

What Are You Thankful For?

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[0 : 0 0] That is the question of this season, isn't it? What are you thankful for? Would you take the Word of God with me and turn to Luke chapter 17? Luke chapter 17. I want to thank Jared and the combined choirs for leading us in such powerful worship this morning. I want to draw your attention back to one of the lines in their choir special from Psalm 46, and it was, Oh God who makes the mountains melt, come wrestle us and win.

What a powerful line, and I hope it didn't just get glossed over. We're calling out for God to wrestle us and win. So is it wrong to wrestle with God? Oh no, absolutely not. But it's only wrong if you win. He needs to win. And so I want to remind us that on this Thanksgiving Sunday. What are you thankful for?

Before we read in Luke chapter 17, I'd like to draw our attention on the screens to Psalm 100. Psalm 100, and you can remain in Luke 17 in your Bibles. I've got it on the screen for you here.

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pastures. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, and praise his name. For the Lord is good, and his love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations. I want to speak that word over you, that psalm over you, and with that in mind, let's go to Luke chapter 17. And would you join me in standing if you're able to? I'm reading from the Christian Standard Bible, beginning in verse 11. While traveling to Jerusalem, Jesus passed between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten men with leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and raised their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. When he saw them, he told them, go and show yourselves to the priests. And while they were going, they were cleansed. But one of them, seeing that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice gave glory to God. He fell face down at his feet, thanking him. Oh, and by the way, he was a Samaritan. When Jesus said, were not ten cleansed?

Where are the nine? Didn't any return to give glory to God except this foreigner? And he told him, get up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you. Let's pray together. God, I pray that you would impart to us, teach us, from a glimpse of this miracle, how important gratitude is.

[3 : 2 8] How essential gratitude is to truly worship you. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You may be seated. Thank you for standing. Point number one, I want to share with you this morning. Ingratitude is the enemy of worship. Ingratitude is the enemy of worship. We see this spelled out in this amazing story that no one could go out and replicate. You understand the impact that being a leper was on your life back in these ancient times. If you had the disease of leprosy, your life was, for all intents and purposes, over. You would be cast out of your town. You'd be separated from your family. There was no known cure for leprosy at the time. And so you would be, have to live in a leper colony outside of any area of civilization with other lepers. So these guys' lives were drastically changed with their encounter with the Savior. How many of you would be able to testify by lifted hand and say, my life was drastically changed when I encountered Jesus? Anybody? Yes. Every one of us, by God's grace, would be able to have that testimony. My life was changed when I met Jesus.

Now, unfortunately, for many of us, our encounter with Jesus forgave our sins, rescued us from hell, but it has seemed to have little impact on our lives over the years of supposedly walking with Jesus.

Why is that? Well, just because you've been saved, what we call saved, saved from the punishment of your sin because of God's free sacrifice for you and paying for your sins on that cross of Calvary so many years ago, and then rising from the dead to be alive today and listening and ready to hear your call for salvation out to Him. And when that moment happened, He certainly saved you. But since that time, so many of His children have failed to walk with Him. And years and decades will pass, and perhaps we'll be faithful in church attendance, perhaps we'll be faithful to give of our tithe, and yet we're failing to actually walk with Jesus. We don't know a whole lot more about Him now than when we first began.

That is the sin of ingratitude. We're grateful that He saved us from hell. We got our get out of hell free card, so to speak.

But we're not grateful enough to go back and give Him glory and listen to His voice and follow His commandments and sit at His feet and allow Him to mold us and shape us into who He wants us to be.

[6 : 37] It's like, God, thanks for saving me, thanks for healing me, but I've got it from here. And how many people do we know like that? Truth is, when we look in the mirror, sometimes we're like that, aren't we?

Ingratitude is the enemy of worship. Romans chapter 1 and verse 21 teaches us this. It says, Though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or show gratitude.

Man, if you look at the people that He's talking about in Romans 1, that's terrifying. Because we see these people who were living godless lives, maybe on the outside they might look okay, but when you peeled back the surface, there was nothing of God in their life.

But they knew God. But they weren't grateful. They didn't glorify Him as God. They were like these others who were healed by Jesus.

They had encountered Him. They had tasted of His goodness. They knew what He could do. But they failed to come back and glorify Him.

[7 : 43] They failed to show Him gratitude. Ingratitude is the enemy of worship. How is that so? Because ingratitude makes us discontent.

You see, our lack of thanksgiving is usually traced back to discontent. A lack of being content with what God has given you and with who God is.

