

Audio Transcript of Sermon
August 13, 2022
Gratitude

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. We are called in part to have gratitude. God has called us to have eternal life and to be his children; however, God has not called us to be ungrateful sons and daughters. When first writing to the Thessalonians, Paul told them to in all things give thanks. First Thessalonians five verse eighteen.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

18. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

When writing to the Colossians, Paul provided a similar message and also reminded them of the need to treat others the way they would hope to be treated by God and Jesus Christ, showing kindness, humility, meekness, patience, tolerance, and being forgiving, while doing this in a foundation of love. Atop all of this Paul reminded them of the need to be thankful. 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.

Being reminded of the need to be thankful in everything and being thankful in everything are not the same thing. Conceptually, it is easy to be thankful in

everything, and in practice, the challenges of the moment can make it easy for us to forget to be thankful. When life is smelling sweet and before us is a bed of roses, gratitude is easy to have. When life smells like manure and before us is the dung heap, it can be more challenging to have gratitude. There are many examples of gratitude we can look to in the Bible and each brings us a different perspective of gratitude.

Daniel is one of the prophetic books of the Old Testament and behind that book is a prophet who even though he found favor with the kings who took him and the people of Israel into slavery, still found himself at odds from time to time with those very same kings with whom he had found favor. It was Darius who signed into law a decree that required all people who worshipped any God or who petitioned any man other than the king to be tossed into a lion's den. For many, this would have persuaded them to cease or greatly alter their religious practice, but not for Daniel, and Daniel continued his religious practices of praying three times daily giving thanks to God. Let's read Daniel six beginning with verse one.

Daniel 6:1-10

- 1. It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;**
- 2. And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.**
- 3. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.**
- 4. Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.**
- 5. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.**
- 6. Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.**
- 7. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.**

- 8. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.**
- 9. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.**
- 10. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.**

When faced with certain death and maybe questions about whether the lion may consider him to be a kosher meal compared to any of the locals who would have a similar fate, Daniel still gave thanks. In the face of danger and likely death, Daniel was grateful. When living a life of ease and prosperity gratitude is easy. We must remain grateful even when times are tough.

Jonah also found himself in a tough situation. Jonah was getting an ocean cruise in the belly of a great fish. Tradition says that great fish was a whale and biologists will tell you that would be impossible. What we do know is that without further explanation, Jonah was in the belly of a great fish. Instead of a prayer of despair, Jonah gave thanks for the life he had been given by God knowing that even in this darkest hour, salvation belongs to God. Jonah two verse one.

Jonah 2:1-10

- 1. Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly,**
- 2. And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.**
- 3. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.**
- 4. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.**
- 5. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.**
- 6. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.**
- 7. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.**
- 8. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.**

9. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

10. And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

We can't tell from the account in Daniel or in Jonah what the underlying emotions were, and whatever these were, there was no interference with gratitude. We can read of an account where there were strong negative emotions, and yet gratitude prevailed. Hannah was a wife of Elkanah who was unable to provide him with any children, and this caused Hannah emotional distress, where year by year the emotional strain only grew on her to the point her husband could easily see her distress. Hannah even became bitter and yet prayed to God asking for a son. She affirmed with God her commitment that if provided a son, her son would serve God. Eli the priest heard her prayer and told her that God would grant her petition. Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to Samuel. First Samuel one verse one.

1 Samuel 1:1-28

1. Now there was a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite:

2. And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3. And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.

4. And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:

5. But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.

6. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

7. And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

8. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?

9. So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.
10. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.
11. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.
12. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.
13. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.
14. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.
15. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.
16. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.
17. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.
18. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.
19. And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.
20. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.
21. And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.
22. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.
23. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

24. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young.

25. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

26. And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.

27. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28. Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

In her worship, Hannah choose not to worship the gift she had been given, but God who gave the gift. Hannah was very happy and rejoicing because she finally had the child she had wanted for the longest time. Sometimes when people ask of God and receive of God, they forget about God. They worship the gift rather than the gift-giver. Our rejoicing and our gratitude needs to be focused on God. For most of what God will give us, our own effort is involved, yet we need to remain focused that the gift is from God, giving thanks to the gift-giver not the gift. First Samuel two verse one.

1 Samuel 2:1-2

1. And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.

2. There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

Imagine what ignoring the gift-giver would look like at a celebration where gifts are received. The bride and groom might thank the toaster oven for showing up, and the birthday child would thank the toy for its presence. If you gave the toaster oven or the toy how would you feel knowing your gift was acknowledged but not you? When we focus our gratitude on God it must be focused on God and not what God gives us, because if we are only thankful for the things we can see that God gives us, we will have nothing to be thankful for when physical things are not part of the deal. Our gratitude must be intrinsically motivated, not extrinsically motivated. We must be grateful because God is God, not just because God gives us stuff.

