

The Fruit of a Thankful Heart

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Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0:00] This morning, as I was teaching Sunday school, Joe Halsey said to me, I think Pastor Thanksgiving! And then he amended that to say, I'm not sure, I think maybe every Sunday is your favorite! The truth of the matter is, I remember that I remember I rejoice every time we are together as God's people. I am thankful for the blessing of being among you, and I am so very thankful for the gospel that we enjoy together that has bound us together in this great confidence in a messy world. Am I right? I want you to turn in your Bibles this morning to a convicting, challenging, demanding passage. And I have to confess that years ago, when I was in college, I was in a Bible class, and they said, you have to memorize something like 15, 20 verses. Any verses in the Bible. This was one of them. Turn in your Bible to 1 Corinthians, or 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, and if you wanted to know what I memorized, it was from verse 12 to 28. Does anybody want to guess why I memorized those verses in particular?

The truth of the matter is, they were relatively short. But that does not mean that they are insignificant. And when we look at verse 18 in particular, I want to read that passage, and we are going to begin here and then look at the matter of Thanksgiving in a larger setting.

We recognize that this command is one that is more challenging than we may think at a first reading.

Let me read it to you, and we'll pray together, and then step into the text. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Let's pray.

Our Father, for us this morning to pray, as we take up your word in hand, is not a habit, but a very real confession of our absolute dependence upon you to work in us, to allow the word of God to have free course, to have the word convict, shape our thinking, govern our behavior, control our tongues, direct our eyes, be the genesis of our affections and interests.

[3:14] And so this morning as we pray, I pray and I ask your people to be faithful in praying for me as I preach, that you would work to lift up Jesus and the glory of the cross, that we as your people might rejoice afresh in your goodness and your salvation.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to look at this passage this morning, 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 18, and as we look at it, I want to begin by actually doing a little bit of background work.

I want you to think with me about the subject of thanksgiving, and let's think a little bit about the nature of it. What is it? It says here that we are to be thankful, we're to give thanks, and for some of us, that may be something that is a little atypical.

I don't know if you ever frown at yourself in the mirrors. How many of you practice that? Frowning, frowning. I mean, you know, it's kind of looking at yourself and like, go ahead and give a grumpy face, you know, in the morning.

You know, it's like, you probably don't think about it, but the truth of the matter is, is that thankful spirit is not something that really is part and parcel with our nature.

[4:36] It's something that comes as a result of some other things. And so let me remind you that, first of all, giving thanks is something that usually happens because someone else has done something for us.

We say thank you when someone does something that we didn't have a right to deserve, or when someone has served us or cared for something that really we had an appreciative heart for. We do understand that often we give thanks because we're taught to. And I hate to use the Mahaffey family as an illustration, but they were up here, so they're an illustration. And it goes with singing, you know, there you are. And I'm going to venture to say that probably the six little children, how many of you noticed Morgan wasn't singing? Anybody else notice that Morgan wasn't singing? Just bringing it up for you to think about. Anybody want to send him an email letting him know that he's expected on special music in the future, you know?

[5:38] Elliot, everybody else got to vote on singing except for Morgan, am I right? Your dad? Okay. But anyway, I'm going to venture to guess that of these children, not one of them came into the world and just said, Thank you, Mom.

I'm glad you did that. And, you know, with the first couple diaper changes and all that kind of thing, thank you, Mom. Kids have to be trained just over and over and over and over and over and what? Over again to say thank you. It has to be learned. And it's really not part of our nature. Probably a proof of that would be over in Romans 1, verse 21.

And I want you just to take a look at that passage, kind of frame it in your life, in your heart. It says this, Although they knew God, Romans 1, 21. Although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him.

That's one of the characteristics of the unbeliever. As a general rule, the unbeliever does not have a thankful heart.

[6:47] We do need to recognize that while we are indeed thankful for things we haven't deserved and we are trained to be that way, being thankful runs contrary to our nature.

And left to our own devices, allowed to kind of just do our own thing, we probably have to say that thankfulness would not be even a blip on our radar screen most of the time.

We come into the world kind of thinking that everything revolves around us and actually the things that we receive are things that were due to us. And so why say thank you?

