

Praise Anyhow

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 November 2020

[0:00] Do you wonder what God's will is? What is God's will? Do you want to know what the will of God is for yourself, for your life?

You need wonder no longer. I'm going to tell you exactly what it is, exactly what the will of God is for your life. In fact, there's three things that are definitely God's will for you.

And we're going to see that. And they're God's will always for every one of us. I can tell you this absolutely based on the authority of the word of God, the will of God for you today.

This is always true for you. We see this in 1 Thessalonians 5 from verse 16. Turn there if you like. 1 Thessalonians 5 from verse 16 through 18.

And this is a good number of verses. You can hide these in your heart. We might want to say them together. Let's do that, can we? We're going to read verses 16 through 18.

[0:58] I'm going to read them a couple of times. Say them along with me, because these are good words to hide in your heart. So this is 1 Thessalonians 5, 16 through 18. Rejoice evermore.

Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. And again, rejoice evermore.

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you, concerning you.

The secret of a godly disposition are here in these three verses, these three secrets if you like. Rejoice. When?

Evermore. Always. Pray how often? Without ceasing. Give thanks in what circumstances? In everything.

[1:56] No exceptions. So what are we to do? There's some wonderful truths here. You wonder, how can I practically make them happen? But God helping you, you can put these into action. If God wasn't commanding you, then you would think, how can it be possible?

But if God's commanding you something, it must be possible. Otherwise, He wouldn't be commanding you. So what would the Lord have you to do? Number one, rejoice evermore. It's saying there, brother, sister, be always rejoicing.

Be joyful at all times. And that's a tough call, isn't it? You could think, you know, you might be feeling quite miserable in yourself today.

I'm not putting that on you, but, you know, there's times when I feel a bit miserable. You know, I'll be honest with you today, I'm human. But the Bible says, make a decision to praise. Whatever.

Amen, sister. When the praises go up, the blessings come down. That's a good one. Now, think of, for example, in Acts chapter 5, it says, as Peter demonstrated for us, Peter and the company with him, even after they'd just got beaten up for Christ.

[3:07] This is Acts 5, 41, it says, and they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing, there's that word, that they were counted, worthy to suffer shame for His name.

Now, you could think, naturally speaking, him and his men, beaten black and blue, simply forgiving the gospel, yet they were rejoicing.

We can learn from that, can't we? Our praise is not dependent on things, it's dependent upon God. Our joy is not natural, it's supernatural. And the Bible speaks about a fullness of joy.

There was a man who apparently smelled so good, wherever he was and whatever he was doing, his skin seemed to exude this pleasant fragrance. What it was, he worked at a perfume factory, and he breathed in those aromas day after day, they filtered into his clothing, they penetrated his skin, they even filled his lungs, and he became a walking perfumery.

And friends, that should be for us, shouldn't it? That God's joy so fill us, that God's joy just can't help but come out of us. The presence of God is in us, such that it comes out.

[4:21] We're spending time with Him, that He will come out of us. The presence of God would so impact us. It can. The Word says, Rejoice in the Lord.

Philippians 4 verse 4, here's another one to remember, and an easy one really. It says, and some of you might already know it, I'm sure, Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice.

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. So Paul said rejoice always. And he said rejoice always again. Paul wrote these words, even while he was in prison.

The letter to Philippi, he wrote that while he was in prison. Here he was in some horrible, you can imagine some constrained, chained environment, where he's in some cell, locked up in a miserable place.

It must have been the happiest of surroundings. This rejoicing that we have is not dependent on where we are, or limited to how we feel.

[5:32] Paul says rejoice in the Lord, how often? Always. And again I say rejoice. This biblical joy, it should overflow our personality.

This joy that fills us, it's beyond our circumstances. And it's not meaning that we're putting it on, some kind of plastic smile. It's beyond even how we might look.

It's deep down resident within us. This joy that we have, it just cannot help, that we cannot contain it. It's beyond our own ordinary feelings.

And that's the joy that Jesus brings, isn't it? He gives joy in our heart, doesn't he? You that are saved, can you say amen? His joy fills your heart. It doesn't matter your circumstance, what's happening for you.

It doesn't matter your ordinary feelings. It's the essence of the saviour. It's not that man exuding the perfume. It's the joy of Jesus that's within us. We can't contain it. The joy of the Lord is our strength.

[6:32] The strength of our lives. And sure enough friends, we know life's filled with constant heartaches and challenges and hurts. You know, as a preacher, I often get people tell me this, of what's happening for them.