I want to show you this study from Duke University, famous university for research. And they did this study years ago that said, the top three factors found to contribute greatly to emotional and mental stability were, number one, the absence of suspicion and resentment.

So in other words, if you harbor suspicion or resentment in your life, you're prone to becoming emotionally or mentally unstable. Nursing a grudge was a major factor in unhappiness.

Number two, not living in the past. An unwholesome preoccupation with the past leads to depression. Man, things just aren't how they used to be, are they?

[8 : 57] Well, you can't go back to the past, can you? And God is not merely a God of the past. He is a God of the present. But thank God, He's a God of the future. And you know that big, scary future that the world seems to be headed toward, God will still be God.

Jesus will still be King. And so not recognizing that can certainly lead to depression, mental and emotional instability. And number three, not wasting time and energy in fighting conditions you cannot change.

Folks, you can fight back against what God allows in this world. But I can promise you, you won't win.

You can wrestle with God. But the only way in which you will come out the winner is if God is the winner.

You've got to let Him win because guess what? Victory belongs to Him. He's going to win whether you allow Him to or not. So if eventually you stop fighting and stop wrestling and say, okay God, I will accept the circumstances in which you have placed me.

[10 : 18] And I will stop fighting against conditions that I cannot change because seemingly you have allowed this. Clearly, you have allowed this. Now, what's interesting is that the Bible teaches all these concepts.

And it took human researchers a long time to figure this stuff out. It was groundbreaking research. They could have just read the Bible from the beginning and realized that we must trust God.

Let's go to 1 Timothy chapter 6. 1 Timothy chapter 6. While you're turning there, I want to say this statement to you. Discontentment means we know better than God.

Discontentment means we know better than God. So if ingratitude comes from and leads to discontentment, what is this discontentment?

What is not being content or satisfied with what God has given you? Whether material possessions, circumstances, health, whatever your situation is that is such a struggle, where is this discontentment coming from?

[11 : 27] Ultimately, you can trace it back to this belief that I know better than God. Now, most of us wouldn't admit that. If you polled the audience today and said, how many of you believe that you know better than God, I believe we would get overwhelmingly say, I don't know better than God.

However, our actions speak otherwise. Our clear discontentment speaks otherwise. 1 Timothy 6, if anyone does not agree with the sound teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the teaching that promotes godliness, he is conceited, prideful, conceited, and understands nothing.

But, here's some descriptors of this kind of person. He has an unhealthy interest in disputes and arguments over words.

You know anybody that has an unhealthy interest in arguing and disputing? Are you that person? From these come envy, quarreling, slander, evil suspicions, and constant disagreement.

Here's the fruit of these kinds of people who are discontent and say that they will not agree with the sound teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[12 : 54] They say it with their actions. They might say they agree with their words, but their actions speak louder, don't they? From these come envy, quarreling, slander, evil suspicions, and constant disagreement.

Do you know anybody like that? Do you know anybody that's just constantly suspicious, constantly in disagreement, constantly quarreling, constantly fighting? These are people whose minds are depraved and deprived of the truth, who imagine that godliness is a way to material gain.

Guess what? That describes a lot of so-called Christians in our churches today. They imagine that godliness is a way to material gain. It's a way to power.

It's a way to influence. It's a way to satisfy something in themselves. It is not a means to honor God.

Verse 6, but godliness with contentment is great gain. Just acting godly doesn't mean you're godly because the truth is you can't ever act godly all the time.

[14 : 07] You can put on a good show. You can put on a good front. You can say what everybody expects you to say, but unless it's real, unless it comes from God, then discontentment will take over.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. It's great advantage. That is the power of God. And then over in Romans chapter 16, I urge you brothers and sisters to watch out for those.

Watch out for these people that were described in 1 Timothy 6. Watch out for these people who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned.

If there's people out there trying to distract you from the mission of God, watch out for them. Keep away from them. I didn't write it.

Paul did. Take it up with him. God allowed it. Verse 18, For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites.

[15 : 08] By smooth talk and flattery, they deceive the minds of naive people. Y'all, this discontentment is a big deal. It's a big deal.

This lack of gratitude is a big deal in God's eyes. Ingratitude is the enemy of worship.

Ingratitude makes us discontent. Discontentment means that we know better than God. But we don't. We absolutely do not.

Let's move on. Worship produces willingness. Gratitude leads us to worship. I got ahead of myself. Gratitude leads us to worship. And then worship produces willingness.

Let's look at Luke chapter 17 again, our text this morning. Back in verse 15. Luke chapter 17 and verse 15. We see this gratitude leading to worship played out beautifully in this story.