How many of you actually go out of your way and say thank you for the check you get week after week? It just kind of plays on and happens. And just watch children who have been allowed to get their way incessantly at home when they are in a place like Walmart or Meijer and they don't get their way.

What is their first response? They have an emotional meltdown. It's not like, you know, thank you, Mom, for helping me learn that the world doesn't revolve around me. No, that's not what happens.

[8:01] Or when the government suggests that they're going to cut one of the many subsidies with which they bought your votes, I mean, everybody says, well, that's a good idea. We need more of that. No, that's not what happens.

I do want you to understand that Thanksgiving is really rooted in our view of God and His undeserved kindness. And I want you to have that fixed in your mind because the truth of the matter is, is as we come to grips with the issue, and I got to tell you, the spirit of thankfulness that we have is something that is a very winsome part of our witness.

It's what unbelievers notice about us and ends up being attractive to them and causes them to ask, what's the reason for the hope that lies within you?

I notice a different spirit in you. So when you stop and think about this issue of thankfulness and recognize that it's something that's rooted in our life, you understand that the starting point as we looked at Romans 1, verse 21 is that when people don't know God, their hearts are characteristically hardened towards the reasons that they ought to be thankful.

They never stop and think about it. Several weeks ago, I had the opportunity of sharing the gospel with an individual, and in the course of conversation, they comment on the fact that God had been, they kind of recognized that God had been awfully patient with them.

[9:34] I thought that was a very interesting comment to come out of the lips of an unbeliever. And I said, well, you ought to be very thankful for that. Well, why?

I said, because if God had not been patient with you, time's up. Guess what the consequences would be of God being impatient with you? You would be enduring the consequence of your willful rejection of the sweetness of the gospel for all of eternity.

Stop and thought about that, and, well, I see your point. But was he thankful and drawn to the cross? Not in that case. You recognize that this issue of thankfulness is something that really reflects the heart that we have and where we are.

Let me have you turn to a different passage to kind of frame this. Turn to Ephesians 5, verse 20.

We're thinking about the matter of thankfulness and just kind of identify what Ephesians has to say in relationship to this, marking the fact that when a believer is filled with the Spirit, one of the things that comes out of that believer is the fruit from inside in relationship to thankfulness.

Verse 18, what's it say? Don't be drunk with wine, for that's debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit. And what happens when we're filled with the Spirit? Giving thanks always and for everything to God, the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[11:01] Show me a person who is persistently thankful and who is not walking around with a semi-permanent pout, and I'll show you a person that has the Lord Jesus Christ in their life and is evidently aware of His presence and the unbelievable blessings that we have in Christ.

So the practical question to ask yourself at this point is this, is thanksgiving a characteristic of your lifestyle and something that you're known for? And here's the question.

Go ahead and nudge your wife. You're sitting close enough to her. Kind of nudge her and just say, hey, honey, don't tell me now because pastor will call me out publicly. But, you know, kind of ask me later.

Let's talk about thankfulness. And a fair question would be this. Is thankfulness a general characteristic of your life? If we are conscious and sensitive to the presence of the Spirit of God in our life, we're going to be thankful people.

Or is this something that we probably need to work at and learn to be prompted to do a little bit like children? Well, I do want you to take the time with me this morning to kind of think about some of the things that give us reason to be thankful.

[12:19] We understand that having a thankful spirit is something that God has to do in our lives. Let's think about reasons to be thankful. So let's look at some Bible examples for that.

And I want you to notice, first of all, in the passage that we looked at, go there if you would, the 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 18. And here's the apostle giving his concluding instructions to the church at Thessalonica.

And in relationship to that, he makes this little statement that I want you to focus on and allow to kind of govern your life moving forward. Now, I want you to notice that it doesn't say give thanks for all circumstances.

It says give thanks in all circumstances. And every one of the circumstances that we fall into is a circumstance that is granted and directed by the sovereign Lord of this universe, who we know from the Scriptures is doing what on our behalf, having saved us and drawn us to himself.

He is working all things together for our good. He's at work. He's actively engaged in taking care of things for our good. And so I want you to mark that this issue of being thankful in every circumstance is his instruction to us.

