

Audio Transcript of Sermon
November 23, 2019
The Spirit of Thanksgiving

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. This next week on Thursday in the United States is the holiday of Thanksgiving. It's appropriate for us to take a look at what the Bible has to say about thanksgiving. We'll see that it's just more than eating turkey and watching football, and spending time with family. We'll start today by taking a look at first Timothy two verse one, first Timothy chapter two verse one.

1 Timothy 2:1-6

- 1. I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;**
- 2. For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.**
- 3. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;**
- 4. Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.**
- 5. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;**
- 6. Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.**

Here, we are given many bits of information about giving thanks or thanksgiving that we should be giving thanks to all men including those who are in authority that we can lead a quiet and peaceable life. Part of our giving of thanks or thanksgiving is not something that is solely done with God as a religious concept, but it's something that is wise for us to do as we work with other people. Giving thanks, being appreciative, and showing gratitude is one of the best ways we can live our life because it will allow us to lead a life that is quiet that is peaceable, one in which we can worship God in the way that He would have us worship Him. Most people will think immediately about Thanksgiving of not being thankful and showing gratitude towards other people on earth, many people will only think of showing gratitude towards God. And, there's nothing wrong with just showing gratitude towards, except the fact that it can alienate us from other people, and that can cause us a lot of grief in our own life. That doesn't discount that in

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addition to being respectful and thankful and showing gratitude to the people that help us in our life that we should ignore the many wonderful things that God does for us in our life, day in and day out. Whenever something great happens, there is the hand of God in that, whenever we get through a difficult situation, getting through that difficult situation involves the hand of God. God is with us in the good times and the bad times and we need to be mindful of the need to always approach God with a spirit of thanksgiving.

Let's take a look at some Psalms. We'll take a look first at Psalm ninety-five, Psalm ninety-five beginning with verse one.

Psalm 95:1-11

- 1. O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.**
- 2. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.**
- 3. For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.**
- 4. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.**
- 5. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.**
- 6. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.**
- 7. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,**
- 8. Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:**
- 9. When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.**
- 10. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:**
- 11. Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.**

As we go through our life, we need to remember all of the wonderful things that God has done for us in our life. That's why in verse two of Psalm ninety-five we go into God's presence with thanksgiving. Many people approach God only with the idea of getting something from God. We need to go into the presence of God with thanksgiving showing gratitude. We need to thank God not only with gratitude, but by being joyful in our gratitude. That's one of the reasons why there are so

many different songs sung during church services. Those songs are designed to show gratitude towards God in a cheerful way. We know that God is a great God and he is above everything in the universe. We know that God formed the deeper places of the earth, the valleys that are deep, the Grand Canyon. He formed the high mountains as well. In the United States it would be the Rocky Mountains, in Europe it would be the Alps. So, wherever we see the wonders of geography, the hand of God is in that. Verse five shows us that God made the sea and the dry land, and we have the full story on that from the Book of Genesis in the first chapter. And because we have seen all of these wonderful things that we see day in and day out, the biggest mistake we can make is to worship the creation. There is nothing wrong with being a wise steward of the earth, taking care of the earth that God has given us, but we should never put ourselves in a position where we are worshipping the creation rather than the creator, because God is our God and we are His people. And, if we ignore God, if we harden our heart to what He says, and do not accept what God is teaching us, then we will tempt God, we will prove that God will follow through with what he says he will do, and just like the children of Israel who wandered about the wilderness for forty years, well, that's exactly what will happen to us. God wants us to be His children, so He can be our Father, and that begins with the spirit of thanksgiving., more than anything else. So, thanksgiving is huge in our relationship with God. Psalm ninety-five was not the only Psalm that was written that talked about Thanksgiving. Many, many psalms were written about thanksgiving. Let's take a look at a shorter Psalm, Psalm one hundred, we'll begin in verse one.

Psalm 100:1-5

- 1. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.**
- 2. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.**
- 3. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.**
- 4. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.**
- 5. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.**

We know that God is our God and we are his people. We also need to remember that everything we have in our life, including life itself is a gift of God, that God is in control of the universe, and everything that exists in the universe, and that

would include you and me. There is nothing that we do or accomplish that does not have the hand of God in that. So, whatever we do may reflect a desire or effort on our part, it also reflects the blessing of God, and for that we must remain thankful with the spirit and attitude of thanksgiving. And, thanksgiving is not just a simple meal that we have once a year, where we get together with family and friends and think that we are expressing thanksgiving, it's something that is done day in and day out in our relationship with God. We praise God, we're thankful for what God has given us, and we bless God's name. We say good things about God, and we think highly of God, and we recognize that God in our thanksgiving, the good and the bad, has been merciful to us, and that that mercy will continue into the future.

