

Truth In Scripture.org  
Pastor Rick Kabrick  
Thanksgiving 2023

This time of year people tend to be more thankful for things: Family, friends, health, life, jobs etc.

But the thing about thankfulness is that it should be a year long thing. And I think most of you are like that.

But still we can ask ourselves and as countless Pastors have asked their congregation:

**Are you thankful no matter what?**

Perhaps you have lost a part of your family, or a friend, or a struggle with your health, or job. Any of those things

can and are, I agree are tremendously difficult. And within those events it is hard to be thankful.

We have all heard of hardships that people have gone through. The Bible is full of those stories.

Of course, the greatest story or example we have is the LORD Jesus Christ, who went through the suffering and the shame and the physical and spiritual pain of the Cross.

And all for the Joy set before HIM, and that Joy is you, that is us. I don't know if most believers ever truly realize just how much the LORD loves them. This side of Heaven anyway.

In 2CO 11:16-33, we see the sufferings of the Apostle Paul. And you gotta wonder at what point would we become bitter and stop being thankful.

**VS 16 Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then tolerate me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting.**

**In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the LORD would, but as a fool.**

**VS 18 Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise!**

**Whatever anyone else dares to boast about—I also dare to boast about.**

**VS 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham’s descendants? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.**

**Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.**

**Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea,**

**VS 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles;**

**in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers.**

**I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food;**

**I have been cold and naked.**

**Vs 28 Besides everything else, I face**

**daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.**

**If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.**

**VS 31 The GOD and Father of the LORD Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying.**

**In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me.**

**But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.**

**The Apostle Paul's life was never boring.**

In prison for the last time he knew the next set of footsteps he heard could very well be the guards coming to take him to his execution.

His only bed was the hard, cold stone floor of the prison cell.

Not an hour passed when he was free from the constant irritation of the chains and the pain of the iron manacles cutting into his wrists and legs.

But instead of complaints, his lips rang with words of praise and thanksgiving!

The same man who wrote **EPH 5:19-20**, “**Sing and make music in your heart to the LORD, always giving thanks to GOD the Father for**

**everything, in the name of our LORD Jesus Christ”.**

Thanksgiving—the giving of thanks—to GOD for all HIS blessings should be one of the most distinctive marks of the believer in the LORD. We must not allow a spirit of ingratitude to harden our heart and chill our relationship with GOD and with others.

Nothing turns us into bitter, selfish, dissatisfied people more quickly than an ungrateful attitude.

And nothing will do more to restore contentment and the joy of our salvation than a grateful attitude.

In the ancient world, leprosy was a terrible disease. It hopelessly disfigured



those who had it, and it permanently cut them off from normal society.

Every leper yearned for one of two things: To be healed, or to die.

One day 10 lepers approached Jesus outside a village, loudly pleading with HIM to heal them. LUK 17, While HE was on the way to Jerusalem.

HE was passing between Samaria and Galilee. As HE entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance.

When Yeshua saw them, HE said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they were going, they were cleansed.

Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying GOD with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at the LORD's feet, giving thanks. And that man was a Samaritan. You know the history there if you have been with me.

Then Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they?"

Was no one found who returned to give glory to GOD, except this foreigner?"

And HE said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has made you well."

In an instant Yeshua restored them all

to perfect health, but only one came back and thanked HIM.

All the rest left without a word of thanks, their minds preoccupied only with themselves, gripped with a spirit of ingratitude.

We must be careful not to let ingratitude and thanklessness get into our life. Above all, we must never fail to thank GOD for HIS blessings.

The Bible says this about being ungrateful:

**ROM 1:21, “although they knew GOD, they neither glorified him as GOD nor gave thanks to him”**

An ungrateful attitude is cold toward GOD and indifferent to HIS mercy and love.

It is a heart that has forgotten how dependent we are on GOD for everything.

Throughout the Bible, we are commanded to be thankful. In fact, thankfulness is the natural outflowing of a heart that is attuned to GOD.

The psalmist declared, “How good it is to sing praises to our GOD, how pleasant and fitting to praise HIM!” (PSA 147:7).

Paul wrote in **COL 3:15**, **Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one**

**body; and show yourselves to be thankful.**

Because GOD has blessed us, and we should be thankful for each blessing.

Sadly there are many believers...unbelievers...never are satisfied with what they have—rich or poor, healthy or sick. But what a difference it makes when we as believers realize that everything we have has been given to us by GOD! And it is all specially designed for us.

There are many stories of the wealthy and successful. They are the envy of all of many of the world. But without Yeshua they are lost and miserable inside.

Wealth and fame cannot fill that GOD shaped vacuum inside of them. We all have it that void. And only Christ can fill it.

**ECC 3:11, He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in their mind.**

On the opposite end are the stories of those who have almost nothing in the eyes of the world.

Few possessions, bad health, whatever and yet they are absolutely delighted to be this side of Heaven serving Yeshua.