[13:46] A little note that I picked up from one Bible teacher was this, is that he said that a spirit of thankfulness is a thermometer to your spiritual health.

I want you to think about that. The spirit of thankfulness is a thermometer of your spiritual health.

The spirit of thankfulness is a thermometer of your spiritual health.

How many of you on occasion have kind of felt like you're not doing very well? You know, my wife is homesick today. And she is, I mean, I know she's sick.

She's hacking and you don't want to know all the biology that went into this. It's like, had a half a bowl of soup and then we had a half a bowl of soup. So it's real. And when you really want to kind of check into all these details, you do what with a thermometer, right?

Stick it in there and check it. Well, a spiritual check would be this. So how am I in the area of thankfulness?

[14:49] Does my life register on a consistent basis a spirit of thankfulness? I want you to notice this as well. Our thankfulness in this passage is inseparable from our relationship and union in Christ.

You look there towards the end of the verse, it says, for this is the will of God. That's what he wants from us. Hey, stop just for a minute. Everybody look up. Are you a Christian? No, I'm not talking about one of those.

I know the vocabulary. I'm talking about, are you really a believer who God has the authority and right to tell you how to behave? I don't know about it. No, I'm talking to you. He says, be thankful. I got it, right? Be thankful. Is that the way you are? Well, recognize that this business of thankfulness that we're instructed to engage in is something that is to be connected to and with our relationship in Christ.

It says, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus. The word in sets the boundaries of where and why we are to be thankful.

[15:58] I mean, the word in makes a world of difference if you say, go swimming in the pool, right? I mean, if you're trying to swim and you're not in the pool, what happens? It's pretty ugly.

And people are wondering, what are you doing flopping around on the ground like that? In is critical. Be thankful in Christ Jesus. I couldn't help but think Friday.

I think many of you know that I finish the preparation for the sermon and it goes to print and then to Connie on Thursday. And I got a call and Cassandra asked me, said, And Grahams has heard some pretty sobering news about the brevity of the remaining part of her life.

They've encouraged her to go into hospice and Grahams would love for you to come over and talk with her. And so I came over. I came over Friday at noon and we're sitting there.

And here is a lady who about a year and a half ago, prior to this, did not know Christ. She's 64 now and she is, according to the doctor, some weeks away from eternity. And now what does a pastor do?

[17:05] Come in and say, it's going to be all right. You know, you're going to live forever. I said, hey, listen. Against the backdrop of that pretty sobering news that you've heard from the doctor, let me have you think about things that you can be unbelievably confident in.

Do you know what? Her spirit was lifted as she stopped and realized what it was to have slipped from darkness about a year and a half ago into salvation and to know Jesus Christ as her personal Savior.

And I've got to tell you, I see that lady's face light up in the face of the imminency of death. And she had confidence as she looked. Now she's in a riverside, OSU, two different hospitals.

Mark, forgive me. You know, it's like, there you go. And she, I said to Cassandra this morning, I said, aren't you thankful for salvation?

That's what I said today. I said, aren't you thankful for salvation? Aren't you thankful that as Grams is there in the ER, that you know and she knows beyond a shadow of a doubt what her eternal destiny is?

[18:18] Aren't you thankful for that? And I want to encourage you as you stop and think this morning about the issue of thankfulness, that you stop and understand that God's expectation for you is that you as a believer who once used to be the miserable slave of sin, delivered by His grace, made His child, given all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

He has told you, live thankfully. And by the way, living thankfully is not just kind of, all right, I'm supposed to do it. How many of you have been around people that are faking it?

I mean, case in point. You go to the restaurant and up comes the, and by the way, you saw the waitress kind of being surly over at the serving table with a couple other waitresses, but she scampers up to your table and what does she act like?

Hey, it's so nice to see you. You know, I just saw you over there being grumpy. And now you walk over here, you know, 30 steps away and it's like, wow. And the one that gets me the most, I mean, I just, I have to kind of stifle myself not to go off on it.

It's when you make a choice and they say, excellent choice. It's like, you got to be kidding. You know, when I, Capsidia is a place I like to go. I actually say I'd like liver and onions because I do like liver and onions.