One of the biggest reasons that we can forget and ignore a focus of thanksgiving with God are the needs of our everyday life. We all have needs our we will suffer. We have need of food. We have need of water, something to drink, clothes, shelter, companionship. Those are some of the really big needs we have on a physical level. On a spiritual level, we also need to be fed spiritually so we can grow in the knowledge and the grace of God and Jesus Christ. Because we have all of these needs, we can let worry and doubt creep into our life, and the more that we allow worry and doubt to creep into our life, the easier it is for us to ignore the blessings that God can give us. When we look at the ministry of Jesus Christ, he gave us all a very good lesson that we should remember when we are thinking about our needs, and that lesson was given, recorded for us in Matthew six beginning with verse twenty-five, so, let's take a look at Matthew six verse twenty-five.

Matthew 6:25-34

25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32. For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Jesus gave us great wisdom to live by, and if we ignore this wisdom, we compromise our relationship with God, our ability to give thanksgiving to God. We worry about food. We worry about what we are going to drink. We worry about where we are going to live. We worry about what we're going to wear, especially if you're younger, if you're going to school, you tend to worry about what you are going to wear, because you want to look cool with all of the friends. Jesus tells us not to worry about that. Jesus gave us examples of what we find in nature, and how we don't find the plants worried about how they look, or the animals worried about how they look. And God, through Jesus, tells us that even Solomon did not compare to what we find in nature. God knows what we need. He's not going to ignore our need, and we should take that with a great deal of faith. And, because we have that commitment from God, we should always be seeking first the Kingdom of God, and the righteousness of God, and what we need will be given to us. The trick is, what we need will be given to us, what we would really, really, really like to have may not be given to us. Whatever we are given by God will meet our needs, and will fit within God's plan of salvation in our life. Being thankful is also being respectful of what God would have for us in our life. We cannot err from it moving to the left or to the right, there is a straight and narrow path we have to stay on for salvation.

The words of Jesus were magnified and expanded by the early church and the teachings of the early church. And, the Apostle Paul was the most prolific of the

writers we have access to in the modern era. Let's take a look at Paul's letter to the Philippians, looking at Philippians four verse four, Philippians four verse four.

Philippians 4:4-9

4. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

6. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

9. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Here, we are given wonderful advice by the Apostle Paul. If we ignore the advice, we run the risk of harming our own salvation. The first thing we are taught is to rejoice, to rejoice and remember to rejoice. And we rejoice, because rejoicing is coupled with thanksgiving. We only rejoice when we are glad something has happened, and gladness is linked to the spirit of thanksgiving. In everything that happens in our life, we must be thankful. In verse five, we're told to let our moderation be known unto all men. So, we can rejoice, but we do rejoice in moderation. We don't rejoice by going out and getting rip roaring drunk. What we do, we do with moderation. In verse six, we're taught not to take anything for granted. "Be careful for nothing." Don't take anything for granted. Approach every situation with prayer and supplication. So, prayer and supplication is where we go to God and we ask for God's blessing, intervention, guidance in our life, and we also give thanksgiving to God as we are making our requests known to God. I'm always very thankful when God keeps me safe on a daily basis, and I find it is very useful to thank God as I continue to on a daily basis ask God to keep me safe on a daily basis. One of the big problems I see here in El Paso as I'm walking my dog JoJo is just the fact that from time to time, we encounter stray dogs, and sometimes the dogs are friendly and sometimes they are not friendly at all. And, I'm grateful to God when God keeps the not-so-friendly dog away from us and keeps the dog from being violent with us. I'm very grateful for that because there

is no greater concern that I have when I've had an aggressive dog come and try to bite me or the dog I'm walking with. So, I've learned to be very thankful because things can change in an instant. Life is very fragile as we know it. And so we always want to be very thankful in how we live our life, and reflecting what God has given us. We also, as we are thankful, are reminded to think of things that are honest, that are just, that are pure, that are lovely, that are of a good report. Anything that has any virtue, anything that has any praise, those are the thoughts we are to keep our mind on. We live in a world that is very negative, where evil lives every day. We are reminded to be thinking of what is good in our life and as we, and as we are thinking of what is good in our life, we are much more likely to maintain that thankful attitude that is best for us to have in our life. And, as we have this thankful attitude in life, the God of peace will be with us as peace will overtake our life and our thoughts, and our actions.

