

## The Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, Psalm 107

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And he'll speak on the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Brother Jim.

When I saw Eugene Jr walk in, it reminded me of my life and his life and my wife's life. Back at a unity conference. That's when it was still called the unity conference. Williamsport, Pennsylvania. That's back in 1960.

And you were just a young tad then. I was an old man by that time. My wife was just a young maiden. I had never met Sandra before that. I'd seen her at a distance, but she was pretty.

She was a kind of a gal who ran with her nose way up in the air. Most of the time you couldn't bring her back to earth. But at this time, I met her at Williamsport. You know, she was kind of attractive. I kind of liked her a little bit.

I said hi a couple of times, and we spent a little bit of time together that week, she and I and Eugene. Wherever she and I went, Eugene was right behind us.

So I was glad to see Eugene here today. I don't remember know if you remember that, but it was a lot of fun. A lot of fun. But you can see what happened.

One of the things which we hear very little about today is something that's contained and it's buried in the hundred and seventh Psalm, and we're going to read a little bit about that Psalm today and some of the things that are contained in it. But this is a psalm of thanksgiving and of praise to God, and it's thanksgiving or thankfulness that we find so little in this world today. This world is in need of so many things.

And yet if people were thankful for the things that they had, this world would not be in need of nearly as many things as it thinks it's in need of.

I wonder if we could start off today with a balance sheet, and this is the sort of thing that you learn all about when you're going through school and learning about mathematics. I'm going to put a proposition to you today, and I want you to tell me, not out loud but to yourself, how rich you would be after a day or a week or so with this kind of a mathematical setup. I want you to suppose that every time you express thankfulness for some kindness that had been done to you, some anonymous, anonymous donor would give you a dollar bill, and that's pretty good.

But on the other side, I want you to suppose also that the same donor was going to collect 50 cents from you every time you complained about the situation you were in or every time you criticized someone else without any thought of helping the other person. I want you to tell me at the end of a day how rich you think you would be. Or at the end of a week or a month or a year.

I didn't dream that one up. That was. I copied it from someplace, but I thought it was pretty good. Some days I think we would come off, even in that imaginary type of balance sheet, pretty much in the red Today. It's a shocking thing to hear somebody say thank you.

In fact, the phrase has almost become a puzzlement in this world, and strange things happen. Whenever you hear the phrase thank you. People look at you very surprised, like they never heard the phrase before, and sometimes the expression of gratitude comes as a surprise or even a shock. The other day, a lady boarded a crowded bus and a man rose up to give her her seat, and

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she fainted.

And then she was revived and she came to and she thanked him and he fainted.

Maybe it's not that bad, but one of the reasons why we've got so many problems in our lives and so many problems in this world that we live in is because we forget one of the easiest things in the world to do to say thank you. When Paul was writing to Timothy, that young man, that young man who was struggling so hard to preach the gospel, to preach the gospel in a heathen land, Paul said this. Know that in the last days, perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves. Covetous boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful and unholy from such, turn away. You notice in with all of these things, blasphemers, people who are covetous, people who are unholy, people from which you should turn away, leave them behind, don't associate with them.

There is another trait that he puts in with that group. People who are unthankful. An unthankful person is a miserable person. If you want to see a person who's got a long face and person who has got a misery in their life, taking other extenuating circumstances out, look to a person who's unthankful. That's what you will find behind it all.

Character of our era, I think the day in which we live is just this. People want and and want and want and want. But there is very few people, after they get and get and get, who will say thank you. Very few people, all of us today, take many, many things for granted. Many things more than we should take for granted.

Thanksgiving has become a lost art and it is true that even though the wind, and sometimes you get some dilly winds here in Chicago, even though the wind does chill the body, ingratitude really chills the soul. There is nothing worse than being with people who are in gracious people who cannot say thank you for their lot in life. Just as Sister Hollister said, I did not know that she had fallen. But even as Brother Ben says, there is a reason for this. There is a reason in life for everything that happens to us.