[16 : 11] Verse 15. One of them, one of the ten who was healed, seeing that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice he gave glory to God. He fell face down at his feet, thanking him, and he was a Samaritan.

Why was that included? Y'all talk back to me for a second. Why was it included specifically in this passage that he was a Samaritan? The Jews hated the Samaritans, didn't they?

There was a lot of ethnic and social division between these two people groups. We talked about it in our starting point course briefly this morning, but we see that the Jews and the Samaritans had this old ancient feud.

The Jews looked down on the Samaritans. They considered themselves a higher class of people. They considered themselves God's chosen people, and the Samaritans were the worst in their minds.

They were the lowest of the low. They would not do business dealings with them. They would avoid them at all costs. That's why it's so powerful when we see this Jewish man who was beaten up by robbers, and the priests passed him by, and the Pharisees passed him by, but who stopped and helped him?

[17 : 22] The good Samaritan. What a powerful story that is. And when Jesus stops at the well and sees this woman drawing from the well, and she's a social outcast, and she's lived a tough life, and she's made a lot of bad decisions that have led her to where she is.

She's been married three times, and now she's with a guy that she's not married to, and Jesus stops even though she's a woman from Samaria, and he says, I want to give you water which will never make you thirsty again.

The living water. I want to introduce myself to you. I want to speak to you in love. I want to talk to you like you're valuable, like you're worth something. What a powerful description we see of God blurring these lines, tearing down these walls.

The one that returned to thank Jesus was a Samaritan. People that you wouldn't want around. People you wouldn't invite over to Thanksgiving. The people you're like, man, I don't want them in my church.

I don't want them messing this place up. Jesus wanted those people. He loved those people. And time and time again, he showed them, he showed his people, the Jews, their value.

[18 : 35] So, we see it happen in verse 16. This man fell down at the feet of Jesus and thanked him, and he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus said, wait a minute, weren't ten cleansed?

Where are the other nine? Didn't any return to give glory to God except this foreigner? I'm sure his disciples were greatly impacted by that. Wow.

Jesus making a point here. The only one that came back and gave glory to me was this foreigner, this outcast that you would want nothing to do with. And he told him, get up and go on your way.

Your faith has saved you. Seemingly, he was the only one who was not only healed of his physical sickness, but he was healed of his spiritual sickness. Jesus. His faith made him whole in a way that someday he would bow before God along with the rest of us when every knee will bow.

Yes, even yours. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. All of us will bow someday before our Lord, and that will be the second time that this man gets to bow before God himself and thank him and give glory to him for healing him.

[19 : 45] worship produces willingness. We saw that ingratitude is the enemy of worship. Ingratitude comes from discontent, and discontent means that we know better than God.

So if we're going to truly worship, the Bible teaches us that worship, true worship, comes from that which is done in spirit and in truth. If we're going to worship God, it must be worship from spirit and in truth.

And genuine worship will produce a spirit of willingness in us. This Puritan preacher, I read this quote from Jeremiah Burroughs, it was an old Puritan preacher lived long before any of us, and he said, worship is not only doing what pleases God, but is also being pleased with what God is doing.

Can we read this together? Let's all read it together out loud. Ready? If you look at that screen or this one. Ready? Worship is not only doing what pleases God, but is also being pleased with what God is doing.

Y'all, I think that's where we go off base. We will try and try to do what pleases God, as long as it fits within our acceptable, what seems acceptable to us.

[21 : 07] But where we have such a hard time is being pleased then with what God does. What if God doesn't choose to do what we think is acceptable?

What if God goes outside that box? What if God wants to shake things up? What if God is teaching us that what's been important to us is not what's important to him?

See, I learned something in some of my training in ministry over the years. And it's this. It's that we can put two bubbles up here.

We can have a large bubble and then a very small bubble at the bottom. And in that large bubble represents everything that we think is important.

And in the very small bubble at the bottom of that is what God thinks is important. What God thinks is important is knowing him and making him known.

[22 : 14] Knowing God and making him known. That is our mission. That is God's will for us. That is our responsibility to God.

God. Walk justly. Love mercy. Live humbly with your God. Walk humbly with your God. Listen, it is of utmost importance to look in the scriptures and see what God says is our responsibility.

What God says our duty is. What God says we're supposed to be spending our time on. Because if we don't be faithful to do that, then it's so easy for that bubble on top to get larger and larger and suffocate what God says is actually important.

And then we become just like everyone else. And then our churches become just like every other organization. That we have what's important to us.

And along the way, it's suffocated what's important to God. What's important to God? For people to be brought into his kingdom. Just like we were. He wants others to come in to the fold.