And we know there's situations in families, in homes, there's trouble, there's crisis, there's the devil's ways that are just burdening us for our loved ones.

There's hurting people. You know, I've heard of abuse situations of drugs, of circumstances, of struggle. And I hear all about it.

People are hurting. I know that. It's real. And this current virus situation, it just amplifies it all, doesn't it? It's like, oh no, what are they going to tell us next?

And what's the next announcement going to be? And it only amplifies people's pain and grief. It's like the whole community's under this cloud, isn't it? This heaviness.

[7:37] It's despair, it's gloom. It's all around us. But, we have an inner resource. Amen. You that are the saved here today, you have an inner resource that sustains you.

It's his joy, the joy of the Lord. That's what Habakkuk said. You know, as we know, this has been popularized into a song. Habakkuk 3, from verse 17, tells about Habakkuk.

He's talking about his surroundings. He says, although the fig tree does not blossom, neither there be fruit in the vines. The labor of the olive fail, and the field shall yield no meat.

The flock be cut off from the fold. There shall be no herd in the stalls. What does Habakkuk say? Yet will I rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation.

The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. He says, so the fig tree doesn't blossom. All these things, everything's going wrong all around me.

[8:40] Even though there's no food, even though there's always disaster, even though there's always crisis, yet will I rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Habakkuk's saying to us here, no matter what, no matter the tough situation that we're faced with, Habakkuk says this, he declares, I shall yet praise him.

It's like our Lord tells us, he speaks to us, even when our faith is tested to the highest degree. And he says, what are we to do? Rejoice. Our Lord says rejoice.

Even in the most trying of times, when we're under the most intensive attack, and even when we hate it for his sake, that's what he says in Matthew 5.

Matthew 5, he tells us amongst all the beatitudes, all the ones that he calls blessed, he says this in Matthew 5 verse 11, he says, blessed are ye.

[9:45] When? When men shall revile you. You know, they're going to curse you. And persecute you. And shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake.

You know, I've been there. People have been accusing me, condemning me, attacking me. What's the word? Liable.

You know, slander. For my sake. What does our Lord say to do? Rejoice and be exceeding glad. For great is your reward in heaven.

For so persecuted they the prophets, which were before you. Our Lord says here, rejoice people. He says rejoice. He says be glad. It's saying be continuously rejoicing.

That's the sense of it. This is a continuous thing. He says be exceeding glad. You could put it literally, rejoice and leap for joy.

[10:45] That's what, you could put it to that literal sense. It's got a sense of a leaping for joy. This is something to get excited about. You know, there's a, there's a church called the Holy Spiritual Jumpers.

You know, no joke. There's, there's actually a church called that. I wouldn't recommend it. They've got some false doctrine. You know, the jumping isn't necessarily the false doctrine, but, but it's got a sense where they jump around in their services.

you know, we have got something worth jumping and shouting and, and telling the world about, haven't we? We've got something worth jumping out of our skin with joy and gladness, even when we're persecuted and reviled and hated for his namesake.

So, literally rejoice and leap for joy. I should get you to all stand and, no, that's okay. There's a reward coming. Amen. There's a reward coming.

And he says that there is a reward in heaven and it is great. Wow. You know, I know, I had occasion, not that I'm big noting myself, but where I was doing some open air preaching and someone smashed an egg on my head in the city of Adelaide.

[11:59] It wasn't that long ago. And, it was, I just wish I had the camera going at the time. It would have just been, it would have gone viral. you know, you think, you know, and then afterwards I think, actually that was a blessing because I must have been doing something enough to provoke the devil enough, to provoke this woman enough to smash an egg on my head.

And, there's a time to rejoice, isn't there? So we should rejoice. It's his will and it's his command. And it's our decision, friends. It's our commitment. You can say, I will rejoice.

That's what the psalmist sang in Psalm 42. He sang these words in the midst of grief and a time of deep heartache. He said this, I shall yet praise him.

We can go there, Psalm 42. We're going to read the whole context around it here that surrounds this statement of Psalm 42. Psalm 42, it says, from verse 1, As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? Are you thirsty today? Are you thirsty for God? Amen. Amen.

[13:17] My heart, well, as the heart, which is the deer, pants for the water brooks. So, panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. It says, verse 3, My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me, for I had gone with the multitude. I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day. That's what we're doing today. We're keeping holy day. Amen. Verse 5, Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God.

