



PROUD PEOPLE DON'T SAY "THANKS"

Kevin Presley

Greetings and welcome. It's good to be with you for Let the Bible Speak. I hope you had a good week and are anticipating an even better one ahead, if God is willing.

This week, Americans will pause for a day and gather as families or friends, eat a bountiful meal, relax, perhaps watch some football, or maybe go shopping. And all this stems from a long-standing and noble tradition of offering thanks for our many blessings. We should be thankful people, especially living in the land of freedom and prosperity that we enjoy. We have more, as a people, than any other people on earth throughout history and despite our difficulties and circumstances, we have more blessings than we can count and of all people, our hearts should be overflowing with gratitude and thanksgiving. Are they really though? Is "thanks" a word or is it also an attitude and a way of life? How we answer that question has great and even eternal implications.

Let's read together from the first chapter of the book of Romans. Aside from Paul's great thesis stated in verse 16 that the gospel is God's saving power, most of this chapter, and the next, define the very reason the gospel is necessary. Paul paints a dark picture of a terribly lost and undone world. He describes the moral and spiritual degeneracy of the nations of earth who long ago rejected God and went down the path of self-determination and prideful self-will. Following their own lusts and desires and deposing God and elevating themselves to the throne of their own hearts, they became a morally debased and hopelessly lost people as God finally allowed them to have their way and gives them up to their wicked desires. That's a picture of the lost world. What led to this? One of the things Paul mentions may surprise you. In verses 20 and 21 he writes: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened." No, they certainly did not glorify God, but notice Paul also says, "nor were thankful." What did that have

to do with their spiritual destruction? A lot! Because as the title of the lesson affirms: PROUD PEOPLE DON'T SAY THANKS.

Isn't it irritating when people don't tell you thanks for something nice you do for them? I mean, if we give, or we help, or we serve, from the right motive, I know we don't do so for adulation or to heap praise and attention upon ourselves. Rather, I mean, isn't it just a common courtesy and a good social grace when somebody helps you in some way, to simply say "thanks". I have been in that situation, and you have too. And it just rubs me a little wrong when I go to some effort to extend assistance or a kindness, and a person seem incapable of merely saying the words "thank you." Why? Because we view that person as not on ungrateful, but perhaps entitled to our help. It's a good thing, in my view, when parents teach their small children to say "please" and "thank you." To not only address people in terms of respect to show gratitude to others.

I think the Lord agrees with that for you remember that Jesus on one occasion healed ten people with the fatal disease of leprosy. Jesus did, not only what others did not have the power to do, but what most would not be willing to do, instead of running away from them, He had pity on them and took away their blight, their shame, and their death sentence. He told them to go and show themselves to the priest and when they went, they found their sore-ridden flesh fully healed. And the record then tells us in Luke 17:15-18, "And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" Jesus appreciated this one man who returned to thank Him and expected the others to have come and done the same. But not for the sake of ego, but notice that he equated the returning and giving of thanks to "giving glory to God..." That helps us understand why Paul said of the Gentiles in our original reading in Romans 1 that what led them down the road to spiritual ruin and doom was that they failed to glorify their creator as God, NEITHER were they THANKFUL. Gratitude is a recognition and a confession of the source of the blessing and that it is not of ourselves but that we benefited from the unmerited kindness of another. Proud, self-sufficient, and entitled people (and yes, rude people) don't usually say thanks. And that reveals much more than the lack of social graces and etiquette. It speaks to something much deeper in the heart.

The bible is full of statements that prove that God expects to receive thanks for all He has done. When a reigning and triumphant King David defeated the Philistines and brought the ark of the covenant into His newly established capitol of Jerusalem, he had the people sing: "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." (1 Chronicles 16:34). And when the ark was brought to the tabernacle that day, they offered sacrifice to the Lord as a way of thanking Him for what He done. Some of the sacrifices that Moses commanded under the law, such as are outlined in Leviticus chapter 7, were not about atoning for sin, but some of them were thank offerings given to the Lord. This illustrates that gratitude to God was to be a central feature of the life of Israel. God does not want to be forgotten. He never wants His people to forget our dependance upon Him and begin to think that we fight our own battles, win our own victories, and secure our own provisions and blessings. They come from the gracious hand of God and whenever the people of God have forgotten that and become ungrateful is when they were lifted up with pride and strayed away FROM God.

Psalms 30:4, "Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His, And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name." Psalm 75:1 "...We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks! For Your wondrous works declare that Your name is near." Psalm 97:12, "Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name." Psalms 105:1, "Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; Make

known His deeds among the peoples!" And Psalms 107:8 "Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!" And we have only begun to read the many passages that remind the people of God to be thankful.

The theme is just as prevalent, if not even more so, in the New Testament as Paul admonished us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." Notice, not only FOR everything, but Paul says IN everything, give thanks. Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." We are to thank God for every blessing, every mercy, every provision, every enablement, ever empowering, every victory, and even every faith-refining trial. "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ..." (2 Corinthians 2:14) The Christian should be so aware and humbled by the grace and goodness of God, that thanksgiving saturates the very speech he or she utters. Along with the overt sins of the flesh that should be unknown in the life of a Christian, so Paul adds "neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks." (Ephesians 5:4)

Even Jesus was thankful. When we took that single loaf and that cup of fruit of the vine in His hands as He established a pattern for churches to remember His sacrifice by, the bible says "he gave thanks" (Matthew 26:27. When He fed the four thousand in Mark 8:6, it says he took the food and "gave thanks" for it. If Jesus the creator was moved to say thanks before a meal, how terrible for His people today to scarf down our food and lap up our blessings without saying 'thank you' to God. It therefore goes without saying, that Christians should be ever-grateful people, But God even expects all people of the world to recognize His sovereignty and His goodness and to react with thankful hearts and it angers and saddens Him when they do not. He frowns upon those who feel self-sufficient, entitled, and do not acknowledge God as the source of all blessings. James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." Jesus reminds us that the Heavenly Father "...makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:45) Water and sunlight are two of the most essential elements of life on earth and both come because God framed the worlds with them and continually provides them as He holds the universe together by His power and allows them to continue. Not only is He the source of all life but life only continues by His divine edict.