Everything that comes our way comes by permission of God. If we are God's people, all things work together for good. To them that love God and are called according to his purpose. All things that doesn't leave anything out. Psalm 107 in the first couple of verses says, o give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good.

For his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy. Some of us are so wont to think of ourselves at the mercy of what is going on in this world and what is happening in our business world and in our society. We want to think that we are so at the hands of our society that we fail to look up and to give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Psalm 107 is a Psalm of thanksgiving.

It's a psalm that would remind the children of Israel when their parents and their grandparents were living in Egypt in slavery, in bondage, in an iron furnace, and this was a Psalm 20. Remind them of how great the works of God had been while they were there and while they were delivered from that bondage. Let the redeemed of the Lord give thanks. Let those in the world who had been pulled out of slavery give thanks.

And even for crying children, you may not think so, but give thanks. Because soon enough they will be this high, and you will say to yourself, would to God, that I could have those little arms around

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me again, and you'll be even thankful that the people next door have a baby and you can lift them up once again. Those times pass on.

They're a beautiful time in your life. Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good.

Let's pass on a couple more verses down the psalm. Maybe we should read the whole psalm, but I'm not going to take the time now. But it is a beautiful psalm, a beautiful psalm about people who are in trouble, and if you are in trouble ever in your life, though there are other beautiful psalms, read this 107th Psalm. Read what God does to People who are miserable.

And I mean miserable, because that's the words that he uses here.

Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and he saved them out of their distresses. Verses 13 and 14. He brought them out of the darkness and the shadow of death and brake their bands in sunder. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men. For he hath broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron asunder.

O that men would praise the Lord. Skipping to verse 21. For his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men, and let men, let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving and declare his works with singing or with rejoicing. This is the job.

When God, whenever we find ourselves in a plight, whenever we find ourselves in distress, in trouble, in misery. For he satisfieth the longing soul in verse nine and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Wonderful works to the children of men. We are going to be living very close to Mexico, the land of Mexico, the country of Mexico.

And down in the land of Mexico, I understand they have hot and cold springs of water coming out of the ground, and it's an amazing thing that in some parts of Mexico, in the very same area of the country, there will be both hot springs of water and cold springs of water coming out of the land, and many tourists come and watch the women of the area as they're washing their clothes. First of all, they boil their clothes or they take their clothes in the hot spring and then they rinse them in the cold and the clear one, and one tourist, when he was down there, remarked to the guide, I suppose the women here are very thankful to their gods, for their gods are being very generous to them.

And the guide turned to the tourist and he says, no, senior. They grumble because there is no soap, and this is the way in which we conduct our lives too. Listen to young kids as they come home from school today. Young kids that are knee high to grasshoppers, as we used to say, listen to the kind of things they say.

They do not come home and tell you how good their teacher is and how much they have learned. During the day they grumble because once during the day the teacher raised her or his voice at them or the teacher scolded them for something or other kids don't like that, and they remember those kind of things. All of the goodnesses that are done to them. During the day, they forget.

And sometimes we're like those little bratty kids, and that's what you have to say about us when we act like they act. We're little spoiled kids.

Thanksgiving is a sacrifice. It's a sacrifice, and why is it a sacrifice? Not only because the psalmist says it's a sacrifice, and let them sacrifice the sacrifices of Thanksgiving and declare his work with rejoicing.

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Actually, the psalmist is referring back to one of those sacrifices that is mentioned, that is elaborated upon in the book of Leviticus. One of those sacrifices, or actually it was a whole series of them, were Thanksgiving sacrifices, but one in particular was enumerated as a sacrifice of Thanksgiving. It was a sacrifice, and it's no less for you and for me. Because it takes brain power.

It takes brain power not to utter the first thing that comes into your noodle, but to think about how good God is to us. That's why it's a sacrifice. It takes time for one thing. You have to stop what you're doing for a moment to say thank you, and there are not very many people today who are willing to stop for a minute and say thank you.

Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of Thanksgiving. It takes time and it takes effort to do that sort of thing, and it takes a willingness to forget yourself. There is nobody who can be worried about his own problems while he's uttering the words thank you for something that has been done on his behalf. The words thank you are words which take you out of yourself, out of your own complaint and out of your own way and into the way of God.

There is a certain wisdom in all of this, a certain wisdom that the psalmist has found. Whoso is wise, and this is the last verse, I think. Yes, the last verse of the psalm. Whoso is wise and will observe these things.

Even that person shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord. You want to understand the Lord's ways in this life? Then learn this one thing. Be thankful. There is nobody in this wide world who will ever know anything about God, who has not turned to God and said, thank you, Lord, for what you have done for me.

And basically this is the response to Christ to the call of God. Basically, that's the response. Anybody who comes to God and gives his life to God, basically that's what motivates you to do it. It's a thank you. I thank you, Lord, for what you did for me.

Didn't have to do it. He doesn't have to be good to us.

And this about God and about his People whoso is wise will be thankful, will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord. How could anybody possibly understand the loving kindness of the Lord unless he turned to God and were to thank him for the few things that he can see that God has done in his life? And when you do take a look at the number of things that God has done for you in life, the list becomes greater and longer and longer. We're so want to be able to solve our own problems. We do so want to live our own lives without being interfered with.

Sandra and I want to live our own lives without being interfered with. We want to bring up our children in such a way that we will not be interfered with. You cannot do it. There are going to be interferences in your life and other people are going to have an effect upon your children. It can't happen that you can live in a vacuum in this world.

How great it is to be able to say honestly to yourself, all things work together for good. That is reason enough to be very, very thankful, and it is much wiser, much greater in this life to put all of your care in the hands of God who cares for you. We've had a number of difficult decisions to make lately, and we have made them even more difficult by our own way of confusing things. But it was only when we are thankful for what God has done for us that some of all of the cloudy issues begin to clear up and you can really begin to see that God answers prayer.

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It is very difficult for my wife and I to make up our minds when we're going to sneeze, and you know, that's about as an automatic thing as you can possibly think of. But it's hard for us to do that, and to think of going down to a land 1500 miles away from us and buy a house in a couple of days is utterly ridiculous for us. It may be easy for other people, and I know other people do it as almost as if it were routine.

And we were having a difficult time too for the first little while. But I can honestly say that prayer changes things. When you don't have to be worried about how much money you're either going to save or spend, how much money you're going to get out of your old house and whether or not you're going to be able to carry the. You can't ignore these things. Obviously you can't go down buy \$100,000 home if you only make \$15,000 a year.

You can't be stupid. But on the other hand, if you let all of the other things worry you, it's impossible to make a decision. You can't do it. There are too many things to be considered.

The whole business of being thankful enters in. When you learn to be thankful for what God has done for you, then all of the mysteries, all of the unknowns begin to take a normal proportion and you don't have to worry so much about all of the things that you see in the future, and you only have to concern yourself with. With what is ahead of you today and what is on your mind today. My boss down in Texas said there is no way that anybody can come down in two days and pick out and buy a house and be satisfied with it.

And he said, take my advice, move down here, rent a home, and when you've been down for a number of months, then you have time to go around and get the best buy and the best house. I said, no, Ed, tomorrow we're going to buy a house. That's what we came down here for, and that's what we're going to do, and we did it.

Being thankful takes its place in our life, in the very simple things of life. What is more simple in life than eating? What is more simple than that little bit of nourishment that you take into your body every day? And yet how many people there are in this world that really take their food for granted? They take it for granted until, well, I don't know, even with some people, when the source of their income is cut off.

