

Thanksgiving Service

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Date: 22 November 2011

[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. During this time, missionaries Jason Holt and Chris Gardner preach on the topic of Thanksgiving.

So three, I think he gave me only 45 minutes and the next preach to 45, so we should be able to squeeze it in by 10 with the music. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me.

Bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies, who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles.

Let's pray. Father, I thank you for this passage. Speak to our hearts. I pray that we leave here being changed and not just remembering the Thanksgiving that we should have in our heart because of this time of the year, but that our life would develop this new habit that's so important in the Christian walk, and we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

This week, we're all talking about being thankful, and no doubt many of you have read articles or seen different people talk about things we should be thankful about, but what does the Bible really tell us that we should be thankful for?

[1 : 21] We know that in the New Testament, it says we should be thankful for everything, so we could just say everything. Sometimes my son will lead in prayer, and he'll say, God, thank you for everything. Amen. And then we'll say, well, you know, we're getting ready to eat. Maybe we can be a little more specific.

And he said, we covered it all. I said, you know, God, thanks for everything. And sometimes we're like that in our life. God, thanks for all that you've done. Amen. We can move on with our life. But here, this passage kind of delves into a little bit, and it says in verse number two, bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

So what are some things that we should not forget? Here, this passage tells us, but before we get to that in verse three and down, in verse one, it says, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me.

So here he is saying, from down in my soul, from the most inner part of my being, I want the Lord to be blessed. You know, we can't give a gift to God, per se.

He's the owner of everything. There's nothing that he needs. But we can't love him and be grateful and have a heart that's worshiping him and being thankful to him for everything that he's done for us.

[2 : 31] And this passage is talking about that. On all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Here we got the list of five things that we should be thankful for.

Look what it says, number one, verse number three. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities? Who forgiveth all thine iniquities? We should not forget that we've been forgiven.

Amen. And when we're thanking the Lord, sometimes we think about stuff like, well, I thank God for my shoes, and I thank him for my clothes, and I thank him for my house. And that's great.

We should be thankful for all the material things that we have. But the psalmist here is he's praising the Lord and loving the Lord and showing his gratitude toward the Lord. He says, I don't want to forget all your benefits.

And the first thing that I remember is your forgiveness. Is your forgiveness. And today, if you've accepted Christ as your Savior, you can rejoice with me this evening and be so thankful that he has saved us.

[3 : 34] That he has forgiven us from our sins. Look what the Bible says here in verse three. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities? He didn't just forgive some of them, but he forgave all of our iniquities.

That word iniquities is a little different than sin, because iniquities is like the really bad stuff. The really bad, twisted, perverted sin that lies in the heart of every man and woman.

And God has forgiven us of all our sins, of all of our iniquities, and all the bad things that we've said and that we've done, and all the things that we're so ashamed of from our life.

God has forgiven us. We have been forgiven if we have accepted Christ as our personal Savior. And tonight, we should rejoice in that. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, because he has forgiven us.

Look in verse number three. It says, For who forgiveth all of our iniquities? And the second thing there, Who healeth all thy diseases? Who healeth all thy diseases?

[4 : 41] So, he forgives us. So, we've been forgiven, and we've been healed. In the context here, of all the things that he's developing in the thought, he's talking about the spiritual life.

And many times in the Psalms, he talks about how we've been healed. For example, in just a few pages over, Psalm 107 20, he sent his word and healed them.

So, people were healed by the word of God. Over in Isaiah 53, the Bible talks about by his wounds, we are healed. It's talking about all those broken things that we had inside of our heart, and the bitterness, and the anger, and the despair, that oftentimes is like a disease inside of our being, and wants to destroy us from the inside.

And I'm thankful tonight that we have a living Savior that has forgiven us of our sins, has forgiven us of all our sins, all of our iniquities, and he's also healed us.

He's the God that can heal us of all of our diseases, and we should be so thankful for that this evening. Look what the Bible says in verse number 4. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.

[5 : 52] Who redeemeth thy life from destruction. Now, just imagine the psalmist here. He's loving God. He's praising God. He's spending some time with God. He's saying, with all of my soul, with everything from the depths of my being, with my heart, I'm just praising you and loving you.

