11/22/26 Message

Part of FollowJourney of Discipleship
November 20, 2026

Message: Thankful for What

Series: Follow

Background

> *I'm approaching this series as if we are all in the same stage of our journey with Jesus, at the beginning. For some, this will be a review, but for most it will be a guide for what comes next. For all of us, if we'll let God work in and through us, we'll grow closer to Jesus and each other.*
>
> *—Pastor Chad*

Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT)
19 "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

> *It's a circle of life with Jesus at the center. When you jump on the circle, it should be your goal to reach out and grab everyone you can and pull them on the circle with you. There's a lot more to it, but it's a great illustration. When you commit your life to Jesus and you commit to following Jesus, then you become His disciple. It's like being a student. You're only a student as long as you choose to be. That's the problem with this thing we call the spiritual journey. So many of us choose Jesus when we need Him, but when life is good, we forget all about Him. We stop being a student!*
>
> *—Pastor Chad*

- The spiritual journey is intended to be a LIFELONG commitment where you start and never stop.

The Confusion of Thanksgiving

- We confuse being thankful for our CIRCUMSTANCES with being thankful for our GOD
  – A characteristic that ought to distinguish every genuine follower of Jesus Christ is a GRATEFUL HEART

LUKE 17:11–19 (NLT)
11 As Jesus continued on toward Jerusalem, he reached the border between Galilee and Samaria.
12 As he entered a village there, ten men with leprosy stood at a distance, 13 crying out, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”
14 He looked at them and said, “Go show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed of their leprosy.
15 One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, “Praise God!”
16 He fell to the ground at Jesus’ feet, thanking him for what he had done. This man was a Samaritan.
17 Jesus asked, “Didn’t I heal ten men? Where are the other nine?
18 Has no one returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?”
19 And Jesus said to the man, “Stand up and go. Your faith has healed you.”

Thanksgiving Gratitude

- GRATITUDE BEGINS WITH RECOGNIZING THE GIVER

James 1:17 (NLT)
Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.

Sometimes the very blessings we ask God to give us become the things that distract us from Him.

– Everything we have ultimately comes from God
– Gratitude requires intentional recognition.

Feeling thankful and expressing thanksgiving are not the same thing.

- GRATITUDE IS A RESPONSE TO GOD, NOT OUR CIRCUMSTANCES

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NLT)
16 Always be joyful.
17 Never stop praying.
18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

– Our circumstances change, but God doesn't.

Psalm 100:5 (NLT)
For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

– God's goodness is not determined by the goodness of our circumstances.

Gratitude is an expression of trust.

Acts 16:25 (NLT)
Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening.

> *Immature gratitude says, "God, I'll thank You when things get better." Mature gratitude says, "God, I trust You even when things don't get better."*
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Gratitude changes our perspective.

Philippians 4:6–7 (NLT)
6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.
7 Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

– Thanksgiving doesn't necessarily change our circumstances, but thanksgiving can change how we face our circumstances.

- GRATITUDE SHOULD LEAD US <u>TO JESUS</u>

– Genuine gratitude draws us closer to God.

Luke 17:15-16 (NLT)

15 One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, “Praise God!”
16 He fell to the ground at Jesus’ feet, thanking him for what he had done. This man was a Samaritan.

– A thankful disciple doesn’t simply appreciate the gifts of Jesus. A thankful disciple treasures Jesus Himself.

Gratitude should produce worship.

Psalm 100:4 (NLT)
Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name.

The greatest reason for thanksgiving is our salvation.

> *If God never gave us another earthly blessing, what He has already given us through Jesus Christ would be enough reason to spend eternity thanking Him. That’s the heart of thanksgiving. Not simply gratitude for what we have. But gratitude for who has us.*
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WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

Let’s go back to the ten lepers one final time.
– Ten men were desperate.
– Ten men cried out to Jesus.
– Ten men received His mercy.
– Ten men experienced His power.
– But only one came back.

And Jesus asked:
“Didn’t I heal ten men? Where are the other nine?” ***Luke 17:17 (NLT)***

What if Jesus asked today:
– Where are the people who prayed for My help and received it?
– Where are the people who asked Me for forgiveness and found it?
– Where are the people who cried out to Me in their darkest moments and experienced My comfort?

– Where are the people who have received blessing after blessing, yet rarely stop to acknowledge Me?

Be the one! Return to Jesus!

Ask yourself, “Have I become so consumed with what God has given me that I’ve forgotten to thank Him for who He is?”

> *This Thanksgiving don’t just be thankful for what you have. Be thankful for who you have. Because when you have Jesus, you have a reason to be thankful that no circumstance can take away.*
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