[19:41] Excellent choice. You know, my wife is going, you know. Faking it's not what we're talking about here. It's a call, it's a command by God to be genuinely thankful because of your relationship in Christ Jesus.

And by the way, our relationship with Christ Jesus and our union in Him is not something that kind of comes and goes. Aren't you thankful for that? Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

And I am rooted and anchored in my relationship with Him. And because of that relationship, I am to be a person who is thankful in all circumstances.

Second, we are to be thankful for our gospel companions. I want you to turn from 1 Thessalonians back for a moment to the book of 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians chapter 1. Now, let me give you a little bit of background on the church at Corinth. Church at Corinth was probably a great deal like the church at Columbus.

[20:49] What do I mean by that? I mean it was filled with people who, if you read 1 Corinthians chapter 6, it says, and such were some of you.

Right? Now, how many of you know what the sum of you is talking about? Nod your head if you know who the sum of you were. Okay? It says, basically, Paul says, there are a bunch of skunks in that church.

And, you know, it says, your pasts are pretty sullied. You know, they're not all that good. And he says, yeah, you're like that. And I got to have you look, if you will, at verse 4.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given to you in Christ Jesus. Whoa! Stop. I heard a, I read an interesting article.

It was a little note, actually, that I think it was John Piper was talking about the difference between Islam and Christianity. By the way, did you know that Islam is kind of a big thing right now? And you hear it on the news and things like that. He was talking about the difference between Islam and Christianity.

[21:53] One of the differences, everybody smile. Can you, come on. Go for it. Some of you need more muscle help. Truth on.

I'm talking to you. Yeah. Okay. But anyway, the difference between Islam and Christianity, one of the differences is the concept of the church. The church. By the way, do you know what a church is?

It's a family. It's a family. It's a family. And I want you to think with me a little bit about the fact that we're to have a thankful spirit for the family members we have.

Now, stop just for a minute, and I want you to think in the dark part of your heart. Some of you know each other well enough that sometimes you really don't like each other. Hard to believe that. I know. But one of the things that goes with being a pastor is that I know people's hearts after 29 years. And every now and then, people get kind of south of the border on their attitudes towards each other, right?

[22:55] I remember when we would have Wednesday night prayer time, and I remember where I'd watch people walk past rooms where other people were in, and I knew why they were walking past rooms. They didn't want to go in that room.

Do you know why? I'm not going to pray in that room. I know so-and-so is in there, and we're not getting along right now. You've got to be kidding me. Here's Paul. By the way, what really makes a difference in our thankful hearts, it is our attitude and relationship with Christ.

Right? Right? Our attitude and relationship with Christ. And when our attitude and relationship with Christ is where it needs to be, we are going to be thankful for our gospel companions.

And here is Paul. In that nasty, low-life church in Corinth, he says this in verse 4, I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given to you in Christ Jesus.

Now, some of you are thinking, well, I wish those people would move on up the ladder in progressive sanctification. I mean, God has been too patient with them.

[24:03] Here's the deal. By the way, you don't know where they started. And you're forgetting how patient he has been with you. When I was a little younger, I used to find myself pretty irritated with other people. And as I've slowly grown, slowly, operative word, slowly grown, I've found that often in my prayer life, when I'm finding myself a little challenged by saints, my prayers are now colored by this thought.

Listen. Lord, be as patient with them as you've been with me. Do you follow that? Be as patient with them as you've been with me.

Here's the apostle. He's thinking about fellow believers there at the church in Corinth. And he says, listen. He says, I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus.

I'm thankful for you. I'm thankful for you. And I'm thankful for you in principle because of what Jesus has done for me that has knit me together with you.

[25:20] This morning as I came in early to listen to our team practicing for our morning worship, someone said to me, how are you doing?

Now, it's a standard civil greeting. It's appropriate. And my answer was this. Here's what I said. I said, I dwell among my own people. Do you know what I was saying?

It doesn't get any better than being with God's people. It doesn't. A couple weeks ago, I had a young man that we were in the process of considering for pastoral ministry here ask me, so when you retire, are you leaving?

And I said, well, why do you ask? He said, because I've heard that it's really hard to pastor when the retired pastors in the congregation. And I said, well, I said, these are my people.

