

“Be Ye Thankful”
By Brother Parrish Lee
Sunday, November 8th, 2015

Wow. Amen. Our God is what? greater, our God is stronger, our God is higher than any other. Don't get me started. Coming from a person who used to speak the name Allah, and call him great, for many years, to the Name who is above every name, and the miraculous things that He has done, and that man says that man says, “Hallelujah.”

What a beautiful time of praise and worship, amen? Amen?

Giving honor to God, the beneficent, the merciful, the compassionate, our healer, our redeemer, our savior, our bridge over troubled waters, our light in the dark places, and, some of us know, our keeper on the roads, our food on the table, and our job five or six days a week. Giving honor to Him, who is the preserver and the giver of all good and perfect gifts. And, giving honor to those who have before us, in this ministry, in this pulpit, from our founding pastor, he and his family, to our pastor, he and his family. And, to all of those who have stood in the gap, to make up the hedge in between. And, giving honor to all of y'all that come to present yourselves to honor the most high God, that He might supplement and supply your every need. Giving honor to you, that God would do exactly what He said He'd do.

We've taken this month, as Brother Andy said, we've taken this month, and it's easy to see, it's simple to see, it's altogether appropriate to see the month of November as the month of thanksgiving, the month of giving thanks, putting ourselves in remembrance. The Scripture theme for the month is:

Ezra 3:11 *And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; [they sang together by course] because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.*

All the people shouted. But, our scripture for today, our scripture theme for today

1 Thessalonians 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

If we could just bow our heads for just a moment. Lord, we do come and we thank You for all Your wonderful, Your incredible, Your good and perfect gifts that You have given to us, God. The things that we can't even call to mind. We thank You for an awesome day, that we were able to get up and walk across the floor, be clothed, in our right mind, to come, and present ourselves to the God who is the God over all. And, as You have blessed us intently, Lord, we ask that You do the same with your Word, as we go over Your Word this morning, and that it would do exactly as Your Scripture says, as Your Word says, that it would not return unto You void, but truly go out to do that which You sent it, that all the people might thereby be nourished, fed, and edified. And this we do come, pray, and claim in Jesus' name, and everyone said, amen. Amen.

What a wonderful day, what a wonderful time, and what a wonderful an awesome—just the ability to be in the presence of God. Pastor Ullyse was here last week, and what a wonderful time. He and his wife had brought so much, but he wanted to make sure that Andy and I would communicate how much he enjoyed himself here. He was thankful for the fellowship, he was thankful for the worship, and he was very thankful for the love offering that the congregation gave to him. He was very thankful for that, and he is already planning another visit. “I had such a good time, I just don't want to—I'm going to

go back, we're going to put in on the calendar, we're going to talk about it, and I'm going to make sure that it's not just Pastor Paine and Brother Rod coming up here to enjoy that blessing." Amen, amen. What a wonderful time.

The title of today's message is simply, "Be Ye Thankful," and we're going to get right into it. We're going to go to part one:

Part 1: Thankfulness Is Part of Our Praise

Now, everybody don't praise God the same way, at the same time, all the time. There's individuals, and God's given us such an avenue of individuality in God. Well, the Jews, the Jews, as they were praising God—they were a people known to praise God—they had over a hundred and seventy-five ways where they praised God. Over a hundred and seventy-five. But they had seven *main* ways that they praised God. Now, the title of this part is, "Thankfulness Is Part of Our Praise." "Thankfulness Is Part of Our Praise."

One way, if I could have Brother Brent come up, one way that they would praise God is called the 'Barak' praise. The 'Barak' praise. (Brent kneels) And, when you 'Barak' God, you kneel or bow, you give reverence to God as an act of adoration, it implies a continual conscious giving place to God, to be atuned to him and his presence. So, our brother here today, is giving us an example, an example we all should be familiar with, of 'Baraking' God.

Another way of praising God, one of the main ones that they had, is called a 'Zamar' praise, and, if Brother Andy would come up... (Brent starts to get up) No, no, stay there, bro. Another way is the 'Zamar' praise. And 'Zamar' means to touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument, that is, to play upon it, to make music with it, and it's specifically a many-stringed instrument, (Brother Andy begins strumming the guitar) accompanied by a voice, to celebrate in song and music, giving praise, singing forth psalms unto God.

