

## LET US GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD!

### INTRODUCTION:

1. In Luke 17:11-19 we learn that the Lord miraculously and instantly healed 10 lepers, but that 9 of the 10 did not stop to thank Him for that wonderful gift, which the Lord made note of.
2. We might be mystified as to how they could do this. But the truth is that they were just following the way of the world since the beginning (Rom. 1:20-21 – “For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, **they did not** honor him as God **or give thanks to him**, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”).
3. Of course, everything should be different right now seeing that we just enjoyed a special day of thanksgiving, one where everyone acknowledges God’s bountiful blessings in their lives, right?
  - A. Well, it is comical to mention that idea, seeing for most that day is more about family, food, and fun than thanksgiving, *and* COVID-19 has inspired, even among Christians (myself included), a gripe fest that has lasted most of the year.
  - B. As I worked on this lesson I realized that I gripe about having to wear a mask, social distancing, people hoarding toilet paper, that we cannot always order from a full menu at all the restaurants I like, for restaurants only offering takeout and delivery, etc.
  - C. So, although Americans of all people are accustomed to griping a lot, it seems that it has been energized in every way in 2020!
4. I want to talk about giving thanks to the Lord.
  - A. For, the way of those who know the Lord and, therefore, *understand* life here in this broken world should be a life of thankfulness—always!
  - B. To remind us of this, I want to spend some time this morning talking about why we should give thanks to God, even in times like these.

### BODY:

- • **I. We should give thanks for our God.**
  - A. We should be thankful because the God of heaven possesses the very qualities required for dealing with a rebellious people like ourselves.
    1. He is a God of grace, mercy, love, and goodness (Psa. 145:8-10 – “The LORD is gracious and merciful; **slow to anger** and great in lovingkindness. <sup>9</sup> The LORD is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works. <sup>10</sup> All Your works shall give thanks to You, O LORD, and **Your godly ones shall bless You.**”).
    2. Rather than letting us lie in the squaller our sin, God chooses to lift us up and show us lasting favor (Psalm 30:1-5 – “I will extol You, O LORD, for You have lifted me up, and have not let my enemies rejoice over me. <sup>2</sup> O LORD my God, I cried to You for help, and You healed me. <sup>3</sup> O LORD, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit. <sup>4</sup> Sing praise to the LORD, you His godly ones, and give thanks to His holy name. <sup>5</sup> For His anger is but for a **moment**, His **favor is for a lifetime**; weeping may last for the night, but a **shout of joy comes in the morning.**”).
      - a. Is this not the song we all could sing?
      - b. It most certainly is the song that should be sung in our house.
  - B. We should be thankful that God is willing to save us at such great cost to Him.
    1. John 3:16-17 – “For God **so loved the world**, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”
    2. Romans 5:6-9 – “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ **died for the ungodly.** <sup>7</sup> For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. <sup>8</sup> But God **demonstrates His own love toward us**, in that

**while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** <sup>9</sup> Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we **shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.**”

3. God’s has chosen to favor and save rebellious sinners, those helplessly condemned to eternal wrath by their own sin, by sending His Son to become man and shed His blood in death on a cross! That is the God we serve and cause for great thankfulness!

- **II. We should give thanks for our abundant spiritual life.**

- A. God wants the spiritual lives of His people to be lived in abundant fashion (John 10:7-11 – “So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. <sup>11</sup> “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”).
- B. Because of the price God paid in Christ for our spiritual life, we have an abundance of...
  1. Peace (Phil. 4:6-7 – “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the **peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension**, will **guard** your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”).
  2. Hope (Rom. 5:1-2, 5 – “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we **exult in hope of the glory of God...**<sup>5</sup> and **hope** does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”).
  3. Joy (1 Pet. 1:3-9 – “**Blessed be the God** and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to obtain an **inheritance** which is imperishable and undefiled and **will not fade away**, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are **protected** by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> **In this you greatly rejoice**, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; <sup>8</sup> and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you **greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible** and full of glory, <sup>9</sup> obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.”).
    - a. I would have never thought that in a year like this peace, hope, and joy could still abound.
    - b. But I now know that our God is amazing, providing these when it seems almost impossible.

- **III. We should give thanks for our physical prosperity.**

- A. We owe God much thanks for the abundant wealth and the ease of life we enjoy.
  1. Paul spoke of God’s generous hand at Lystra (Acts 14:16-17 – “In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; <sup>17</sup> and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He **did good** and **gave you rains** from heaven and **fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.**”).
  2. Jesus spoke of it in contrast to what we may lose (Mark 10:29-30 – “Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, <sup>30</sup> but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.”). How true this is!
- B. Americans are so used to having its so good that we do not realize how blessed we are!
  1. BBC news reported 8 years ago that when you adjust the world’s average salary to fit American dollars and buying power—apples to apple—Americans on average earn over twice as much as the rest of the **world!**

2. The United Nations reports that 780 million people, 11 percent of the world's population, live in extreme poverty on less than \$1.90 per day. (actionagainsthunger.org)
3. Is it any wonder we have difficulty keeping our borders sealed?