This is my family. And I said, I got to tell you, I will not misbehave among God's people because I'm not going to harm the bride. And if I do go left of center, there are people in this church who will get their arm around me and get a hold of my ear and give me a little gentle tug and we'll get it all right.

[26:31] But I dwell among my people. And so I want to challenge you this morning. Do you want to be thankful? Think about that guy that you wish Jesus would take home that's part of the family of God and say, I need to change my attitude.

I am thankful. I am thankful. I am thankful that he's part of the family of God and I am not going to let that sorry spirit from Satan interfere with the fellowship I have.

Third, we are thankful when we comprehend the gospel ministry that we have. Why are we thankful?

Turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians. And I recognize that there are so many different things we could touch on. But I want you to turn to 2 Corinthians 2. What are you all about?

What is the thing that really characterizes the life that you live? Is it your work? If that's what you're thinking, you need a retake on that subject.

[27:35] The thing that is to characterize your life is your comprehension of the purpose for which you exist and why you abide here rather than in heaven.

Can I tell you, when I say to people, and it's always unnerving, I did earlier last week, you know, how are you doing? Well, any better than I'd be dead. It just throws people way off.

I have been counseled more often about not, you know, oh, it can't be that bad. You're not getting it. When I leave here, I'm going up there.

And how about you? And see, here's the deal. I am so very thankful for the fact that at the very heart of why I draw breath today is the sake of the gospel ministry that I've been given.

Not because I'm a pastor, but because I'm a living, breathing child of God who's been drawn from darkness into light. Listen to what it says. 2 Corinthians chapter 2.

[28:31] I'm thankful. But thanks be to God who in Christ Jesus always leads us in triumphal procession and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

I'm thankful. I'm thankful. Because by his grace, I was drawn out of darkness and I have been given a mission that in every step of my life is to draw distinction and difference to what he has done in my life in comparison with the darkness of the world around me.

Why? Why? Why? For the sake of the gospel ministry. I should be marching to a different drum. Not one that is arrogant and harsh, but one by its deliberate tread identifies me as a member of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ whose life belongs to him.

And here is the apostle saying, hey, we are in this triumphal procession. I would encourage you to stop and think whether or not your life represents that kind of process.

The imagery that Paul is relying on when he writes to this church in Corinth is that of the Roman legion marching into town after they've had one of their stellar victories and absolutely destroyed their enemy.

[30:01] They would come marching into town in all their military glory. And I got to tell you something. The military does a good job of putting on a parade.

How many of you understand that? I mean, it is snappy. It kind of makes the hair on the back of your neck stand up. It's like, it's phenomenal. And Paul says, hey, listen.

Christ leads us in this triumphal procession. And through us, spread the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

We are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To one, the fragrance of death.

Have you ever been struck by the fact that as kind and as sweet as you sincerely strive to be as a believer, people who are offended by the call of the gospel end up thinking what you have to say really does stink?

[31:07] I mean, hey, I think we ought to go out of our way not to be offensive. We really should. But at the end of the day, when you tell people that they can't get to heaven by being moderately good, it irritates the dickens out of them because it's offensive.

What do you mean I can't do that? You mean somebody else is in charge and somebody else made the rules and I'm not the center of the universe? It's a very ugly truth in the nursery and it's very ugly for everybody else too.

Don't be surprised. Paul says, hey, listen, look at it. To one, a fragrance of death to death. Guess what?

You're not getting to heaven just being the way you are. Classic illustration last week of making it clear, saying to you know, the idea that you can get to heaven by being good actually means that if that is true, that God wasted his son by having him die on the cross.

Why in the world would Jesus die on the cross if you just given a moderate stab at it would kind of make the pass? To one, we are the fragrance of death to death.

[32:26] I understand. I understand that. But on the other hand, it says, and to the other, the fragrance of life to life. I can't help but think about the smile that came over Cassandra's grandmother's face when we started talking about the fact of her salvation.

Child of the 60s, she'd tell you that. A year and a half ago, actually about two years ago, Cassandra and Melissa walked right down that aisle and stood here in the front and said, I need Jesus.

That's what she said. Do you know why they did that? Because Caleb Gibbs worked with Cassandra at Battelle, and Cassandra saw Caleb's life was different.