You forgave me. You've healed me. And you've redeemed me from destruction. You've redeemed me from destruction. If I were to ask tonight, the average person here present, or the average person on the street, what do you deserve as a person?

That is God saying amen there. And so, what do you deserve as a person? Oftentimes, we might say, well, you know, I deserve, and you go down the list. You know, you deserve maybe food, or you deserve maybe peace and happiness and long life, or whatever somebody might say.

But biblically, if we look to see what we deserve, we all deserve hell. And nothing more than hell. So the truth is, us on our worst day, us in the deepest problem we can imagine, suffering with some sickness or going through some tragedy, is a million times better than what we deserve.

Amen? And here we have David reminding us once again that we should be thankful. We should love God. We should praise Him. We should give our whole heart to Him in gratitude because we've been rescued.

[7 : 18] We've been redeemed from destruction. The Bible says in Psalm 41 and 2, I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry.

He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. There's no doubt many of you here tonight can remember back in the time before you accepted Christ, and how your life was, and headed toward destruction.

And I was here in this city, and coming back in 97, when the Lord began to work in my heart about the need to accept Him as my Savior. And at that age as a teenager, I was right at the point of completely turning my life toward destruction, as many of my friends did from back in that time.

And God intervened, and I praise the Lord for that. And He redeemed me from destruction. And we should be thankful tonight that He pulled us out of the miry clay, that He put our feet on a rock, He put a song in our heart, He's changed us from the inside out, and we don't have hell waiting for us, but we have an eternal home to be with Him.

And as we're in Thanksgiving, let's not only thank God for maybe some of the superficial, materialistic things that we have that's great to be thankful for, don't get me wrong, but let's remember the relationship that we have with the God of Heaven, and how incredible it is that we have that relationship with Him.

[8 : 50] Look what the Bible says in verse number 4, Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies. Here we have it, as He takes this pauper and brings him in to be a prince and talks about how we were nothing and He made us everything and He's crowned us and He's not just crowned us with kindness and with mercy, but His loving kindness and His tender mercy.

He's been so good to us and everything that we have and our families and our church and our pastor and our friends and a place to work and a home to live in and a car to drive in.

Just the tender mercies of the Lord that we can see day in and day out. The eyes we have to see each other tonight and the ears to hear and the hands to fill in and all the blessings, the rain.

Praise the Lord for the rain. If you can't hear the rain, then you're deaf. If you can hear the rain, thank the Lord that you can hear. The tender mercies of the Lord, His loving kindness.

Look what the Bible says in verse number 5. It says, Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles.

[10 : 05] Not only have we been forgiven and we've been healed, we've been redeemed, we've been crowned, but fifthly, we've been satisfied. We've been satisfied. All the longing, all the need, everything that we lack is satisfied in Christ.

And as we go into this Thanksgiving week, we should be so grateful to the Lord for all that He's done for us. And we should commit again in a new that we want to just dive into the relationship with Him and grow in our love for Him and understand Him more through His Word and just realize that every need that we have can be satisfied in Him.

He's the bread of life, He's the living water, and He satisfies our souls. Here's some good biblical reasons why we should be thankful this evening. It's kind of funny when your dad can't find you in the congregation.

It's not like I'm a preacher he hasn't seen before or anything. It's good to be with you guys this evening. Open your Bibles, the book of Luke chapter 17. I was thinking in Spanish before I came up.

I was like, can I do it in Spanish and English at the same time? Then I was like, okay, I don't know what's going on. Luke chapter 17, just share with you a couple of things. You know, Thanksgiving is an amazing time. You go through life and we forget to be thankful and we have these two or three days of the year that we go, hey, oh, I forgot.

[11 : 28] I'm supposed to be thankful. As a matter of fact, I think it might be a good idea to have a movement to create a day called Grumble Day. Because, you know, we get thanks one day and we grumble the rest of the year.

So maybe if we had a Grumble Day, we'd be thankful the rest of the year. You know what I mean? And just be thankful, think about what God's done to us. You know, we live in a society that teaches us to complain, that teaches us the difficulties that are going on, that teaches us how bad everything is.