When Paul preached to a crowd of idolators in the ancient city of Lystra in Acts 14, he said we "preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." God's goodness and blessing stands as a witness to Himself. His numberless and daily providing for His creation testifies of His presence. It testifies of His power. It bears witness of His providence. It bears witness of His personality – his merciful disposition toward sinful and undeserving man. And in all of that, He does it to draw us to love Him in return and serve Him. That why Paul asked the question of sinners in need of saving grace in Romans 2:4, "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" But yet, God's goodness does not always lead people to turn to Him in obedience. Many live their lives with little recognition of God's role in their life. Every breath of air they breathe in is provided by God. Every morsel of food they eat is and every drop of water they drink is because God placed it here for our survival and our welfare. Our lives are given to us and preserved moment by moment by His grace and for the purpose of serving Him and bringing Him glory.

But so many do not truly give thanks (except perhaps in occasional lip service) because they reject God's rule and moral authority in their lives. The reason people don't say thanks is because of their pride and their foolish idea that their life is their own to do with as they please. Paul makes this clear in Romans, chapter one when he outlines the process of how the Gentiles rejected God, turned to idols, and were given over to fulfill their sinful desires and found themselves completely alienated from God with many of God's Old Covenant people, committing the same sins. Notice how it happened. Look in verse 18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness," Paul pronounces the nations of earth under God's wrath and judgment. Why? Because they "suppressed the truth". What truth? That God is the sovereign creator who therefore is the ruler of earth. It quickly becomes evident in the chapter that they did not want God to rule over their life. They wanted self-determination and to live to satisfy their own desires and thus, in the end, to be their own god. That, of course, has been the tendency of mankind from nearly the beginning until now. So, to do that, they had to suppress the truth or silence their conscience which was keenly aware of God's moral law. But since they didn't have the bible, God's written revelation, how was this truth made known? Verses 19 and 20: "because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse," God makes Himself (so far as His existence, His power, and His presence known through the things He created. The 'book of nature', if you please, reveals and reflects the Creator who left His footprints and fingerprints all over it. This includes God's care for us; the countless things we are all blessed with every day that we typically take for granted.

Only a spiritually blind man cannot see the reality of God's care and provision for His creatures. But instead of being humbled by this knowledge and seeking to glorify and worship the God of heaven, they replaced Him in their minds and hearts with gods of their own invention who would let them live as they please. That's why Paul says in verses 21-24 "because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, **NOR WERE THANKFUL**, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves," You see, besides slighting and taking for granted the God who gives us life and every blessing we enjoy, the sin of ingratitude goes much deeper. It is an attitude of independence from God. It reflects a stubborn, proud, and arrogant heart that refuses to acknowledge the sovereignty of God and instead sees man as the captain of his own ship, the ruler of his own life, and the master of his destiny. Humble people are thankful people. People who recognize the power of God over them but also just how gracious and merciful God is to us, are ever-grateful. "Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not." Said Jeremiah in Lamentations 3:22.

So, are you truly grateful? As you stop this week to gather with your relatives; your friends, perhaps your neighbors and eat and enjoy the bounties of the earth; as you perhaps take a moment and bow your heads together and say 'grace' over your meal; as worthy and commendable as that may be; I hope we'll all stop and think a little more deeply and ask: AM I TRULY GRATEFUL TO GOD? True thanksgiving goes beyond a few spoken words. It is much more than a polite social grace. It is even more than a thought, feeling, or attitude. It is a way of life. How can we search our hearts and truly know whether we're grateful or not?

Ingratitude is shown by failing to verbally say thanks. Hebrews 13:15 says, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

But we also show an ungrateful heart when we complain and are covetous. Don't you resent someone you give something to, and they indicate it's not enough? "And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.", said Paul in 1 Timothy 6:8. The wandering Israelites were ungrateful for the manna God provided and for His other works He did for them because they murmured and complained along the way. Are you content or do you complain about your lot in life and spend your life trying to grab more?

And as Paul shows in Romans 1, rebellion is ingratitude. Rejecting the laws and commandments of God are a shaken fist in the face of He who has lavishly given and given. Yes, it's a serious sin to be ungrateful.

And friend, IGNORING God is a form of ingratitude as well. Ignoring His mercy, ignoring the Son He gave so you might have eternal life. Ignoring the gospel, which is His power to save, is to say "God what you gave makes no difference. I'll not moved by it. I have my life to live as I see fit and your sacrifice for me means nothing" You may never articulate those words, but when you ignore the will of God, the gift of His Son, and the call of His Spirit through the gospel, that's ingratitude.

May this week be a reminder of not only our material blessings, but those spiritual blessings that God has gone to the utmost expense to offer to us, and I hope in humble gratitude, you'll give your life to Him in return in obedience to the gospel.

©2024 BibleWay Media. All rights reserved.

BibleWay Media grants permission to copy this material for personal use. Permission is also granted to distribute this transcript as long as it is reproduced in its entirety, used solely for its original purpose of spreading the gospel, and attribution is given to the author and Let the Bible Speak.