And one day she says, you've got to talk to me about what's different in your life. And he said, well, you need Jesus. Now listen to me.

There are people that are watching you every day. Every day. To see whether or not you are the illustration and representation of Jesus Christ.

[33:45] I got a call Friday. Someone that's worked for us on our house. Hey, Tim.

Patrick has a brain tumor. He's dying. You need to call him. Nobody in that circle knows Jesus.

But when they called me and said, you need to call them, do you know what I thought? I said, well, you know, I'm a pastor.

I know. When it comes to dying, people want some comfort, don't they? And I will not be able to say to my dear friend, it's all right.

You're going to be fine. No. But I have the privilege of lifting up the glory of the cross and saying, listen, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.

[34:50] And if he can take care of me and he can take care of the thief on the cross, he can do you too. If you don't understand that that's part of your commission and your call, and you're a person who knows Jesus, there's something that you need to reconnect.

Today's the day. Finally. Can't help but get to this one, right? We are thankful in Jesus Christ our Savior. Look at 2 Corinthians 9, verse 15.

Two chapters that the apostle really spends dealing with the subject matter of generosity and giving. And how does he end it up?

Look at this one. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift. What's he talking about?

What's he talking about? He's talking about Jesus. That's what he's talking about. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift. I wonder this morning whether or not you've had those moments.

[36:13] Today. By the way, how many of you know that I'm a moderately emotional person? I mean, it's like, it's there. I'm sitting right there and we're singing and I love listening to you sing.

And I'm getting cold chills on the back of my neck. How many of you are cold chill people? I mean, it's like over the top, you know. I'm getting that just kind of. And here's what I was doing.

As we were singing. How many of you can multitask? I was singing and thinking of reasons to thank Christ. That's what I was doing. It was overwhelming me. And I had to stop. That's what it is.

It won't come out, right? That's what it's saying. When was the last time you thought about Jesus? And were so affected by the sweetness of that emotion that you just couldn't get on top of it. Huh? I don't know. I've never had that.

[37:15] There might be a reason for that. It might be that you are here and the truth of the matter is, is you have never come to know the sweetness of complete forgiveness in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are some of you that spend your entire life living under the cloud and you think the cloud is really caused by other people. It's not.

Here's what it says in the Bible. It says the way of the transgressor is hard. Isaiah on three different times specifically says this, there is no rest for the wicked.

Come unto me, all you who are labored and burdened heavy, and I'll give you rest.

I love the sweetness of the gospel that allows me to say without hesitation, Jesus stands ready to hear your cry, to forgive you for all of your sins, to grant you eternity in his presence, to make you his child, to care for every detail of your life, to welcome you home with open arms.

[38:54] But there has to be the moment where you and your brokenness realize that sin stands between you and God.

And God in his holiness must judge that sin. But he sent Jesus Christ into the world to be the Savior, to pay the penalty for that sin.

And the Bible says, and whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord, what, what, shall be saved.

Can it get any simpler than that? What's the answer? No.

And so, are you a Christian? You bet. Do I have a command to be thankful?

Yes. And by the way, and how in the world am I going to pull it off? Because I'm a moody, grumpy person by nature. Oh, I have the abiding ministry of the Holy Spirit who comes within me at the moment of salvation, and I have no excuse for staying the way I am.

[40:05] Yeah, I like that one. I can change through his power. Let's close in prayer. Our Father God, this morning as we think about the word, we're mindful that you have given to us every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

We are blessed beyond imagination, and you who abide in heaven have called us to worship, and worship and thanksgiving are inseparable.

We want to be a thankful people. We want thanksgiving to be the thing that distinguishes us from the unbelieving world. I mean, here today, there's all kinds of reasons to not be thankful.

And we, who have received complete forgiveness for all of our sins, who have heaven as our home, who have the joy of knowing God is our Father, and we as his children, are thankful because of what you've done.

And so we ask this morning that as we attend to the word and allow it to speak to our hearts, as we respond in obedience to the convicting power of the Spirit, we ask that we would grow in grace for

the glory of Christ.

[41:30] And those who are here that are not your children, we be drawn to the cross to confess and forsake their sins and repent and believe on Jesus. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.