



Unleashing a Life of Thanksgiving

“. . . Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all He has done.” Col. 2:7 (NLT)

A life of thanksgiving is a decision to:

1. Come before God with rejoicing.

“Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.” Psalm 95:1-2

“Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.” Psalm 42:11

“Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.” Phil. 4:6-7 (MSG)

2. Submit your circumstances to God's reality.

“For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.” Psalm 95:3-5

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that

not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matt 6:25-34

3. Embrace God's love with humble respect.

“Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.” Psalm 95:6-7

- **GOD** – Rev. 4:11 “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”
- **PEOPLE** - Phil 2:3-4 “When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves. Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others.”
- **Jesus put it this way in John 10:11-16** “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

4. Live by confident faith and reliance.

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did. For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, “They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways. So I declared on oath in my anger, they will never enter my rest” Psalm 95:8-11

- We can be a lot like ancient Israel...

- Have need, grumble, complain, distrust, etc...
 - God provides to demonstrate His care.
 - Next difficulty comes along and we forget how He has always provided...grumble, complain, distrust, etc...
 - God provides, cycle can continue on and on.
- Why the cycle? Because our hearts can stray and we fail to learn His ways.
 - God will continue to provide just like He did to Israel, but the consequence is we “never enter into rest” We stay in a state of perpetual fear, anxiety, worry...waiting for the other shoe to drop.
 - Impossible to have an everyday thanksgiving day when we’re just waiting for the bottom to fall out.

APPLICATION:

1. Come before Him with rejoicing:

- Practicing talking to your soul “Why are thou cast down O my soul?”
- Turn on some praise music, sing out loud, declare that “I will give God praise regardless of how I feel”
- Come prepared to exuberantly praise and worship in services...best way to clear out the morning fog.

2. Moses in Exodus 15:25 “cried out to the Lord and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet”

- What are you crying out about? Reversing your bitter circumstance to sweet will require an act of obedience.
- Like the wood, it may seem odd, seem unrelated, but do it anyway. Chances are Jesus has been nudging you already, if not, He will!

Mission or Ministry as appropriate – Who can you invite to your group or minister to that are having trouble trusting God...don’t let them battle that alone, help them get in a small group and open up!

HEAVENLY FATHER:

- ✓ I want to thank You for what you have already done.
- ✓ I am not going to wait until I see results or receive rewards; I am thanking You right now.
- ✓ I am not going to wait until I feel better or things look better; I am thanking You right now.
- ✓ I am not going to wait until people say they are sorry or until they stop talking about me; I am thanking You right now.
- ✓ I am not going to wait until the pain in my body disappears; I am thanking You right now.
- ✓ I am not going to wait until my financial situation improves; I am going to thank You right now.
- ✓ I am not going to wait until the children are asleep and the house is quiet; I am going to thank You right now.
- ✓ I am not going to wait until I get promoted at work or until I get the job; I am going to thank You right now.
- ✓ I am not going to wait until I understand every experience in my life that has caused me pain or grief; I am thanking You right now.
- ✓ I am not going to wait until the journey gets easier or the challenges are removed; I am thanking You right now.
- ✓ I am thanking You because I am alive.
- ✓ I am thanking You because I made it through the day's difficulties.
- ✓ I am thanking You because I have walked around the obstacles.
- ✓ I am thanking You because I have the ability and the opportunity to do more and do better.

I'm thanking you because FATHER, YOU haven't given up on me. AMEN!

What else do you have to be thankful for? _____