I have said it before, I have known millionaires who were extremely generous. Met others not so much. Met

what we would call poor who were generous and thankful for what they had. They have purpose and meaning in their life.

They have like Paul said in PHI 4:

**They have learned to be content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.**

A spirit of thankfulness makes all the difference.

If you are constantly preoccupied with what you do not have, your looking at life wrong. The glass half full or half empty...

Once you can unlock the secret of being content and learned to thank GOD for

what you do have, well you will see the difference that will make in your life.

We need to also take time to give thanks for those around us—our spouses, our children, our relatives, our friends.

I saw the story from a Pastor who tells of getting a letter from a woman in his congregation: The woman began by saying how fortunate she was to have a kind, considerate husband.

The next word was

**BUT**

And then a full page of all of his faults!

How many marriages and other relationships grow cold and eventually are shattered because of ungratefulness.



We need to let others that are in our life know that we appreciate them and are thankful for them.

The Christians in Corinth were far from perfect, but the Apostle Paul began his first letter to them by saying,

**“I always thank GOD for you”.**

We should always thank GOD for those who touch our life. It is part of what Paul also said, **In everything give thanks: for this is the will of GOD.**

There are people now who have more than they've ever had, more than 90% of the world...but because they don't have everything they want, they become thank thankless.

One might ask how can I be thankful for everything, that's crazy.

Well here is the secret:

**Paul said this in ROM 8:28: “We know that all things work together for good to those who love GOD...”**

The circumstance itself may not be good, but GOD will take a bad thing and turn it to a good purpose. If we believe that GOD is at work, blending each event together to lead to HIS goal for you.

**COL 3 says “Let the peace of GOD rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ... Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of**

**the LORD Jesus, giving thanks to GOD the Father through Him”.**

A lot of people can carry out religious functions, they can give, serve, even Preach, but if you want to know whether you are truly filled with the Holy Spirit, ask yourself,

“Do I rejoice always? Do I thank GOD for everything?

**PHI 4:4-7, Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The LORD is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to GOD. And the peace of GOD, which transcends all**

**understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Yeshua.**

One might say but I can't do it, well your right... YOU can't.

**PHI 2:13 “It is GOD who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”**

GOD wills it and He works it by His Holy Spirit. That's why you must be filled with the Spirit. You see being filled with the spirit, that is rejoicing, that is prayer.

What is it that keeps us from being always joyful, prayerful and thankful?

**Doubt.** We doubt GOD's character.

Some believers are not really convinced that HIS Word can totally be trusted. If one doubts GOD's truthfulness and character, we'll have trouble being thankful because they're not sure that HE will keep HIS promise to make all things work for our good.

People say "GOD would never let this happen if HE really loved me." The truth is HE let it happen because HE does love you.

**Selfishness.** This is the attitude that says, "I am not content with the way GOD is working out my life. It's not what I desire." This is building GOD into your world rather than building your world around GOD.

If our vision is the material world, we will have no cause for thanksgiving. Because the material world is incapable of truly satisfying us. That Christ shaped vacuum again.

**A critical spirit** will steal our thankfulness. A critical spirit criticizes everything that isn't exactly the way it we want it to be.

This is someone who says, "I deserve better than this." "I've been hurt," or "I've been wounded by someone, and I'm going to take the pain and let it run through the rest of my life."

But it really boils down to **rebellion**.

When we feel that our lot in life isn't what we wanted we withhold thanks because we're just flat out unthankful.

We say, "I'm mad as hell and I'm not gonna take it anymore....I'm unthankful and I know it. And I'm going to stay unthankful!"

We can have a tremendous impact on the world if we will only practice thanksgiving. In many parts of the world it is dangerous even to be a Christian because of persecution.

In the midst of those trials there are people who thank GOD and not only that but in those times of despair they find opportunity.

There was a minister in Viet Nam named Hien Pham, a young Christian who had worked closely as a translator with the American military forces at the end of the VN war.

He worked closely with the Army Chaplains traveling with them throughout the country.

When the Army Captain left at the end of the war he didn't know if he would ever see his Vietnamese friend again.

Shortly after leaving the war ended South Vietnam fell, and the minister's fate was unknown. The American often wondered about his friend.



17 years later, the American minister received a call from the Vietnamese minister.

Here was his story:

Shortly after Vietnam fell to the Communists, he was arrested by the North Vietnamese.

Accused of aiding the Americans he was in prison for several years.

During the jail term, the sole purpose of his jailers was to indoctrinate him against the West — and especially against the Christian faith.

He was cut off from reading anything in English and restricted to communist propaganda in French or Vietnamese.

He began to buckle under the constant torture and propaganda. At one point he thought, maybe I have been lied to. Maybe there is no GOD, maybe my whole life has been governed by lies.