Get this now, for I shall yet praise him. Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him. For the help of his counsellors.

God's face is looking upon you. He's looking, his face is shining upon you. Verse 6, O my God, my soul is cast down within me. Therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill of Mitzah.

[14:24] Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts. All thy waves, and thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime.

And in the night his song shall be with me. And my prayer unto the God of my life. I will say unto God, my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies who reproach me, while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? Verse 11, says again, Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me?

Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God. God puts a smile on your face, if you like.

The health of your countenance. There's a joy there. There's a joy beam. There's a glistening of your eyes. There's a life in you that comes out of your face. He's the health of my countenance.

[15:22] He's the one I'm going to praise. I'm going to hope in him. And that man had a soul thirst. He had tears day and night. His soul was troubled. His soul was cast down within him.

But he prayed. But he praised. But he declared, I shall yet praise him. He made that statement of faith. He made that declaration.

My soul, why are you cast down? I shall yet praise him. He told his soul what to do. I'm going to praise him. James says the same thing in James 1. It's got the sense of praise him anyhow.

Even when various trials come. You see that James 1 from verse 2? James writes, My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations.

Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. Our Lord says here, praise anyhow. Count it a blessing. God will ultimately deliver us and be our help.

[16:20] Live in praise. Praise him. Praise him. Even in the toughest of times. It's kind of hard to get our head around it. Even when, if we're like that man in Psalm 42 that talks about, I'm cast down.

I'm getting in trouble. I'm feeling like the people are saying, where is your God? He's saying, I'm going to praise him still. I will praise him anyhow. I'm going to praise him in the storms.

I'm going to praise him in the battles. I'm going to praise him when life is hard. David did that too. Psalm 34. A Psalm of David. We're going to read verse 1. You can read through verse 4.

David said, I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. Just pause and reflect on that one. That's something to take heart in, isn't it?

I will bless the Lord at all times. When you look at your watch, it's time to bless the Lord. Amen? You look at the face of your watch and say, it's that time again.

[17:24] It's the blessing time. It's blessing his time. It's blessing him time. Amen? Can we think about that? Every time you look at a clock, it's time to bless the Lord. That's the time. Hallelujah?

You believe that? I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually, continually, continually be in my mouth.

Now we should be a broken record. His praise, His praise, His praise. at all times. I'm being a little lighthearted here. But it's true, isn't it?

The Word of God says to do it. The Word of God says confess it in every situation, in every circumstance, before, in, and after the trials. In the bright days of joy and the dark nights of fear, I will bless the Lord.

His praise shall continually be in this mouth of mine. David goes on, verse 2, my soul shall boast, make her boast in the Lord.

[18:25] The humble shall hear thereof and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears.

So, bless the Lord. Yes, at all times. At all times. Even when you don't feel like it. There's no exception. Notice that. We can have those moments when we think, oh, I'm going to have a praise

break.

I'm going to have a blessing break. No, you've got to keep on blessing. You've got to keep on praising. At all times. Paul praised as Silas did in that most trying of circumstances as we read of them in Acts 16, verse 25.

They were locked up. Acts 16, verse 25. And at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed. You know, Julie and I were thinking at the lockdown we had to come and get the church clean and get the chairs set up and Julie was saying we should come at midnight because we had to wait until the lockdown finished.

But no, we thought we might annoy the neighbours with Julie practising the songs. But no, they didn't care about the neighbours. Paul and Silas didn't care about making a noise at midnight.

[19:37] They praised. Amen. They prayed and they sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them. Glory. At midnight. You know, they probably would have been pretty whacked out after being beaten up and locked up and pushed around and at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God.

And the prisoners heard them. They weren't ashamed of their Lord. Amen. Don't be ashamed. And suddenly there was a great earthquake and the foundations of the prison were shaken and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's bands were loosed.

Even in the prison, even at midnight, they praised. We can learn from that, can't we? You know, your praise is a weapon. Joseph could have wallowed in his self-pity.

Look at what Joseph had to call. You know, so many sad experiences. Who would have blamed him for being a bit of a whinger? He could have got lots to be angry and bitter about.

His own family, his own kin, his own brothers, what they did to him. He had lots to complain about.

No one would have thought it unusual for him to be a bit of a complainer, a bit of a whinger.

[20:54] He had lots to complain about. And after all, it's only human, isn't it? Feel sorry for ourselves. Joseph kept his faith. He kept his joy in the Lord.