Giving thanks is important because when we are not in the practice of giving thanks, or reflecting what is good that has happened in our life, we allow the attitude of resentment to enter our mind. As we are resentful, bad things creep into our mind. And Paul wrote about those bad things in his letter to the Ephesians. Let's take a look at Ephesians chapter five verse six, Ephesians chapter five verse six.

Ephesians 5:6-20

6. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

8. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

9. For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

10. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

14. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

- 15. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,**
- 16. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**
- 17. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.**
- 18. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;**
- 19. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;**
- 20. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;**

So, we are reminded in verse twenty to give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's easy to forget to be thankful, we get very busy in our life. We get so busy as Jesus was talking about and what was recorded in Matthew that we focus on our needs rather than our relationship with God. It's important to be thankful for everything that we are given. Even bad situations can turn out for good when we are being led by the Holy Spirit, and when we are yielding ourselves to the will of God and Jesus Christ. Let's go back real quick and consider some other verses in Ephesians five. When we allow ourselves in verse six to not be thankful, we allow resentment to come in, it's much easier for us to be deceived with vain words. Vain words are those words which are those pleasantries that people will say just to make nice with other people. We have to be careful not to allow those nice words to defeat us, because that is what verse six is talking about. We have to be careful of people who always flatter us, sometimes people lay it on very thick with flattery. We need to avoid that situation because it is easy to be deceived when people are always saying nice things about us. What is important moving on in verse eight, nine, and ten is to recognize that at one point in our life before we knew God and Jesus Christ, we lived in this very darkness where we simply did not know about God, Jesus Christ, and the way of life. What we need to be doing on a daily basis is proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. We have to make sure that as we are proving what is acceptable to God, that we are distancing ourselves in verses eleven and twelve and thirteen from those things which contradict our faith. So, acts of evil, acts of sin are things we need to be avoiding and distancing ourselves in our own life. And, this attitude of gratitude and thanksgiving is one of the attitudes we need to have in our life so that we can get to this future time. We're given other examples in verses seventeen, eighteen, nineteen. People, when they want to go celebrate like to get smashed and drunk. I've known people who've gone to parties with the idea that it was a good reason to go get drunk. Instead,

we need to recognize that we need to be giving thanks to God, not getting drunk. There's nothing wrong with the moderate use of alcohol. But drinking wine or other kinds of liquor in excess where we get smashed drunk, there's a problem with that. We need to reflect if we have gratitude for what God has given us. That's what Paul is writing about in these verses.

Instead of getting smashed drunk, as so many people would tend to do, we can look at what Paul wrote to the Colossians, in Colossians chapter three beginning with verse twelve, Colossians three verse twelve.

Colossians 3:12-17

12. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

14. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

The key to not being not like the world is to remember to be thankful. When we allow ourselves to not be thankful, we allow ourselves to be deceived by this world. Gratitude is the most important attitude for us to have. Going back to verse twelve of Colossians three, as we are grateful, we need to put on bowels of mercies, and kindness, so, we need to be merciful and kind to people in our life who may have harmed us. That doesn't mean we don't allow for law enforcement to do what they need to do if somebody has harmed us in a way that breaks the law, but in our actions with the other person, we need to be more civil and kind. People are imperfect; we live in an imperfect world, and we need to be mindful that mercy and kindness will get us much farther in this world. We need to be humble in our thoughts. Humbleness is simply where we understand who we are accurately. It doesn't mean we see ourselves as horrible people, or sinners. It just simply means when we are humble, we have an accurate idea of who we are as a

person, where we haven't deflated our opinions of ourselves, nor have we inflated our opinions of ourselves. We are, if you will, properly inflated, which is the recommendation for tires these days to improve fuel mileage. So, it's important that we have our ego properly inflated to accurately reflect who we are as a person. Longsuffering means patience. Sometimes people do not learn the first time, the second time, the third time, the fifty-third time. As much as God has been patient with me in my life, I am constantly reminded of the need to be patient with people in my life. We need to put up with other people and forgive other people. And, we need to forgive other people even if they have a disagreement, fight or argument with us. That's what we are taught. And then, we need to be very charitable. We need to be kind in sharing what we have on the physical level. Those are things God is teaching us as a way for us to live our life, and we do all of this in verse fifteen by being thankful. So, gratitude, thankfulness, thanksgiving allows us to grow spiritually. Contrast that if you will, to Satan the devil. What was it about Satan that caused Satan to rebel? Satan in his mind said, "I am going to ascend into the heavens and become like the Most High." Satan lacked this thankfulness in his life, and he had this inflated self-ego. And, those two things together are a very dangerous combination. Thankfulness, thanksgiving, gratitude, those are very huge concepts for us as Christians, that we can use not just on a single day of the year as a national holiday, but in our life day in and day out in everything we do in the good and in the bad. That's why when we look at some of the Psalms, we are reminded from the very first verse to give thanks to God. Let's look at Psalm one thirty-six, and we'll begin in verse one. Psalm one thirty-six and verse one.