And there are a lot of men today and a lot of families today whose sources of income are being cut off. The people that we bought the house from in Fort Worth, for instance. The reason that man is selling his house is because he is going to lose his job and he doesn't know how he can keep the house up. Now, that man is not as worried as others I have seen who do other crazy things in life. In fact, the real estate woman commended him for what he was doing.

He wasn't backing himself all the way into a corner until he had to sell his house for a price that was less than what it was worth. He at least had that kind of wisdom and foresight. But there are other families today who are finding it very, very difficult to put bread on the table. How thankful we ought to be for the bread that we have on our table. The other day a new supermarket opened up in Rochester.

This. We have a Wegmans chain in Rochester, like you have a jewel chain here, and I have never in all my life seen so many varieties. I went by the cereal area. Never in my life have I seen so many different kinds of cereal.

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And I thought really after seeing all those commercials that you see on Saturday morning with the, with the cartoons, I thought I'd seen everything but just aisle after aisle after aisle of different kinds of cereal. I couldn't believe it, and it was so with other kinds of food too. I didn't have time to go through the whole store, but a huge store with more kinds of food than if you had started today to buy one of everything. You couldn't possibly taste everything they've got in that store in the way of food.

And yet there are people who are having a difficult time in the city of Rochester and they're no less educated than I am or than anyone else in the city having a difficult time putting a little bit of bread on their tables. We ought to be thankful for that little bit of bread that we do have, and it's an awful lot in comparison with what other people in other parts of this world have. But saying thank you, saying thank you for the food that you have to eat is becoming old fashioned too, and you don't find too many families who are doing that sort of thing.

From notes and quotes I picked out a bit on a praying farmer. An honest farmer was asked to dine with a gentleman, and this is a well educated gentleman that he's been asked to dine with, and the farmer, according to his custom, gave thanks to God and don't forget he's now out at somebody else's house. Whereupon his host jeered him and said, that is very old fashioned.

It's not customary nowadays for well educated people to pray at the table, and the farmer thought for a minute and this is probably a Texas farmer because they're awful smart down there. They're awful quick witted. The farmer stated that it was customary for him but not with some other members of his family, other members of his household. Oh, then said the gentleman host, they are sensible and enlightened.

Who are they? And the farmer turned to his host and he answered, they're my pigs.

And some people are quick witted. I wish sometimes when those kind of situations come up, I had that kind of wit about me. I would just be obby. Abby, Abby. Well, I did it and I'm glad I'd say something stupid like that.

Paul is giving some advice to the Ephesians and he says this in the fifth chapter in the 19th. Speak to yourselves in psalms and hymns and Spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. That means we are to do as it says. If you want to make melody in your heart, if you want to be the type of a person who is able to sing in this world, and especially today, here is the key.

Give thanks When. How many times a day? Always. For what kind of things? For the good things that happen to you.

For the times when you get a raise and pay. For the times when you get a bonus. For the times when you buy a new house and you're satisfied with it? Yeah. Well, what about the times when things are not going so well?

One of the children come in with a broken arm or a broken thumb or. Or anything else that can happen to a person in this life? For all things a little bit more difficult when things are not going the way you like them to go, to give thanks. In fact, it's a very, very difficult thing. Not one of us thinks of giving thanks at those particular times.

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Give thanks always for all things. You think you're alone in this world? You think nobody else has gone through that kind of an experience before? When we've been back at the office, and this is back in Rochester, everybody knows that our plant is closing down. Everybody knows that the plant is moving off to Texas.

And there aren't very many smiles in that plant, and many of the men that are there are thinking in terms of moving their families to Texas or thinking about trying to get a new job, and so there are not too many, even of the people who are privileged to. To make the move with the new company. Not too many of those men are smiling either.

And I went through a period when I wasn't smiling, particularly when I was upset and making the decision whether to go, and I went over to one guy who I'm very close to at the office, and I said, I think I found the key to the problem. I think I'm the only one that's got a problem, and that's quite true. Sometimes we think we're the only ones here and we're the only ones that have something to be worried about.