I was talking to somebody the other day and I said, I can tell you the number one way to make the economy get better. They said, how's that? You turn off Fox News and CNN and you'd be amazed at how much better everything gets.

You know, our news is all the time telling us how bad everything is. Everybody's dying, everybody's killing everybody, nobody's loving everybody. And we do live in a world that has its difficulties, but I think that as Christians, we ought to be known for being thankful.

And so in the book of Luke in chapter 17, we're going to look at the story of 10 lepers. And you've read this story and you know this story. We're just going to skim through it really quick and hopefully it'll bring something to you that you can think about and pray about during this Thanksgiving time.

[12 : 31] The Bible says, and it came to pass, verse 11, and it came to pass as he went to Jerusalem. Now, if you underline your Bible, when he went to Jerusalem, he's going to Jerusalem because he's going to die.

Okay? He's on his way to a death on a cross. So he is on his way to a very hard time. The Bible says, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him 10 men that were lepers, which stood afar off. Now, one thing I thank God that he's like is no matter what we're going through, have you ever noticed that when there's pain, no matter what Jesus is going through, he automatically makes other people his priority?

He knows that he's going to die. But he says, hey, the lepers are sitting here, verse 12 through verse 13. He says, hey, there's 10 lepers. It doesn't matter. They're far off. They're screaming at me that they need to be healed. And it doesn't matter what I'm going through.

It doesn't matter that I'm going to my death. It doesn't matter that I'm going to a place that's so difficult for me that I'm going to be praying in the Garden of Gethsemane and I'm going to be sweating drops of blood. Okay?

[13 : 31] So he gets to that point, but he says, you know what? For these lepers, these 10 lepers still matter to me. No matter what they're going through, these guys still matter to me in the middle of this. And verse 13, the Bible says, and they lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

By the way, in verse 12, one thing I like, that it says, it says they stood afar off. And if you know anything about lepers, the reason they stood afar off is because they were lepers and there was no way they could get to Jesus. And so they're far off.

They're away from Jesus. And verse 14, it says, and when he saw them, he said unto them, go, show yourselves unto the priest. And it came to pass that as they went, they were cleansed.

Kind of interesting. It didn't happen with other people that he healed. He said he touched them and they were healed or immediately the sickness left with them. He says, you start on your way and what you're going to find is as you obey me, the healing that I've promised has come.

And so they're going off and they're waiting for this healing. They don't know why they're going to see the priest except for the Old Testament said that he was the one that had to say if they could go back into society again and not stand afar off from the people.

[14 : 32] And so he's sitting here in this passage and you find these lepers and he says, hey, I want you to go off. And as he's going off, they don't have the answer to their prayer. I read a saying just the other day that I thought was phenomenal by A.W. Tozer.

He said, perhaps it takes a pure faith to praise God for unrealized blessings than for those that we once enjoyed or those we enjoy now. Did you get that?

It's easy to say thanks for the things that happened or that are happening right now, but what's even harder to do is to thank God for that which is to come still. And so you come to this passage here, they're going off, they're waiting to be cleansed, and the Bible says verse 15 and one of them.

Now, I don't know about you, but when I read that part of that verse, it makes me mad because I know what's coming up and I look at it and I'm appalled at the idea that 90% of the people didn't care enough to come back and thank Jesus.

Can you imagine what it's like to just decide I'm not going to come back to thank Jesus? I'm a leper, I'm away from my family, I am the recipient of nothing but the grace of other people that give me their leftovers, that's the life I live and all of a sudden Jesus has healed me, Jesus sent me to be checked out, the priest says that I am healed, but I'm not going to go thank the guy that did all this for me.

[15 : 50] And you come to this passage and the Bible says verse 15, it says, and one of them when he saw that he was healed turned back and with a loud voice glorified God and he fell down on his face at his feet giving him thanks and then I love how Luke writes this because you'll only find this story in the book of Luke but he finishes the verse and he says, I'm going to tell you all that happened with this one leper but this leper wasn't a normal leper, this leper was a Samaritan.