Another praise that they had before God is the 'Yadah' praise. If Sister Alma would come and assist us in the 'Yadah' praise. And the Yadah praise is to use, or to hold up the hand, to throw toward God, or to revere Him or worship Him with extended hands, as a praise that is thankful, brought before God, or thanksgiving.

Another praise is the 'Tehillah' praise. The 'Tehillah' praise. As Sister Sonya is here, to sing hallal, from which we get the word, 'hallelujah.' So, the 'Tehillah' praise is to sing a song, a hymn, to glorify God in song

Another way to praise is the 'Shabach' praise. And, when you 'Shabach' God, you bring a loud voice. It means to address in a loud tone, a loud adoration, a shout, proclaiming with a loud voice, unashamed, to glory, triumph, power, a testimony of praise.

Another form of praise that we bring unto God besides the Shabach, the Tehillah, the Yadah, the Zamar, and the Barak, there is also the 'Todah' praise. That 'Todah' praise. Simply, the 'Todah' praise is an extension of the hand, avowal, an adoration, a choir of worshipers, confession, a sacrifice of praise, and thanksgiving. In the 'Todah' praise, you raise your hands in thanks to God. You raise your hands in thanksgiving, and give God a 'Todah' praise.

Thank you so much, thank you so much. (The people illustrating different forms of praise return to their seats) So, being thankful is part, part, of our praise; from First Thessalonians chapter five, as we've already read, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Yeah, you. Thankfulness is part of our praise.

Part 2: The Lesson of Nebuchadnezzar

To provide just a little setting for this: Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon, and Babylon was a great nation. In fact, it was a nation of nations. It was what we would call today an empire. As we saw the Soviet Union, it had several—that's about the closest thing we could call today, or maybe even China where they had several other nations inside of it. There were other countries, and yet it was called by one name, USSR, or Soviet Union, back in the day. Babylon was similar to that, and it stretched out upon the known regions. It was great; it was really big, and Nebuchadnezzar was its king. And, it was so great that, one of the things that they had, they had many, many things there—I'm not going to go into all of it, but it's a great thing to look at some time—but, one of the things that they had, they had one of the seven wonders of the world, well, of the ancient world, anyway. Of course, the only one that's remaining today is the pyramids in Egypt, but they also had the Colossus of Rhodes, and other things, and they also had the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. The Hanging Gardens. The historians haven't been able to figure out how it happened, what it looked like. And they said, "Well, we kind of doubt if it really was there. Nobody can figure out what they did or how they did it, so, maybe it didn't really exist. Maybe it was just a legend. Maybe Babylon was so great, they just made it up." That's what historians can do. "If we can't figure it out, well, maybe it didn't exist at all." But, Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler of this great region, this great nation. He would have been the Putin of today. Actually, he would have been bigger, because we have other great nations. He would have been even bigger than Putin.

Daniel 4:24 *This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:*

So, the thing that he's interpreting is a dream. A dream that Nebuchadnezzar had, where he dreamed about this great big tree, that reached all the way up into Heaven. It was big, and wide, and the fowls, and the birds would nest themselves in there, and the beasts, the beasts of the field would come under it, and they would have shelter, and there was food, they would get provisions under it, and he saw that this great big tree had its branches cut off and cut down, and he asked all the people of the land, "What's going on?" all the wise people. "What's going on? Somebody tell me the interpretation of this dream," and nobody could. All the wise men came, and they couldn't, until they got to Daniel. And Daniel came to tell him the interpretation of this dream, and here it is:

Daniel 4:25-28 *That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity. All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.*

So, the dream—Daniel told him, "You are that tree, great King. You are the tree." And, yes, I'm getting to a specific point, here. "You are that tree, but, the interpretation is, you are going to be dwelling out there with the beasts of the field, and this tree is going to be cut down, but the stump remains, meaning God will restore you after seven times, meaning seven years, you're going to be restored." And he said, "But, King, please," in verse twenty-seven, "Let my counsel be accept unto you, and break off your sins, by righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, that it may be a lengthening of your tranquility, a lengthening of your peace." And, all of this was what Daniel told the king.