[23 : 30] There's other sheep who have not yet come home. And somebody has to mirror Jesus and has to follow his example and be willing to leave the 90 and nine and go out and find the one lost sheep.

And if we're not willing, then we're focused on that big bubble of what's important to us. Our fame, our fortune, our political views, what we're comfortable with, what we think is important, and it suffocates the mission that Jesus gave to us.

So are we pleased with what God is doing? Or are we too distracted by what has become important to us? Psalm 51 gives us the answer for this.

It says, create in me a clean heart, God. God, create in me a clean heart. Renew a right spirit within me. Maybe somewhere along the way, I got a wrong spirit.

And now the way I interact with others, with my brothers and sisters in Christ, with the leadership that God has placed over me, I have a wrong spirit. So God created in me a new heart, a clean heart.

[24 : 45] Restore to me the joy of your salvation. What is that? What is the joy of your salvation? That's gratitude. That's thankfulness.

That's remembering what God did for you. Remember how sweet it was when you first heard the gospel message that you are a sinner just like me and the rest of us, and we're all going to hell because of our sin.

But God loved us so much that he said, I don't want you to go to hell. And so I'm going to send my son Jesus as the payment, the sacrifice for your sins and for mine. And then I'm going to raise him up from the dead to show he is God, to prove that he's somebody who can put your trust in.

And now as many as will receive him and believe in him, to them he will give the power to become the sons, daughters, the children, of God.

And that joy, when you first heard that message, when you first responded and said, yes, Lord, I believe. Restore to me that joy, that thankfulness, that gratitude, and then uphold me, keep me up with your willing spirit.

[25 : 57] God, you've got to give me a willing spirit because on my own, I become unwilling. You ever know anybody like that? They're just unwilling, inflexible, just can't work with them.

Got to go on despite them. God, don't let that be true of us. Don't let that be true of First Baptist Henrietta. Make us a church, a people with a willing spirit.

Spirit. And then worship results in witness. Worship produces willingness, a willing spirit, and worship results in witness.

Back to Psalm 51, down to verse 13. Then I will teach transgressors your ways. God, if you renew a right spirit in me, you give me a willing spirit, then I will teach transgressors your ways.

I will teach sinners your ways, and sinners will return to you, God. Oh, God of my salvation, my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

[27 : 04] There's a worship song that says, come on, my soul. Don't you get shy on me. Lift up your voice, because you've got a lion inside of your lungs. Come on. Praise the Lord.

God, open. Open the lips of your people in First Baptist Henrietta, that we will declare your praise, that we will teach sinners your ways, and they will return to you.

God, we will see a material fruit from the change, the willing spirit that you create in this body of believers, and people will return to you.

Lives will be transformed. Lives will be changed. Otherwise, we're distracted. We're focused on ourselves. We're focused on what we have, or what we don't have.

We're not focused on that lost sheep. Worship produces witness. What are you a witness of? Are you a witness of yourself?

[28 : 05] Are you a witness of your favorite political candidate? Are you a witness of what's important to you in the moment, or are you a witness of the power of God?

That's what's going to change. That's what's going to change you and change those around you. Matthew chapter 5 is the last passage we'll go to. Matthew 5 and verse 13. You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty?

See, folks, here's a warning. Either worship produces witness, or it's not true worship. Because if it's not impacting the darkness of the world around us, the spiritual tastelessness, isn't that interesting?

He compared us to flavor. How flavorless would this world be if Christians weren't in it? Real followers of Jesus? That's what I'm talking about. The world has a lot of people who call themselves Christians, but we need real, genuine followers of Jesus.

He said if the salt has lost its taste, well, then it's not good for adding flavor to anything. Nothing can be made salty. And y'all, if we're not being made, if we're not making people salty, that has another meaning, doesn't it?

[29 : 22] Christians are actually pretty good at making people salty. If we're not adding flavor to the tastelessness of this dark, spiritually blind world around us, then what are we good for?

It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. Again, don't get mad at me. I didn't say it. Jesus said you're not good for anything but being thrown out and trampled under people's feet if you're not going to be the salt of the earth.

Not just that. He didn't end there. He said you are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lamp stand and it gives light for all who are in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before others so they can see your good works and give glory to you because you're such a great guy. That's not how it ended.

They may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. That's where we lose him. Yeah, Jesus, I'll do good works.

[30 : 27] I want everybody to think I'm a nice person. I want everybody to pat me on the back. It gives me this warm, fuzzy feeling when I do something nice for somebody, especially around the holidays. Jesus said that's not what it's about.

