

Men's Discipleship

Title: "Thanksgiving at the Cross"

THE BURDEN

Humanity's Natural Condition: Ingratitude and Misplaced Thanks

Text: Romans 1:21

"For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him..."

Point:

Our natural condition is not gratitude but **spiritual blindness**. Sin makes us take good gifts for granted and ignore the Giver.

Even on Thanksgiving week, people celebrate blessings without glorifying Christ.

Transition:

If our natural hearts fail to give thanks, what hope do we have?

That hope is not found in ourselves—but in Jesus Christ.

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 –

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

I. The Root of Thanksgiving: God's Grace in Christ

Verse: 2 Corinthians 9:15 – "Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!"

Point: True thanksgiving does not begin with abundance, but with redemption.

God gives not simply blessings—but the **Gift**, His Son.

Christ came to restore what sin destroyed:

- Communion with God
- Gratitude toward God
- Worship of God

Christ Himself is the **foundation of true thanksgiving** because:

- His cross reconciles us to God (Colossians 1:20)
- His resurrection gives us new life (1 Peter 1:3)
- His Spirit produces thanksgiving in us (Ephesians 5:20)

Explanation:

The Apostle Paul wrote these words not from comfort but often from suffering. Gratitude flowed not from circumstance, but from **Christ Himself**—the “inexpressible gift.” Before we thank God for what’s in our hands, we must thank Him for the **nail-scarred hands** that purchased our salvation.

Transition:

Gratitude is not natural; it’s **spiritual**. The natural man complains—but the redeemed heart gives thanks because it knows grace.

II. The Reason for Thanksgiving: The Cross Before the Crown

Verse: Colossians 3:17 – “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

Point: We give thanks through **Christ**, not merely to Christ.

Because Christ has saved us, we no longer give thanks *from* circumstances but *through* Christ. Thanksgiving becomes:

- Not a yearly holiday
- But a **daily identity**

Through the cross:

- Our guilt is forgiven — so we thank Him.
- Our past is redeemed — so we trust Him.
- Our future is secured — so we praise Him.

Explanation:

All our thanksgiving must pass through the cross—because it’s through the **blood of reconciliation** that our prayers, praises, and gratitude are made acceptable to God. Every “thank you” from the believer’s lips is stamped with **Calvary’s approval**.

Illustration:

At the Lord’s Table, Jesus gave thanks even while holding the bread that symbolized His broken body (Luke 22:19). The Savior’s thanksgiving was not circumstantial—it was **sacrificial**.

Transition:

When we see life through the lens of the cross, every circumstance becomes a reason to glorify God.

III. The Response of Thanksgiving: Living as a Grateful People

Verse: Hebrews 13:15 – “Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name.”

Point: Thanksgiving is not a day—it’s a **daily sacrifice**.

The gospel produces a heart that **chooses gratitude** even in trials.
Thanksgiving becomes:

- A sacrifice
- A discipline
- A witness
- A weapon against discouragement

Practical behaviors:

- Thank God aloud each morning (Psalm 92:1–2)
- Thank God in trials (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
- Thank God for salvation first, blessings second (Luke 10:20)
- Thank God through Christ in prayer (Ephesians 5:20)

Explanation:

Thanksgiving is not a season on the calendar but a posture of the soul. The gospel makes us a **grateful people** in both hardship and joy. Gratitude turns duty into delight and suffering into sanctification.

Transition:

The gospel doesn’t just tell us what to thank God for—it gives us the power to do it **through the Spirit of Christ**.

IV. The Revelation of Thanksgiving: A Foretaste of Eternal Praise

Verse: Revelation 7:12 –

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Point: Thanksgiving on earth is a rehearsal for worship in eternity. Thanksgiving today is a rehearsal for eternity. The grateful heart is the **sanctified heart**—and one day the saints will join the angels in perfect thanksgiving before the slain Lamb.

Explanation:

In heaven, thanksgiving is perfected. There, the saints and angels join in unending gratitude for the Lamb who was slain. Every act of thanksgiving today anticipates that **eternal chorus** of grace.

Transition to Conclusion:

So when we gather around the table this Thanksgiving, we're not just celebrating food and family—we're rehearsing for glory.

Conclusion: Christ, Our Thanksgiving

Verse: Ephesians 5:20 – “Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Summary:

We give thanks *in* Christ (our Redeemer), *through* Christ (our Mediator), and *for* Christ (our Reward).

Our Thanksgiving table points to another table—the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Closing Appeal:

So let us not merely say, “Thank You, Lord,” for the good things,
but, “Thank You, Jesus,” for being our everything.

For the believer, **every meal is a reminder of the Bread of Life**—and every blessing flows from the cross.

God the Generous Giver

These verses anchor Thanksgiving in God's character, not circumstances.

Psalm 136.1

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.”

James 1.17

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.”

Colossians 1.15–17

“All things were created through Him and for Him... and in Him all things hold together.”

Psalm 103.2

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.”

Acts 14.17

“He did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”

Christological angle: Thanksgiving begins not with what we have, but with who God is. And Paul identifies Christ as the One by whom all gifts exist.

Humanity's Forgetfulness and Ingratitude

Setting the stage for grace.

Romans 1.21

“For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks...”

Psalms 106.6–7

“We have sinned... our fathers... did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love.”

Deut. 8.11–14

“Take care lest you forget the Lord your God... and your heart be lifted up.”

Christological angle: Ingratitude isn't a mood; it's a theological failure. It's our fallenness revealed in miniature.

Christ, the Ultimate Gift of God's Love

Christ transforms thanksgiving from polite appreciation to redeemed wonder.

2 Corinthians 9.15

“Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift.”

John 3.16–17

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...”

Romans 8.32

“He who did not spare His own Son... how will He not also graciously give us all things?”

Ephesians 1.7–8

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses... which He lavished upon us.”

Colossians 2.13–14

“He forgave us all our trespasses... nailing it to the cross.”

Christological angle: Thanksgiving is not “count your blessings”—it is beholding the cross as the fountain of every blessing.

Thanksgiving as Worship from Redeemed Hearts

Gospel gratitude becomes a new creation instinct.

Colossians 3.15–17

“And be thankful... with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

Hebrews 13.15

“Through Him let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God.”

1 Thessalonians 5.16–18

“Rejoice always... give thanks in all circumstances.”

Philippians 4.6–7

“With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

1 Chronicles 16.34

“Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.”

Christological angle: “Through Him” — Christ is the mediator of our thanksgiving. Our gratitude ascends wrapped in His righteousness.

Thanksgiving as Mission and Witness

Gratitude spills into proclamation.

Psalms 105.1–2

“Give thanks... make known His deeds among the peoples.”

2 Corinthians 4.15

“As grace extends... it increases thanksgiving, to the glory of God.”

Philippians 1.11

“Filled with the fruit of righteousness... to the glory and praise of God.”

Christological angle: Thanksgiving becomes evangelistic. Gratitude is a public fragrance of the gospel.

Future Hope — Thanksgiving That Echoes into Eternity

The redeemed universe sings gratitude forever.

Revelation 7.12

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving... be to our God forever.”

Revelation 5.11–12

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain...”

Christological angle: The Church’s thanksgiving is a rehearsal for the choir of the Lamb’s throne room.