C. To put this in perspective, I reference something Robert L. Heilbroner, who was an American economist, historian, and *socialist* (who did, however, acknowledge the superiority of capitalism over socialism in bringing prosperity to the masses) wrote *many years ago* about what it would be like for Americans to have to live like over 1/2 of the world's population. We would have to:

1. Take away our furniture, except a kitchen table, and one chair.
2. Take away all clothing except for our oldest dress or suit, a shirt, a blouse, and one pair of shoes for the head of the family.
3. Empty our cupboards of food except for a small bag of flour, some sugar, some salt, a few molded potatoes, a handful of onions, and some beans.
4. Dismantle our bathrooms, shut off the water, and remove the electrical wiring.
5. Get rid of our house and move our family into a tool shed.
6. Cancel all subscriptions to any news and information services (entertainment).
7. Put the nearest clinic or hospital 10 miles away with a midwife in charge instead of a doctor.
8. Discard our bank account, stocks, retirement plans, and insurance policies, and leave the family \$5 in cash.
9. Give the head of the family three tenant acres to farm on which he will make \$300 in cash crops, one-third of which goes to the landlord.
10. Cut off 25 to 30 years life expectancy for every member of the family.

D. When we think about what we have, we should bow our heads and seek God's forgiveness for complaining and not praising Him enough for the abundance He bestows on us!

● **IV. Be thankful for our spiritual family:**

A. Through Christ we can now be children of God and heirs of His glory.

1. John 1:12-13 – “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the **right to become children of God**, even to those who believe in His name, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”
2. Romans 8:16-17 – “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that **we are children of God**, <sup>17</sup> and **if children, heirs** also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be **glorified with Him**.”

B. As members of God's family, we should be thankful for the encouragement it brings us.

1. The encouragement of mutual faith (Rom. 1:11-12 – “For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— that is, that **I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me**.”).
2. The encouragement of assembling together (Heb. 10:24-25 – “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”).
  - a. The oneness and care we share for one another in Christ and the encouragement it gives us is stronger than any other thing in this world.
  - b. Being among brethren are the times I can depend on for spiritual strength, encouragement, concern, and correction in my life.
3. So, if you are not thankful for the joy and riches of being a part of God's family, something is wrong, whether it be with you or with your brethren.

● **V. We should be thankful because it is our duty.**

A. The O.T. spoke of its importance:

1. Psalm 92:1-2 – “It is **good** to give thanks to the LORD and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; <sup>2</sup> To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning and Your faithfulness by night, <sup>3</sup> With the ten-stringed lute and with the harp, with resounding music upon the lyre. <sup>4</sup> For

You, O LORD, have made me glad by what You have done, I will sing for joy at the works of Your hands”

2. Psalm 105:1 – “Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples!”
  3. Psalm 106:1 – “Praise the LORD! Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is good!* For His mercy *endures* forever.”
- B. The N.T. is emphatic about Christians being thankful.
1. Our actions and speech are to be the very antithesis of the ungrateful world (Eph. 5:3-4 – “But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; <sup>4</sup> and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, **but rather giving of thanks.**”). Note the contrast!
  2. Every word and deed must be done in the will of Christ **with thanksgiving.**
    - a. Col. 3:17 – “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks** through Him to God the Father.”
    - b. 1 Thess. 5:16-18 – “Rejoice always; <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing; <sup>18</sup> in **everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.**”
  3. We are warned about ingratitude.
    - a. Ingratitude tests the Lord (1 Cor. 10:9-12 – “Nor let us **try the Lord**, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. <sup>10</sup> **Nor grumble**, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. <sup>11</sup> Now these things happened to them as an **example**, and they were written **for our instruction**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. <sup>12</sup> Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.”).
    - b. Grumbling dims the light we are to shine as holy children of God in this dark world (Phil. 2:14-16 – “**Do all things without grumbling or disputing;** <sup>15</sup> so that you will prove yourselves to be **blameless and innocent**, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as **lights in the world,** <sup>16</sup> holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.”).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. As followers of Christ and His word, we should be keenly aware of all that God does for us and our need to express our thankfulness to Him daily and often.
2. As we conclude I want to remind you again of the 10 lepers the Lord healed in Luke 17:11-19.
  - A. All ten had a disease that made them unclean and unapproachable, all cried out to Jesus for cleansing and received it, making it possible to have the abundant life of fellowship and interaction with God’s people, and all had opportunity to thank **Jesus**...but only **ONE** did!
  - B. I do this because if you are a Christian, you were once unclean and unapproachable in your sin, you cried out to God for cleansing through Christ and received it, and you have the opportunity to live the abundant life of a child in the family of God.
  - C. So, are you thankful? Do God and others see it in your life?
3. Let us never forget Psalm 92:1-2 that say, “It is good to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; <sup>2</sup> To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning and Your faithfulness by night.”
4. If you know of and are thankful for God’s love, mercy, and grace offered to you in Christ, will you come to Him today in F-R-C-B?
5. Or, if you are an erring child of God and are truly thankful that God offers the same love, mercy, and grace to you, will you return to God in faith, repenting of your sins, and seeking His forgiveness in prayer?