It's about drawing people to me. It's about rescuing them from darkness and bringing them to light. There is a great mission at stake here. Well, you see, preacher, I just don't know about that.

That's just not who I am. Well, then you're salt that doesn't have any flavor and you know what happens then. See your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

You say, I worship God? Then you gotta be a witness. Johnson Oatman wrote this song. If you grew up in church, you probably heard this at some point along the way.

Count your blessings. Name them one by one. Count your many blessings. See what God has done. Maybe it's time to go back to a place of gratitude.

[31 : 36] Maybe it's time to go back to a place of thankfulness. Says, God, you've done so much for me along the way. And somewhere, I got my eyes off of that.

And I got my eyes on everything I don't think is right in the world. And you want me to count my blessings again. You want me to go back and see how good God is.

Psalms 118 says, this is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. What's he talking about? He's talking about all the things that God has done. Look what God's done right here in this church.

Look what God's done. I can't speak to the history except what I've read in books or what I've heard from you. But look what God has done. Number one, he's kept the doors of this church open since 1876. Number two, we've got multi-generational Christians sitting in this room, many of whom were raised up in this church.

And if you're not one of those people, man, we're so glad you're here. Because if all it was was people who were raised in this church, boy, that would be so sad. We need fresh blood, don't we? We need fresh people coming in and seeing what God's going to do through them.

[32 : 46] Look what he's done just in the last year and a half that I've seen personally with my own eyes. How many have been added to our number? How many have followed the Lord's command to be baptized and give that public testimony of the transformation he's making inside them?

21 in the last year and a half. Thank God for that. This is the Lord's doing and it's marvelous in our eyes. Is it marvelous in your eyes?

Or could you take or leave it? Is it marvelous in your eyes or are other things more important to you? Is what God is doing marvelous in your eyes or has it been tainted and diminished because you're not content?

You're ungrateful. So here's your takeaway. There's two parts to it today. Do God's ways get to win over my will?

Do God's ways get to win over my will? God's ways are clearly laid out in the word of God. You say, who gets to determine God's ways? Scripture does. The Bible does.

[33 : 58] The Bible teaches us what God's ways are. The Great Commission and the Great Commandment. Go into all the world and teach the gospel to everyone. Make disciples. Jesus followers.

That is God's ways. Love one another. Love the Lord, our God. Love each other as ourselves. That's the Great Commandment.

That is God's ways. Do God's ways get to win over my will? And the second part, does my discontentment reveal a lack of appreciation for what God is doing?

Does my discontentment reveal a lack of appreciation for what God is doing? Would you ask yourself that question along with me? If we're all honest with ourselves, some of us won't be, but I pray that the majority of God's people here would honestly seek our hearts, ask God to reveal to us am I being discontent?

Does that show that I don't appreciate what God's doing here? Do God's ways get to win over me? Would you bow your heads with me? God, teach us to be thankful.

[35 : 10] Teach us to thank you. Let us not be like the other nine who just went on their way and said, oh great, God did something great for me. Wonderful. I'm going to go on my way now.

I'm going to live my life how I choose. Let us be like the one who returned and cast ourselves at his feet and said, God, thank you. Thank you.

Restore to us the joy of our salvation. Then we will turn sinners to you. We will speak of that salvation. We will be your witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, to the ends of the earth.

What is our Jerusalem? It's right here in Henrietta, Texas in Clay County. What is our Judea? It's across this general area in our state. What is our Samaria? The places we don't want to go.

The places that are distasteful to us. We will be your witnesses there. And the ends of the earth, God. You might be calling people to take your gospel message to countries they've never visited, to places that don't have the wealth of the gospel that we enjoy here in our country.

[36 : 23] Or you might just be calling somebody to go across the street, to speak a word at work, to talk to a relative at Thanksgiving. Whatever way we can be a witness and truly worship you, will God's ways get to win over our own?

Church, would you join us in standing? As you do, I'm going to ask these questions. If you're here today and you heard the gospel message, the saving news of Jesus preached to you, and you would like today to be the day that you turn from sin and turn to the Savior, then please come down front and meet me down here.

I'd like to sit down and pray with you, show you from God's word how you can know that you are the child of God. If you'd like to place your membership in this church, please meet me down here.

I'd love to have that conversation with you. If you've got something you just need to pray about, maybe God's spoken to you from his word and he's convicted you about something to pray about, would you come down and just use this if you'd like, if you'd like to sit and pray in your seat, if you'd like to stand and pray quietly, that's up to you.

It's between you and God. Jared's going to lead us in this song and let's use this time as a time to do business with our Lord. I hear you