In Philippians, we're given the key again, again, for peace that passeth understanding. How many people in this world are trying their hardest to find peace within. Two mornings ago, we were listening to a man being interviewed who was searching for peace, peace within, and he had gone to one of the occult religions of the east and was studying yoga and Studying it very fastidiously so that he could bring to others the peace that he had found within.

I used to go around with a gal who believed in. In this sort of thing, in yoga, who is building up karma, and it is true momentarily, people can find peace in this world, and one of the ways that they used to do it, and this yoga man described it on television the other morning, where you set your mind, you concentrate on a certain object, and I think he used a leaf.

Was it a leaf used. I'm not sure, but it was a certain object which you just keep thinking about and thinking about and thinking about until all of a sudden your mind just leaves this world, and you thought yourself into a state of karma, I guess is what they called it, and eventually the ultimate of life to them is to enter into a state of nirvana, which is a happy, blue, blissful nothingness. Nothingness that is the end result of that particular religion.

But it's only momentary, and it's only while you're in this deep process of thought that you can liberate yourself from the problems that grip every human being who's in this world from day to day. Paul has a better answer. Philippians 4, 6, 7. Be careful for nothing but in everything. By prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

Be careful for nothing. How many of us can really be careful for nothing? That's hard. That's hard. We're always worried about everything that happens to us in this world.

It's very, very difficult even sometimes in our house, to listen to the chatter of the little children because we're so caught up, so wrapped up in some of the other worries that grip us, almost grip us and hold us like a trap holds us, an animal that's being snared, and yet what is there nicer than the sound of little children? Don't remind me of that when I get home, because I'll say, I couldn't possibly have said that. Be careful for nothing but in everything. Paul, when he's writing, has a lot of contrast, doesn't he?

If you've got to worry about something, worry about nothing. But on the other hand, in everything, put everything into prayer. Put everything you're doing into prayer, and I think he's being true here.

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No matter how inconsequential you think your everyday items are, put it in prayer and in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving.

And with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all Understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Anyone in this world who tries in any other way to obtain peace that is satisfying other than this through thanksgiving is going to miss the mark and will not find it. He will not find it. For all of the issues of life and death, there is no way that a person can find the peace that passeth all understanding, except he is thankful to God for His gifts to him.

The peace that passeth understanding enters only one type of heart. That's a thankful heart, a critical heart, a crabbing heart, a nitpicking heart. There will never be peace there. There is no way that peace can penetrate a heart that is always looking on the dismal side of the events of life, and I'm not really trying to say that the events of life do not have their dismal aspect.

That is just looking at things with a. With rosy colored glasses and that is not facing up to reality. But this manner is. When you know that God will deal in every instance in your life and bring it for good. How can you be anything else but thankful for the events even though they are hard to bear?

You want peace in your life only one way of getting it. You've got to be thankful for the things you enjoy, and you've got to be thankful for the things that are hard to bear. You got to be thankful for those times in life when you've been humiliated either through failure or in some other way. You've got to be thankful for those times in your life when things have not gone your way. Hard gotta be the hardest thing in the world to be thankful for.

Situations that hurt, and yet that's the way to enjoy peace that passes understanding.

Shall we close this portion with hymn number nine?

All glory to Jesus be given.

All glory to Jesus Begin that life and salvation are free and all may be washed and clothed. Yes, Jesus, salvation may know.

Most kind God, we come before Thee with grateful hearts. We thank Thee for the reminder that our brother has brought to us that indeed we live and move and have all our being because of Thee. So help us, Father, to follow the philosophy that our Brother has brought forth that indeed we may recognize and truly recognize that we owe all things to Thee, that it is not it was not a duty for Thee to love us and to call us out of darkness to send Thy Son upon this earth. Indeed we are grateful, dear Lord, and help us to mark this in our hearts and in our minds. Continue to guide and direct us.

And we ask this not because we are worthy, but because we come to thee in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.