

**Thanksgiving**  
**Enter His gates with Thanksgiving**  
**1 Thessalonians 5 vs 18**

Happy thanksgiving!  
My favorite holiday in all the world.

Recipes

I was taught that you can only eat dessert after your vegetables. You guys have found a way to combine them.

Sweet potato is a vegetable – Sweet potato snickerdoodle

Pumpkin is a vegetable – pumpkin pie squares with cream

Beans are vegetables – candied baked beans – marsh mellows beans and bacon

It's like having ketchup on your ice cream

A man in Florida, in his 80s, calls his son in New York one November day.

The father says to the son, "I hate to tell you, but we've got some troubles here in the house. Your mother and I can't stand each other anymore, and we're getting a divorce. I've had it! I want to live out the rest of my years in peace. I'm telling you now, so you and your sister shouldn't go into shock later when I move out."

He hangs up, and the son immediately calls his sister in the Hamptons and tells her the news.

The sister says, "I'll handle this."

She calls Florida and says to her father, "Don't do ANYTHING till we get there! We'll be there Wednesday night."

The father agrees, "All right."

The old man hangs up the phone and hollers to his wife, "Okay, they're coming for Thanksgiving. Now, what are we going to tell them for Christmas?"

In 1620, 102 passengers (known as pilgrims) endured 66 days at sea on a cargo ship **named the Mayflower. (picture)**

Most of them were religious dissidents who opposed the Church of England.

No hot tub, swimming pool, evening show, 3 course meals, air con room, no engine for 66 days going to live in a place you have never seen before. Courage or madness?

After a harrowing voyage the Mayflower arrived off Cape Cod in late autumn. They spent months exploring the area until they finally established a settlement near Plymouth, Massachusetts. By the end of the first winter, only half of the people were still alive.

The survivors held a thanksgiving feast the following autumn to give thanks for God's blessings. They were alive and had made it through the first year. Bradford, the governor of the little colony wrote, "found the Lord to be with them in all their ways, and to bless their outgoings and incomings, for which let His holy name have the praise forever, to all prosperity." And because the local Native American Indians had been so gracious as to provide crucial and life-saving help to the colony, the pilgrims asked that they join the feast as well.

And so, we have this wonderful holiday reminder every year where we stop and remember with thanks. It seems the main focus of their gratitude was God. So, this weekend, no matter what you are facing or loads you are carrying, we are going to unashamedly enter His gates with Thanksgiving and His courts with praise.

**Can we stand together and declare this Psalm?**

**Psalm 100 (slide)**

**Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.**

**<sup>2</sup> Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.**

**<sup>3</sup> Know that the LORD is God.  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.**

**<sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.**

**<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.**

### **1 Thess 5 vs 18 (slide)**

**Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus**

Paul is giving them some final instructions

These words are found in a letter that Paul wrote to a church that he himself established -- a church in the ancient port city of Thessalonica. The response of the people in Thessalonica to the Gospel Paul preached was remarkable. There had been a remarkable turning to Christ in this region. BUT it wasn't easy, and these believers had faced a lot of personal cost.

### **1 Thess 2 vs 14-15 (slide)**

**You suffered from your own people the same things those churches suffered from the Jews <sup>15</sup> who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out.**

They were facing many trials and struggles, and he sent Timothy to encourage them

### **1 Thess 3 vs 2-4 (slide)**

**<sup>2</sup>We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, <sup>3</sup>so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. For you know quite well that we are destined for them. <sup>4</sup>In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know**

So, the context for this expression is one of struggle and trial not comfort and prosperity and peace

And he wrote those specific words about 'thanksgiving' to encourage them to persevere through their trials with the sort of attitude of heart that brings glory to God -- "... In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

IN EVERYTHING NOT FOR EVERYTHING

As Ruth Bell Graham well said, "**We can't always give thanks FOR everything, but we can always give thanks IN everything.**"(slide)

IN EVERYTHING - The Greek word for "everything" is "pas" which means no exceptions.

When I express thanks regardless of my circumstances I am making a declaration of faith.

How can we be thankful in everything?

### **1. Thankful that there is always more going on (slide)**

There is always more going on than meets the eye. He always sees what I can't see and is orchestrating things we know nothing about at the time.

**We know that in all these things God is working for my good and His glory (slide) Rom 8 vs 28.** I can't see it at the time, but I believe it and declare it. As my dad reminded me "WE KNOW" that's a statement of belief.