Paul found himself in many dangerous situations during his ministry as if he were facing down death. When being taken to Rome, Paul found himself shipwrecked after enduring a violent storm, something similar to a hurricane in the Mediterranean. Everyone aboard was fearing for their lives. Heroic efforts were being taken by the crew to salvage the ship. Not only was Paul working to help them and advising them of what they should do, but even during this challenging time, Paul took it upon himself to give thanks for the food they had. Acts twenty-seven verse nine.

Acts 27:9-38

9. Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,

10. And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

12. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.

13. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.

14. But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.

16. And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:

17. Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

18. And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship;

19. And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21. But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.
22. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.
23. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,
24. Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.
25. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.
26. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.
27. But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;
28. And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.
29. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.
30. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,
31. Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.
32. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.
33. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.
34. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.
35. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.
36. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.
37. And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.
38. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

When on the verge of losing everything, Paul gave thanks for what God had provided. Even in the face of impending loss, we must find a way to give thanks to God, because if we can't all we are acknowledging is we are only thankful for the gifts given to us by God and not the gift-giver. We cannot be ungrateful.

Even Jesus acknowledged God with the food the disciples and Him had. Imagine being the Son of God knowing that God could send legions of angels to defend Him, and yet finding out there was a logistical snafu. Jesus and the disciples had a tradition of providing food for the multitude of people that followed them around and found themselves with only five loaves of bread and two fish. Instead of only focusing on what they were given in those five loaves and two fish, Jesus was thankful, and in the end, more than five thousand people were fed. Matthew fourteen verse thirteen.

Matthew 14:13-21

13. When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

14. And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

15. And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

16. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

17. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

18. He said, Bring them hither to me.

19. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

20. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

21. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

Even when facing imminent death, Jesus found it within Him to be thankful for the bread of the last Passover with his disciples, knowing that the broken bread

symbolized His body which would soon be broken. Matthew twenty-six verse twenty-six.

Matthew 26:26-29

26. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

All of us face the certainty of physical death. As we approach our morbidity, will we find ourselves grateful to God for the hope of eternal life or will we find ourselves ungrateful for the reality of mortal life? It can be very easy to be ungrateful even when facing the incredible gift of eternal life. Most people tend to be ungrateful even after receiving an incredible gift. Gratitude must extend beyond the gift and return to the gift-giver. Such was the situation when Jesus encountered ten lepers. We don't know the ethnicity of the ten lepers, but we do know that one leper who gave thanks to Jesus for being healed was a Samaritan. This Samaritan made sure his gratitude did not stay with just being healed and living the rest of his life, but in returning the gratitude directly to Jesus. Luke seventeen verse eleven.

Luke 17:11-19

11. And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13. And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16. And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18. There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

When we think of the many reasons to have gratitude for God, the Book of Psalms gives us many reasons to reflect. One of the biggest reasons to have gratitude and be thankful to God, is for God's enduring mercy for us. Let's notice Psalm one hundred thirty-six beginning with 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.

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.

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.

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.**
- 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.**

The psalm we just read tells us to give thanks to God three times and gives us twenty-three examples of good things God did for the people of Israel, but the reason for the gratitude is not just the good things God did for the people of Israel, but God's enduring mercy. When we are ungrateful, it is like we think we are spiritually in need of nothing, not realizing how spiritually naked we are needing the mercy of God in our lives.

We give thanks to God for this hope of eternal life we have knowing that our victory comes to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ focusing on that gift of eternal life, not the reality of our physical mortality. 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 steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

We are called to give thanks in all things, knowing the gift of eternal life comes from God the Father through Jesus Christ. We are grateful for all that is in our life and we focus on the gift-giver, not the gift. The error of the unrighteous is worshipping the gift not the gift-giver. Like the unrighteous, the righteous live on the same planet existing within the same planetary environment. The righteous stand in awe of this earthly gift we have been given knowing it is given to us by a gift-giver, God the Father. The unrighteous see only the earthly gift and cannot see beyond it to the gift-giver. They worship and serve the gift instead of the gift-giver. Romans one verse eighteen.

Romans 1:18-25

18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

19. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

20. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

21. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23. And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

24. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

When we focus our gratitude on God and not the things God gives us, then we can be like Paul, who found himself able to be content in whatever state he found himself, and like Paul we will also know we can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengthens us. Philippians four verse ten.

Philippians 4:10-13

10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

We are called not only to have eternal life, we are called to have gratitude to God, not focusing on the gifts God gives us, but focusing on the giver of those gifts, God the Father. We can look to examples from the Bible, with Daniel facing certain death in the lion's den, and yet gave thanks to God. We can read of Jonah who gave thanks to God even when in the belly of the great fish, and of Hannah who even though she was bitter, gave thanks to God for the birth of her son. Paul was able to give thanks to God in the middle of a hurricane-like storm on a boat that was threatened with sinking, and on many occasions, Jesus was thankful as well. We must be thankful to God the Father for the enduring mercy that God has for us, focusing our gratitude on God and that enduring mercy, and not the physical things we have today.

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