You weren't expecting that. There were probably nine Jews and one Samaritan and the guy that came back was the least expected guy to come back because nobody respected the Samaritans because of who the Samaritans were.

And so he says, and he came back, he was a Samaritan and Jesus answered, were there not ten the cleansed but where are the nine? And the Bible says, verse 18, they are not found that return to give glory to God save this stranger.

Verse 19, he says, and he said unto him, arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. So just give you a couple of things to think about out of this passage. There's ten guys come to Jesus, Jesus sends them off so they are healed on the way, they come back and they say, Jesus healed us, one of them comes back to thank him, the other one doesn't.

And can I tell you, we live in a day and age where it's so easy to whine and it's so easy to complain. Probably the best people that can understand this are the ladies that had to cook for tonight.

[17 : 11] Because, you know, we're doing a Thanksgiving dinner and then it starts to rain when you have to bring your stuff, doesn't it? It couldn't get any worse than that. I mean, it starts to rain, I've got to bring my food to the church, it starts raining, I've got to pull my stuff out.

You know, it's kind of funny the way we are, isn't it? The only person that could understand that more is a preacher that wasn't quite ready to preach tonight. I was sitting there at my house and I'm just going to confess, I'm kind of one of these type A personality guys and I just got some issues with, I like quiet when I'm trying to study and so I was at the house studying and my apartment complex that I live in is very small.

I'm thankful because your pastor owns the apartment complex so, it's his basement so, and that's one of the perks you get with calling him dad and pastor at the same time but I have this little apartment, this little apartment I'm talking about when I say little, I'm talking about when you stretch out you're touching corner to corner, you know, your feet are at one end, your head at the other end, not of the bed, we're talking about of the apartment and so, and so I'm sitting there today and I'm trying to study and of course today is pre-op for Joshua.

So, my wife had to go to the doctor I was going to go and since I was preaching I said, no, I'm not going to go I'm going to spend some time studying and so, she goes to the doctor the only problem is she left three kids at the house doing homeschool.

Homeschool and studying don't go good together. Okay? If you actually do homeschool. So, daddy, what does this mean? Daddy, what does this mean? Daddy, what does this mean? And of course me with my kind, patient, loving self that I am, I was very loving and kind and sat each of them down and explained to them what they had to do.

[18:48] And I better tell you now I'm lying because if not my kids will tell me in the car. You know, as I was sitting there it's funny because I'm getting together a message to be preached on Thanksgiving.

And all I can think is how much more could I be annoyed while I'm trying to study? Okay? So, I know none of y'all have ever done anything like that but I'm sitting there how much more could I be annoyed?

Is there any way that they could bother me more? Is there any way that they can make it less possible for me to get something done to be able to preach tonight? And then, you know, the Holy Spirit has this way of just getting to you and, you know, 15 years ago my wife and I got married and we begged God for kids for 8 years.

I'm talking about we went to bed at night and cried ourselves to sleep saying, God, why can't we have children? And now, instead of thanking God for the children we have, we complain about the blessings that God's given us.

You know, I don't know if it ever happened to you because, see, you begged God for a house and you have it and when there's a problem all we can do is complain instead of be thankful as well. Or you always wanted that car but now it guzzles too much gas and the gas price is too high.

[19:59] We live a life of complaining and complaining and complaining. Can I just tell you thankfulness is a choice. Out of 10 men that decide that they had gotten healed out of 10 men one of them came back and he chose I am going to choose today to be thankful.

I'm going to choose to do what I'm supposed to do I'm going to be thankful. He chose to be thankful. He came back. I read this somewhere some people are bitter not because they do not have anything but because they do not have everything.

Let me say that again. Some people are bitter not because they do not have anything but because they do not have everything. Is that not the truth? You know, we always want something bigger. We always want something better.

We always want something a little bit nicer. And if man, if I could only have that I would be happy and we forget that we ought to be thankful to the God that's given us what we have. We forget.

See, when I look at those nine guys I really want to look at them and I want to say what is your problem? How dare you not come back to Jesus to say thank you?