Ten Boom

Nazi camp. Not only was the camp filthy, but there were fleas everywhere. Corrie's sister Betsie, who was imprisoned with her, insisted that 1 Thessalonians 5:18 was God's will for them: "In everything give thanks." But giving thanks in a flea-infested place seemed unrealistic to Corrie—until she realized why the guards didn't come into their barracks to make them stop praying and singing hymns. They wanted to avoid the fleas! So, the prisoners were free to worship and study the Bible. The fleas, yes, even the fleas were agents of grace, and something to be thankful for. (There's always more going on).

My time in Turkey (Always more going on)

### **2. Thankful for what will come of it (slide)**

When Jesus instituted the first communion He gave thanks for His body and the blood. Was He thankful for what he was about to endure? He was not thankful for His present horrific circumstances BUT rather for what would come from it. The Grace and glory that would come because of the cross. This gave Him joy. It's a belief and trust in the future that enables me to be thankful in the now.

God, my situation is not lost on you, so I give thanks for what will come of it.

### **Romans 5 vs 3-5 (slide)**

**<sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;<sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.**

No circumstance that happens to me is wasted on God. In all these things He is doing something in me

### **Hebrews 12 vs 2**

The joy set before Him...endured. There is no promise that we will be free of trouble and suffering but If the joy Jesus promises is real and the future secure... no circumstances can rob me of that thanksgiving.

### **1 Peter 1 vs 6-9 (slide)**

**<sup>6</sup> In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>7</sup> These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup> Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup> for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

### **3. Thankful for what is there (slide)**

So often I struggle to be thankful because I am always focused on what is missing rather than what is there. We can so often get caught up with all that still needs to happen that we don't stop and see what is there.

**Heritage (slide).**

**ABC Meal pack: 32,400 meals packed, 225 volunteers, multi-generational**

**MIQRA - 100 attending**

**Chaplain: 14 new candidates in training**

**15 LG's have participated or are participating in Alpha**

**Mops – half the moms are new!**

**Journey: caregivers ministry - trial session in Dec with hopes of weekly session in 2019**

**College LG started**

**Bridge - In the last 3 years, all of our High school seniors have successfully graduated from High school and ALL of them are currently attending college**

**85 students who are being tutored. We currently have a waiting list of over 70.**

**FiXiT campaign: Update (slide)**

People are growing, sharing their faith, working on marriages, winning sinful battles, overcoming racial barriers. We want more and there is still a long way to go but we give thanks for what is there.

The most important part that is there is HIM...His presence

**Hebrews 13 vs 5 (slide)**

**God has said,**

**“Never will I leave you;  
never will I forsake you.”**

There is an important truth that we must never forget. Jesus is in me. There is nothing that happens that can make Him leave. He is right there and it's not about feelings. Is He just there when I feel good? Moses? Jesus? We must be careful not to judge His presence by how well it is all going. The thankfulness is that He is there and will give me what I need to get through.

Lynn- kidneys

**Habakkuk 3:17,18: (slide)**

**Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines: the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat: the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.**

How do I do this when things are bad?

Always start by thanking Him for what is there

Focus not on what is missing but what is there

Me- kidney stones- what to be thankful for- it's a nightmare

You are here

There is a hospital nearby

Someone to take me

Painkillers

Clean water

Others who have been through this

**John 16 vs 33 (slide)**

**In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."**

If we focus on the circumstances of life we will be grumblers. If we focus on the Lord, we will be thank-ers. He has overcome the world, that leads to a heart of gratitude.

**4. Thankful that He was there before (slide)**

Israel built memorials to remember what God had done.

Thanksgiving builds memorial stones of faith for tomorrow (Ebenezer)

**Joshua 4 vs 20-22, 24 (slide)**

**<sup>20</sup> And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. <sup>21</sup> He said to the Israelites, "In the future when your descendants ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?' <sup>22</sup> tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' <sup>24</sup> He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God."**

## **1 Samuel ch7 vs 12 (slide)**

**<sup>12</sup> Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."**

Do you have memorial stones in your life? For your family? Declarations of faith and thanksgiving.

We want to do that today

Right now, we want to saturate this sanctuary with thanksgiving.

Personal – safety, security, food, home

Family – kids, parents, health, normality,

Faith – grace, mercy, forgiveness, community, the cross

Nation – freedoms, roads, stores, transport, communications

World- people coming to Christ, peace in Sudan, Muslims coming to Christ, Bible being translated...

Where you have clearly seen Him at work - N/Dad/ Morocco lady

Thanks for what He will do

Let's stand and begin with one voice, with family, till there's no more

Then come and place your stone as we build an altar of thanks.