And he knew God had a plan for his life. He knew God was working it out. Ultimately, when everything seemed against him, God gave Joseph the grace to forgive.

Didn't he? Joseph got the grace to forgive. He got the grace to bless instead of curse his own brothers. For, what did they deserve?

Humanly speaking, the injustice, the wrong, the hurt. Joseph praised. Joseph rejoiced. Joseph showed God's grace.

Paul tells of a time when he had a thorn in the flesh and he sought the Lord three times. Take it away, Lord, take it away, take it away. And 2 Corinthians 12 verse 9, the Lord said to him, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

[22:04] And so Paul says, most gladly, gladly, there's that rejoicing again, most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong.

Paul says, look, I ask the Lord to take it away. God says, I'll make you strong. My strength will be perfect in your weakness. And he says, I'm going to glory, I'm going to rejoice, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

I'm going to take pleasure in all of these things. Think of those things that he talked about. And Peter gave a similar account of many tests, as James talks about too.

These things that Peter and Paul and James talk about, such things as fiery trials, life struggles, some tough things happening. There's people not sure what their income is going to be, whether they've got a job next week.

[23:09] You know, there's people going through times of anger and grief, fiery trials. There's people facing infirmities, when physical affliction hits you, when you've got pain, you've got illness, and it's gnawing away at your body.

Infirmities. People have got reproaches. When you're mocked and rejected, your family members think, oh, you're one of those Bible bashers, and they scorn you and revile you.

Persecution is when you're attacked and oppressed for your godly convictions. You know, in workplaces, it's like that. You dare to be questioning something that the world goes in lockstep with and you say, well, I don't follow that.

And you get attacked for that, just for giving your opinion, for your convictions. You face necessities. Paul talks about necessities.

He talks about the wear and care of daily life, just the daily grind, daily responsibilities that can wear us out, just trying to make a living, just feeding the family, paying the mortgage, distresses, when we have to deal with disappointments and hurts.

[24:17] They can be deep hurts, tribulations, unusual pressures and challenges, then temptations. Look, we're still flesh. We've got to battle the flesh, the devil, the world, sin.

All of these tests face you and me, day by day by day. But what should we do day by day by day? Rejoice, pray, give thanks. Every test are opportunities for us to grow.

So rejoice and keep on rejoicing. David cried in Psalm 28, verse 7, he said this, The Lord is my strength and my shield. My heart trusteth in Him and I am helped.

Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth and with my song will I praise Him. David says, The Lord is my strength. The Lord is my shield. I'm going to trust Him.

He's going to help me. And therefore my heart greatly rejoices. I mean look at the Psalms that David wrote. He wasn't, he didn't have a pampered life.

[25:21] He had some tough things. He had the shepherd's work. He had the hatred of Saul. He had his own flesh to reckon with.

He had many battles. And David said, He's my reason for praise. Even when I'm in the deep lonely valley, here's the reason that I can praise.

You know, some will only praise God only in the good times. And we can be like that, can't we? Oh, sure enough, I'll be a happy, clappy Christian when it's all fine and dandy.

Everything's going good for me. Yeah, I'm all in. But then when things are bad and difficult, we can kind of crawl under a rock and just sort of almost fade away.

You know, the cause of our joy is not things. And it's not in how people treat us, good or bad. The cause of our joy is not even our feelings.

[26:18] The source of our joy is the Lord. It is the Lord, our Lord Jesus. The source of our joy is His saving grace and love. Our joy does not stop when things are against us either.

We are never finished praising. You can say, oh, it's time to praise. It's that time again. Bless the Lord out. Oh, it's that time again at all times. No, I'll just have a break now.

No, no break. There's no stopping of your praising. You've never finished praising. So rejoice ever more. It is the will of God for you. Get that.

It's God's will. And it goes on. Now, I'm going to not take so much time on the next two. But number two here is that our praying and thanking go hand in hand with our rejoicing.

So number two, it says, pray without ceasing. Pray without ceasing. As we rejoice, we pray. And the more we pray, the more we rejoice.

[27:15] They're linked together. Paul says this, pray without ceasing. He said, pray wherever, pray whatever, don't stop praying.

Now, someone has reckoned there's approximately 667 recorded prayers in the Bible. 667, and there's about 454 recorded answers.

Now, of course, not all the answers are necessarily recorded. But the point is, God answers prayer. Amen? When we pray, God answers prayer. God gives us an answer.