[21 : 04] I'm talking about I get irate thinking of the idea that somebody could do that to God. But the truth of the matter is I do it on a daily basis.

I complain about that which I beg God for. I'm not thankful the way I ought to be thankful. Thankfulness is a choice. You know, here's what's funny. When they were begging Jesus to heal them all of them begged together.

They were all together hey Jesus master heal us. But then when they came back to thank there was only one left and there wasn't a crowd anymore saying Jesus heal us it was now one guy saying Jesus thank you. And so you find these guys they made the choice he made the choice to come back and do what God has called us to do.

We take our blessings for granted. Because see, we think our blessings are normal. Can I tell you this folks? As Fox News tells you that we're dying of hunger in America I wish you could go to Burkina Faso and see what it's like.

Not saying we don't have problems but can I tell you that God's been good to us. And see it's all about the attitude because see these nine guys decided not to come back and say thanks and one guy decided to come back and say thank you for where you put me today.

[22 : 21] Thank you for where I'm at today. I still remember before I got married I remember I was like Micah about 16 years ago. That's scary. I didn't know you could be doing anything for 16 years yet but I'm getting to that age now where I'm older than a lot of people.

But I remember I said God don't come back until I get married. And then I got married and I said God don't come back until I have kids. You know what I mean? We're always wanting something else.

We've got to decide we're going to come back and thank Him. Thanksgiving the Thanksgiving was a choice that they made. If you look in Romans chapter 1 and verse 21 this is going to be a passage that's going to talk about human beings and the mankind and when it talks about them it's going to talk about them in a very bad way.

But verse 21 the Bible says because that when they knew God they glorified Him not as God neither were what was the problem? Neither were neither were thankful.

You come to this you know it's appalling to us to look at these guys but if we look at it you know I'd have to say that too many times you and I tend to be just like them.

[23 : 28] I read this somewhere today that they said a mom told his son she says Bobby you need to go tell this lady thank you for the birthday party she put on. Bobby went over and she said he said Bobby went over and he came back really quick and mom said what happened did you not tell her thank you?

he said I was going to she said but I was behind the lady or behind the little girl that she also said thank you and the lady said don't mention it so I just decided not to. Can I say this about the ten lepers?

I believe all of them were probably thankful. I grew up in a family that the words I love you flowed freely in our family. That's just there were words that flowed freely but I've heard my dad say many times and my papa told mamaw when they got married he said I love you and if I ever change my mind I'll let you know.

My dad decided that he was going to vocalize the words that my papa said he felt and I believe he felt. Can I tell you something folks? Can I tell you something?

Thankfulness is not just about what you feel it's about what you say. How many of you are thankful? Because see I can guarantee you all nine walking back home were running jumping leaping with joy headed to their house to see their family that they've not seen that they've not been able to hug the little daughter that they've not seen since she was five years old and she's fifteen now I can just see dad walking in the house wrapping his arms around her man he was thankful but he just didn't say that he was thankful and Jesus looked at and he goes what happened I I healed ten of them and there's only one of you back I read this and this probably impacted me as much as anything I've read in the last year this one little statement I ask you to listen to it and think about it the statement says this about the only thing that we can give to God is thanksgiving do you realize that when you give your money you're not giving your money you're giving his money that he lets you have does that make sense brother Chris I'm giving my talents well you know when you give your talents all you're giving God is that which he already gave you brother Chris

[25 : 34] I'm giving my talents I'm giving my time brother Chris I'm giving my money all that is not you never came up with that can I tell you the one thing that you can give God that's unique the one thing you can do that nobody else can do is there's something that is born in you to say God I thank you for what you've done for me I thank you for what you've done for me so let me ask you tonight in our life are we going to be one of the nine are we going to be one of the one that comes back and says Jesus thank you for what you've done for me because see if we went to see reality around the world we would notice that reality is not what we think reality is here God's been good to us I thank you for the privilege of being your son Jesus I say thank you tonight for what you've done in my life there were ten lepers and I want to be known as that one that comes back dear Lord I want to say thank you for all that you've done for me thank you for my family thank you for the ministry thank you for where you've placed us I beg you God you'd use our life to bring honor and glory to your name