Don't worry.

It'll come. Start with a little thing which you can do. Appreciate your husband, wife from today.

Learn to say thank you even if she brings you a cup of tea. She may get a heart attack because she's never heard it before. Wonder what happened to my husband.

No, I'm only joking. She won't get a heart attack. You'll be bonded together more.

I'm not saying say it like you teach your children to get honor. Aren't you thankful that your wife gets up in the morning and makes a cup of tea? Why should she do it? Are you one of those Indian Maharajas whose wife is like a slave who's got to do all that? No. Be thankful for one another.

Be thankful for your husband who slogs away to earn a living and make a home for you. That's one thing I want to encourage all of you to do. I'm not going to stand here in false humility and say, Oh, no, no, no.

Don't say all that about me. I accept your thanks. I accept your gratitude and I appreciate it very much.

Those of you, I believe you sincerely said it. Sometimes we are very kind to strangers. We say thank you to unknown strangers if they did something for us.

You know, on a railway station, somebody picked up something for us, which fell down, we say thank you. But we rarely say thank you to appreciate those whom we are very familiar with. I think that's our problem.

I tell people at least once a year on your parents' birthday, write a thank you note to them. On your husband's birthday, write a thank you note. On a wife's birthday, once a year, that's not too often.

Your parents' birthday, your children's birthday, write a thank you note and say how you're thankful for them. We had that practice in our home from the time our children were small. I still have some of those thank you notes that one six-year-old son of mine wrote to his three-year-old brother.

You know, all that baby handwriting. They're very precious to me. They didn't have money to buy fancy 35-rupee cards.

They just took a scrap of paper and wrote thank you very much. And even wrote to me, thank you, Dad. We encouraged our children right from the beginning to write a thank you note on each other's birthday to express appreciation for one another.

It's a habit I learned from Jesus. And it's a habit particularly we in India have very, very little. We are misers with money.

We are much bigger misers with expressing appreciation. If you don't believe me, ask yourself, how much do you appreciate? I mean, think, for example, we all say that our body is much more important, much less important than our soul. Every one of us here will say it.

If you had a terrible cancer and some surgeon treated you, maybe he charged you 50,000 rupees for that surgery, you'd still go and be deeply thankful to him. Imagine if he did it for you absolutely free. What about elders who have stood here for many years and saved you from something far worse than cancer freely, never charged you one cent, not once, for years? The elders of this church, for example.

I say that to all the churches, people who labor and labor and labor to save you from sin. How many times have you gone to them and said, brother, or written a note to them saying, I'm deeply thankful? You'd say that to a heathen doctor. You'd give him 50,000 rupees.

Our elders don't want money. We are so utterly ungrateful within the body of Christ, but very deeply expressive of our thanks to unbelievers. We think that those who have done something for our body are a million times better than those who have labored for our soul, which means we are just like the children of Adam.

There is no brother whom I met who has been a blessing to me, dead and gone or alive, to whom I have not verbally and in writing expressed my deep gratitude for the way they drew me closer to God. I learned it from Jesus. I learned that humble people are always thankful.

If the chief minister walking down the street and dropped his handkerchief and somebody picked it up and gave it to him, he'd just take it and put it in his pocket. If a beggar was walking down the street and he dropped a bit of cloth and you, an educated, well-dressed man, picked it up and gave it to that beggar, you probably wouldn't do it. But if you had the humility to do it, he would be shocked that you, such an upper-class person, would pick up a scrap and give it to a beggar.

So, thank you so much, sir. You know why? He thinks you're more important than him. Jesus taught us, consider everybody else is more important than you.

Dear brothers and sisters, it's one of the things God has drilled into my mind. I can't consider everybody more spiritual than me because the Bible doesn't command that. But the Bible does say, consider everyone as more important than you.

And I've sought, God is my witness, I've sought with all my heart to consider others as more important than me. Never to expect one single thing from them, and if they do something small, always to express my gratitude in any way possible. I will not treat my brothers in Christ as less important than some doctor who healed me, treated, did a surgery for me.

I will not insult the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ by treating them lower than earthly doctors who can only heal my body. I believe, if you take heed to what you heard just now, you've discovered one of the

greatest secrets of the Christian life. And you have probably discovered why your spiritual life has been so stunted for so many years.

Learn to give thanks. Learn to appreciate. Brother Ian is a master at it.

And if you wonder why he is such a humble, godly brother, this is one secret. He knows how to appreciate young people, older people. Learn from him.

He's your elder. I've seen that through many years. I've admired him for his spirituality, but I know it has come out of a humble heart that appreciates other people, whoever they are.

Dear brothers and sisters, here's something which we can learn. God has done so much for us. We praise him.

God uses people to bless us. Let's thank him. In our own family, in the church, and one another.

And so I want to thank you all with all of my heart. And when people thank you, as I said, don't be artificially humble. Get rid of all that hypocrisy and saying, Oh, no, no, no, no.

Accept it. And go back in secret and give the glory to God. Don't try to get honor before others saying, Oh, I give the glory to God.

That's for honor. Go and do that in secret. But when people thank you, thank you.

Thank you for your appreciation. So I want to thank all of you. I didn't plan to give an exhortation.

I get carried away sometimes. But I love you brothers and sisters deeply. And I speak to you as my own children.

I'll tell you something. I'll close now. I was in the United States once.

And some brothers who are not part of our church, but who watch my messages regularly on the Internet. They asked me a question once. They said, Brother Zach, why is it that sometimes when we hear your CFC messages, they are so strong and hard and you hit people so hard, but here when you come to America, you preach so gently and so softly.

I said, Those are my children. I discipline my children much more than I would discipline, I don't have the right to discipline other people's children. I just encourage them and say a few good words.

And I said, Even physically, I've never spanked anybody's child. I've never rebuked any children as strong as my own children. So CFC, I said, are my children.

They said, Brother Zach, we want to be your children. We want to listen to those. We don't live in India, but we want to listen to those messages where you speak to your church.

So how to find out? Tell us what is the color of the screen behind your back in CFC. Then we can detect which are the messages on YouTube, which are CFC messages, and we'll listen only to them. Boy, I was surprised to see the hunger of those brothers and sisters to receive the discipline of a father.

So please accept these words from a spiritual father who loves you very much. God bless you all. Thank you.

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