Sometimes it's yes, sometimes it's no, sometimes it's wait. But God will answer your prayer. You can have that assurance. So pray. Pray without ceasing.

Jonah prayed inside a fish's stomach. You know, you don't have to go to a holy place to pray. You can pray if you ever have that occasion where you might be put inside a fish's stomach.

[28:13] You can pray there. Amen? Amen? Probably a good place to pray. Amen? Daniel prayed in a lion's den. You know, if you ever get that opportunity to go into a lion's den, be like Daniel.

Pray. Pray for your life. Pray for God's grace. David prayed in Psalm 55, verse 17. He says this, evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud and he shall hear my voice.

Now, Psalm 55 in the context, David was in a cave here. He was a man on the run. There was people out for his blood. He had a price on his head as he fled from Saul who was intent on killing him.

He says, evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud and he shall hear my voice. In Psalm 55, he talks about David's house of oppression, of being sore pained, of fearfulness and horror, of battle and of strife, of being overwhelmed.

Yet, what does he do? He praises and he prays and in faith he says, cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee. He will hear when you pray and he will prevail.

[29:27] Stephen prayed while they were killing him. Think of that one. He prayed for God to forgive his killers.

What grace is that? You know, you could think what you would pray for someone who's killing you. You know, pray for fire to fall on their heads. No, David, sorry, Stephen, he prayed that they would be forgiven.

Wow, that's something, isn't it? That's Acts 7, 59 and they stoned Stephen calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit and he knelt down, it says, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Pray, without ceasing. Stephen did that, didn't he?

Nehemiah shows us how to pray like that too. When King Artaxerxes inquired why he was sad, Nehemiah, the cupbearer, related to the king the destruction of his beloved Jerusalem and the king asked Nehemiah, what do you want?

[30:39] And Nehemiah prayed a quick prayer right then and there before he answered. Now, I'm not sure that he got on his knees and did some posturing or even whether it was an audible prayer, but he prayed a quick prayer right then and there on the spot.

And this is Nehemiah 2, verse 4, it says, then the king said unto me, for what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. Now, before he gave an answer he prayed. He prayed, he could say, he could understand, perhaps he prayed just in that moment, just an eye blink of a prayer, even without saying the words.

What do you ask for? Right then and there Nehemiah was conscious of God's power. He wanted God's will. He wanted God's way. He wanted God's purpose. And he asked God to give him an answer, to help him give an answer.

So it's right for us. We might do that in all circumstances of life. When you're having that encounter with another person, when you're witnessing, when you're at the checkout, when you're going about your day by day in the workplace, in the school place, to pray those short to the point prayers at any time, anywhere, to the glory of God.

Because we should pray when? Without ceasing. Non-stop. So in other words, I'm not thinking this means that we should be walking around necessarily uttering prayers audibly and such, or having some reverential posture all the time.

[32:13] Not necessarily such, but that heart of prayer, that prayerful heart, that dependency upon God, that when we're giving, when we're living our day by day lives, when it's that time again, it's time to pray.

It's time again. Pray. Keep on praying. Pray when you're angry. Wow, that'd be something, wouldn't it? When you just want to, you know, yell at your husband, or your wife, or not that any of you would ever do that, but you're praying when you're angry.

You're praying when you're hurting. You're praying when you're disappointed. You're praying when you're doubting. Friends, he says pray. God says pray. Pray without ceasing.

Amen? How do we get that? How do we make that happen? It's a challenge, isn't it? Let's be honest. Pray persistently. Maintain that spirit of prayer so that God helping you, you'll still be mindful of God.

You'll be praying. You'll be seeking God's way. You'll be asking God's help. You'll be laying hold of God's hand. Getting hold of God.

[33:21] Pray. Pray when you face temptation. Pray when life is hard. Pray when you're working. Pray when you're resting. Pray and keep on praying. It's God's will for you.

So we're saying praying. Keep on praying. Pray without ceasing. And number three, we're up to the third point now. Number three is in everything give thanks.

Paul's saying be grateful. What can we thank God for today? Count your blessings. Name them one by one. I don't have a book big enough to, an exercise book big enough to put them all in.

Amen? The blessings of God, the reasons to be thankful. Can't you think of so many? It's hard to reckon, isn't it? Notice it says, in everything, give thanks.

Not after it is over, but while you're still in it. Can we have a thankful heart? To keep sweet. To keep thankful. And when those moments when we're inclined to be fleshly, let's be thankful.