One day, he made up his mind. The next day, he would not pray anymore. That morning, he was assigned to clean the latrines of the prison. It was the most dreaded chore, shunned by everyone for reasons you can imagine.

As he cleaned out the buckets filled to overflowing with toilet paper, his eye caught a single piece of paper with English printed on it.

He hurriedly washed it off and slipped into his hip pocket, planning to read it at night.

That night after his cellmates had fallen asleep, he held it up to the light when the guards had gone by and he read on this shred of paper:

**And we know that in all things GOD works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to HIS purpose.... What, then, shall we say in response to this? If GOD is for us, who can be against us? HE who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor**

**anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of GOD that is in Christ Jesus our LORD.**

Well, the minister about to give up on GOD. He wept. He knew his Bible, even though he had not seen one for a long long time.

The next day, He asked to clean the latrine again. He continued with this chore on a regular basis, because he had discovered that some official in the camp was using a Bible as toilet paper. Each day he picked up a portion of Scripture and yeah, cleaned it off, and in the silence of his prison cell he was comforted by his GOD.

The day came when, through an equally set of circumstances orchestrated by the LORD, he was released.

He promptly began to make plans to escape from the communist country building a boat in secret.

Finally, 53 other people planned to escape with him. The group had hidden the boat from the watchful eyes of the Gov't officials and all was going according to plan.

Until just a few days before their departure four Vietcong officials came to his property. They beat him a little and said they had heard he was trying to escape. "Is it true?" they demanded.

He denied it and lied to them about what was going on. Eventually they left.

He was relieved but yet disappointed with himself somehow.

Now who among us would not have done the same thing?

He made a promise to GOD, fervently hoping that the LORD would not take him up on it. He prayed that if the Vietcong were to come back again, he would tell them the truth. Totally trusting in the LORD...

Well, only a few hours before they were to set sail the officials once again, stood at his door.

He, true to his word, admitted, yes it is true I am planning to escape.

The 4 officials looked at each other and one leaned in and said: We want to escape with you!”

So it was that 58 people in total found themselves on the high seas, and after a few days they were suddenly engulfed by a violent storm.

Hien prayed to GOD, “Did You bring us here to die?”

However, those 4 four Vietcong were all fishermen as well and they were quite skilled at handling a boat.

If it were not for the sailing ability of those four Vietcong, they would have perished.

They arrived safely in Thailand, and years later Hien arrived on American soil where he became a successful businessman in Texas I believe... grateful for for all that he went through and grateful to become an American.

When the prophet Daniel learned that evil men were plotting against him to destroy him,

“he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his GOD. His GOD is your GOD.

I don't know what trials you may be facing right now, but that same GOD does.



HE loves you so much, and HE is with you in the midst of trials and heartaches.

GOD has given us the greatest Gift of all—HIS Son, who died on the Cross and rose again so that we can know Him personally and spend eternity with HIM in Heaven:

**2 COR 9:15, “Thanks be to GOD for HIS indescribable gift!”**

The tradition of Thanksgiving was adopted from the Wampanoag Indians and their interaction with the Pilgrims.

The growing number of English were displacing the Wampanoag Indians and

converting them to their faith. So the Indians declared war on the pilgrims...

The war only lasted a year, but it was certainly one of the bloodiest of the Indian Wars. Most of the Wampanoag Indians and their allies, the Narraganset were killed. This is an area I live in here in RI.

Those that were not killed in war fled to other tribes and those captured were either relocated or sold into slavery.

So heres tha real history of Thanksgiving, and notice GOD's hand in this:

In 1614 Captain Thomas Hunt captured several Wampanoag and one Patuxet

Indian named Squanto to be sold into slavery in Spain.

A Spanish monk purchased Squanto and taught him English, but more important he introduced him to Yeshua.

In 1619, Squanto returned to his native land, only to find his tribe nearly wiped out by an epidemic.

Meanwhile, in 1608, a British group called the Separatists fled to Holland. In 1620, they sold everything and to finance their journey to America.

On the *Mayflower*, the Separatists were joined by those seeking the new land for other reasons;

The two groups, 102 altogether, were called the Pilgrims. Their journey lasted nine weeks. The ship lost its course and landed north of its destination at what we now call Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

On December 21, 1620, they began their new life at the place they named Plymouth. There was nothing there. It was a devastating winter. Half the Pilgrims died.

Finally the spring came and brought unexpected relief with the help of a Christian brother — Squanto.

He taught them how to grow corn, use fertilizer, stalk deer and catch fish.

William Bradford, the governor of Plymouth, wrote of Squanto that he was “a special instrument sent of GOD for good beyond their expectations.”

Governor Bradford proclaimed a day of thanksgiving to GOD and the Pilgrims invited their Indian friends.

Together in harmony, the Pilgrims and the Indians feasted, and gave thanks to GOD.

How thankful were the Pilgrims? The first Thanksgiving took three whole days!

Happy Thanksgiving my friends...