

# When Jesus gave Thanks

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This morning, I'd like to focus on three different occasions when Jesus expressed gratitude. These scenes represent the kind of gratitude we should feel for our Heavenly Father.

**Jesus was thankful for the Father having a listening ear, generous hands and a loving heart.**

### I. **Thankful for the Father's listening ears**

John 11:41-42 (NKJV) So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. <sup>42</sup> You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me."

Jesus is standing at the tomb of his dead friend Lazarus. He had made a proclamation of being the resurrection and the life.

He did not merely have the power to resurrect He claimed to be was very source of resurrection and life.

Listen to the dialogue between Him and Martha.

John 11:21-27 (NKJV) Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. <sup>26</sup> And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Martha, Mary and many of Jesus closest followers believed that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God but many of the Jews who were there to grieve with and comfort the family saw him as a man who was a great teacher and even a healer but not a life giver. Only God could give life.

John 11:37 (NKJV) And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

It was the people who didn't believe in who He was that moved Jesus to pray the way He did.

John 11:41-42 (NKJV) Jesus' prayer "Father, thank you for hearing me." <sup>42</sup> You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.

**Three things stand out about His prayer**

1. **His reference to God as “Father” points to His relationship as the Son of God.**
2. **He didn’t make a request he is thanking the Father for having heard Him.**

The prayer implies that Jesus has already asked for Lazarus’ life, and that all he must do is to thank his Father for the answer. It assumes that the events that were to take place were already planned ahead of time.

John 11:11 (NKJV) These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”

3. **Jesus wasn’t praying out loud as a matter of theatre or show**

His prayer sought to draw his hearers into the truth of His relationship with the Father.

His prayer demonstrated to them that He did nothing by Himself. He asks and the Father grants.

The end goal was that many of those who were questioning his identify would finally believe that He has been sent by God himself.

He is thankful that the Father listens and responds to prayer. He is also thankful that many will believe in Him.

#### **The answered prayer.**

**John 11:43-44 (NKJV) Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!”** <sup>44</sup>And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.”

John 11:45 (NKJV) Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.

You and I are not Jesus and we may not raise the dead but we do have access to the Father in prayer because of Jesus.

**Ephesians 2:18 (NLT) Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.**

Hebrews 10:19-22 (NLT) And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. <sup>20</sup>By his death, Jesus opened a new and

life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. <sup>21</sup> And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, <sup>22</sup> let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him.

**Jeremiah 33:3 (NKJV) Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.**

Isaiah 59:1 (NKJV) Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.

God is listening and does respond to our prayers. For this we should be thankful.

## **II. Thankful for the Father's generous hand**

Matthew 15:36-37 (NKJV) He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. <sup>37</sup> So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left.

Here Jesus is thanking the Father for the few fish and loaves and the much that it would become to feed four thousand men, besides women and children.

Again, the purpose of the miracle was to reveal who He was to his disciples and the people who had been there for three days listening to Him teach and had eaten nothing. But this setting also teaches us to be thankful for the little we have and submit it to the Father who has a generous hand and always provides for our needs.

God the Father is a generous God who takes care of us and always provides for our needs. For this we should always be thankful.

**Philippians 4:19 (AMP) And my God will liberally supply (fill until full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**

Matthew 6:31-33 (NLT) "So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?'" <sup>32</sup> These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. <sup>33</sup> Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

**Psalms 23:1-2 (AMP) The LORD is my Shepherd [to feed, to guide and to shield me],** I shall not want. <sup>2</sup> He lets me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still *and* quiet waters.

Psalms 37:25 (ESV) I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.

That the Heavenly Father hears us and care for us should make us thankful but none of this would be possible without the last thing Jesus gives thanks for.

### III. **Thankful for the Father's loving heart**

Luke 22:19 (NKJV) And when He had taken bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

To the disciples Jesus is giving thanks for what looks like simply bread and wine. But the bread and wine to Jesus represented the Father's love for them and all those who would come to faith in Him.

It also represented the suffering of the one who was giving thanks. It was His body that would be broken and His very life (blood) that He would give for the sins of the world. All because of the love of the Father for those who were far from him.

**John 3:16 (NKJV) For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

Romans 5:8 (NKJV) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**1 John 4:9-10 (NLV) God has shown His love to us by sending His only Son into the world. God did this so we might have life through Christ. <sup>10</sup>This is love! It is not that we loved God but that He loved us. For God sent His Son to pay for our sins with His own blood.**

As Jesus is thanking the Father and blessing the bread and the wine, he knows that in just a few hours that meal to him would become reality.

He would be betrayed by one of his closest friends, sentenced to death by the Jewish leaders, his beard ripped from his face, his body beaten, bruised and shredded by a whip at the hands of the Romans, his hands and feet would be pierced with iron nails and His blood would soak a wooden cross and the ground beneath it as a sacrifice for those who were guilty of sin. All because of the Father's love and for this He is thankful.

He was giving thanks for the love that prompted this act of sacrifice, and He was reminding us to that we are to ever and always give thanks for the love that held Him to the cross. It was not the nails that held Him there. He could have called ten-thousand angels to set Him free no, love held Him there!

The Father does listen to our prayers and he does provide for us, all because of what He did through Christ His Son to bring us into right relationship with Himself. For this we must be thankful!

Romans 5:10-11 (NLV) We were saved from the punishment of sin by the death of Christ. He has brought us back to God and we will be saved by His life. <sup>11</sup> Not only that, we give thanks to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have been brought back to God.

*Thank you, Father, for listening to our prayers, thank you for providing for our needs and most importantly thank you for your loving heart.*