[34:26] when we're inclined to complain, when we're inclined to have a pity party and no one else is invited, you know, be thankful.

Can't we? Be thankful. God hears your heart. He knows your need. He knows the situation. He knows what's happening right now. And sometimes, though, we can be inclined to do the opposite of being thankful, can't we?

Not that there's any whinging poms here, but as it were, they talk about whinging poms, you know, I think there's a few whinging Aussies as well. You know, I think it's human nature, isn't it?

To be a bit of a whinger, to have a bit of a whinge, to have a bit of a moan. In Philippians 2.14, it says, Do all things without murmurings and disputings.

All things without murmurings and disputings, that you may be harmless and blameless. The sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as the lights in the world.

[35:32] Philippians 2.14, Do all things without murmurings and disputings. You might be being wronged. You might be having a hard, the hard end of it.

You might have someone really sticking it into you and doing you wrong. Do all things without murmurings and disputings. You can have grace. You know, we can even thank God for the thorns. We don't often thank God for situations that are hard, do we? For trials and heartaches and trouble, difficulties.

We're willing to praise Him for His goodness, but we sometimes fail to realize this, even in the difficult times, they can be blessings in disguise. There was a Scottish preacher, Matheson, who had this problem.

And he realized he was not ready to praise God when things went wrong, as he was when things went right. And this fellow, George Matheson, the Scottish preacher, he began to lose his eyesight over time and he changed his thinking.

[36:39] He reached a point where he could pray, my God, I've never thanked you for my thorn. I've been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensated for my cross, but I've never thought of my cross as itself, a present glory.

Teach me the value of my thorn. Now even the troubles of life, we can count them a blessing, even the hardness, even the tough things, even our weaknesses and burdens, the trials we face, God can use the good to bring, sorry, he can use the difficulties to bring the good.

As we saw with Joseph, he meant it for evil, God meant it for good. Even in the difficult places, he can have grace to thank God for the sufficiency of his grace.

He is our sufficiency. And in our trials, we can turn to God. Friends, learn to thank God. Think of it, just as we reckon of, maybe in the practicalities of our own life, someone made this list.

They said, I'm thankful for the clothes that fit a little too snug. You know, I've got that problem sometimes that the belts haven't got enough holes in it. I thank you for the clothes that are a little too snug because it means I'll have enough to eat.

[37:53] You can be thankful for that, can't you? I'm thankful for all the complaining I hear about the government because it means I've got freedom of speech in this country. I'm thankful for the alarm that goes off early in the morning because it means that I'm alive.

I'm thankful for the teenager who's not doing the dishes but is watching TV because that means he's at home, he's not on the streets. I'm thankful for the taxes that I pay because it means I'm employed.

I'm thankful for the lawn that needs mowing, the windows that need cleaning, the gutters that need fixing because it means I have a home. I'm thankful for the weariness at the end of the day because it means I've been capable of working hard.

I'm thankful for the parking spot. I find even if it's at the far end of the parking lot because it means I'm capable of walking and I've been blessed with transportation.

You can be thankful even for the things that aren't just how you want them to be. Amen? How can we cultivate that thankfulness in our own lives? Friends, it says this is the will of God concerning you.

[38:59] Rejoice. Rejoice evermore. Pray. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in everything. Give thanks.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that prayer isn't just something we do at church or at set times but it's an atmosphere. It's an attitude of heart.

It's a constancy of spirit. It's a prayerfulness that is that mind that we have. That thankfulness can be our attitude that we'll have an attitude of gratitude even when there's tough things or thanking even in everything that is tough and hard as well as good and Lord that we can have that rejoicing even in even in trial and we can rejoice!

evermore. One day our rejoicing will be on the other side of the curtain as we enter the glory of the saints' rest.

Lord, we pray that our rejoicing that we'll be practicing very well this side of heaven so that we can be rejoicing evermore and we pray each one might know what it is to know they have a home in heaven that this life is not the end of our journey and the place we'll go to will not be for punishment of our sin because you've paid for our sin and we've trusted your saving Lord that we can know with an assurance that our eternal life is guaranteed because we put our trust in your saving blood that you died in our place for our sin and we trusted that work of the cross that you've did for us Lord, we pray for each one to have that heart that certain knowledge that we can go through life with a heavenly disposition that we'll be praising we'll be praying and we'll be thankful and we'll give you all the thanks and glory in Jesus name

[41:13] Amen