Psalm 136:1-26

- 1. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 2. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 3. O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 4. To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever.**

We know that the mercy we have in our life is there for us in our life and for that we need to be grateful, thankful, and have thanksgiving. Verse five.

- 5. To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 6. To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever.**

- 7. To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 8. The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 9. The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.**

God, in all of His creation has made what we see on a daily basis. Everything that we see on a daily basis pales in comparison to the mercy that God has for each of us in our lives, and for that we can be thankful, have gratitude, and show thanksgiving. Let's continue with verse ten.

- 10. To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 11. And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 12. With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 13. To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 14. And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 15. But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 16. To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.**

In the historical accounts of the Bible, in the good times and even in the bad times, the captivity in Egypt, God's mercy triumphs over everything. And because God's mercy triumphs, even bad situations, for that we can be grateful, we can be thankful, and we can show thanksgiving. Let's look at verse seventeen.

- 17. To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 18. And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 19. Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 20. And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 21. And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 22. Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever.**

When Israel entered the promised land, they had to take over land and territory that was occupied by other people. Through the mercy of God, the people of Israel, were able to take possession of the land, and because of God's great

mercy, in how He worked with His people, even though they had been rebellious, and had to be in the wilderness for forty years, God was still merciful and helped them take possession of the land. For that we can be grateful, we can be thankful, we can have thanksgiving. Verse twenty-three.

- 23. Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever:**
- 24. And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 25. Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 26. O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.**

In the modern era and throughout the history of mankind, people have found themselves in a low estate, not wealthy, maybe not even what we would call middle class, and somehow people through the mercy of God have lived, they have been redeemed from their enemies, people who have tried to bring harm to people are often thwarted by God because of God's mercy towards us. God takes care of his people just as the promise that Jesus gave us in Matthew that in verse twenty-five God gives food to all flesh and for all of this in verse twenty-six, we're told to give thanks to the God of heaven.

Giving thanks is something we do for many different reasons. And, as we reflect in our life as we get older, it's easy to see how God has blessed us. The older I get, the more I look back at my life and I see stupid things I did when I was younger, and I'm very grateful that God had mercy for me at that time because it has enabled me to live the life that I have now. No matter what situation you may find in your life, God has mercy to you and for you. We need to remember to be thankful to God in His mercy so that we can have this attitude of gratitude in the spirit of thanksgiving.

So, what is this final act of gratitude? We are grateful, we are thankful, we have thanksgiving. We understand the need to live by God's way of life and not the evil ways that might be in this world. What is the end result of all of that? We will all come to this end result in our physical life where we will die. Beyond that is this Kingdom of God, this wonderful time of happiness in the future. Let's conclude today by looking at a verse that we may not be related with thanksgiving. Let's take a look at first Corinthians fifteen verse fifty.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

50. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

51. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

56. The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

It is with an attitude of thanksgiving, thankfulness, and gratitude, that we know that through this miracle of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we have access to eternal life. In everything that we do, with our focus of gratitude, thankfulness, and thanksgiving, is this awareness and knowledge that in the future we will one day be living eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

Getting to that future time of eternal happiness, the Kingdom of God, begins by today doing many things. And, among the many things we need to be doing is recognizing that thanksgiving is something we do on a daily basis. Thanksgiving is not something reserved for a national holiday or a feast. Thanksgiving is something that is done in the good times and the bad times reflecting on the mercy of God. Everything that God has done for us, is for our benefit, and because as people we are imperfect compared to the divine nature of God, God could take any kind of severe action with us. Instead, God chooses to be merciful to us understanding the frail nature of the human existence. In all of our thankfulness with God, and with all of our thanksgiving with God, the fact that God is merciful to us in our frail existence deserves the highest level of thanksgiving, and for that we give thanksgiving to God with praise and with joy.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing, we'll get together next week on the Sabbath. Until next time, thank you for joining us today.