Daniel 4:29 *At the end of twelve months [twelve months! Nebuchadnezzar took twelve months to think about this] he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.*

Now, you've got to remember, Babylon was the nation, and he was the ruler. There was nobody higher on the planet at that time! Other nations were under him, and, now, Daniel has told him, "Look, you don't rule. The Heavens rule, and the Most High is the one in charge!" After twelve months, he's walking in his palace, and, after twelve months, he said:

Daniel 4:30 *The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?*

He's looking around, going, "Are you telling me that something is greater than me? Look at what I've got! Look at what I do! And something's greater than me?"

Daniel 4:31-33 *While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: the shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High [until you know that the Most High] ruleth; [until you know that God is the one who's in charge] in the kingdom of men, and giveth it [He gives these things!] to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.*

And they call this—they said this is extremely rare, you know, when you're trying to explain things of God, you come up with some pretty crazy explanations. And, the medical people, and the scientists, they said, "Well, what really happened to Nebuchadnezzar was extremely rare. He had a disease, and this disease came upon him, and it's like a lycanthropic disease, and it's kind of like when a person starts thinking they're an animal, they start acting like that. It's extremely rare!" They tried to explain it, when I looked it up, and it's extremely rare, because God put His finger down, and said, "Boom! Now you got it." And so it's rare that that judgment gets passed, but when that judgment gets passed, y'all try to explain it; no, it was God that did this thing. And, it was that way for seven years.

Daniel 4:34 *And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me [after seven years, God gave him back his mind], and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:*

Now, there's a reason why this had to happen to Nebuchadnezzar. Because everybody knew who Nebuchadnezzar was. If it had happened to Leroy or James down the street, it wouldn't have been no big deal. "He's out of his mind; he's crazy." But, it happened to the Emperor! It happened to who was the king of kings at the time. Now, everybody, all the nations, "You heard? Something has come upon Nebuchadnezzar, the great king! Something has happened to him. Something really bad has happened to him! Apparently, he had a dream. Apparently, Daniel told him something. And, apparently, just as he said, it has come upon him!" "Why?" "Well, apparently, what Daniel told him was, 'You've got to give thanks to God for what he gave you! You've got to thank Him! You've got to praise Him, because He's the One in control!'" "Really? Then what happened?" "Well, apparently, Nebuchadnezzar didn't want to do that. And, apparently, he fell a little." And everybody throughout the land knows that it happened

to the great one, and if it could happen to him, it could happen to anybody. "If he can't stop it, then nobody can stop it, even with access to the best medical people, he had access to the best sorcerer, he had access to the best foods; he can get anything he wants. So, if he couldn't stop it, and he has to lit up the name of the Most High, that means all the rest of us in Babylon need to be lifting up the name of the Most High." That's why it had to happen to the great king. And the reason it was written down is that it puts all those who read this later on, in remembrance, in remembrance that we, too, have that obligation to praise and thank God for the things that he gives us, because it is not we who have given us these things, it is He in us that has given us these things.

Part 3: Thankfulness Is a Choice

Being thankful is a choice.

Colossians 3:15 *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

So, let God's peace rule in you, because we are called to let that be done in one body. Now we are all members, in particular, but we are all members of one body, so we are all supposed to let the peace of God rule in us together. Together. Or, simply, these things, we are called, we are the ones called, to let this happen to us, in the body of Christ. To let that rule, and we are called to be thankful, thankful.

Yesterday, after Men's fellowship, I got a phone call, and it was from Brother Jesse G. Brother Jesse, a real humble man, called me to tell me, he said, "Brother Parrish, I just called to let you know what things has happened. I was in surgery for over 11 hours." He said, "I was on the table, and out, for over 11 hours." I was like, "Wow!" And, as I was trying to think of some things to help comfort my brother, he went from, "I was in surgery for over 11 hours, and, you know what? God has been good to me." He said, "God kept me the whole time. I woke up; I'm in my right mind, brother." He said, "I've got feeling going on where I wasn't having so much feeling before." He said, "All I can do right now is just praise Him. That's all I can do is praise Him." And he went on; he said, "God has been good to me for a long time. I can't help it. I can't help it." As he was sharing with me, I thought, "You know, trying to encourage this brother, when he is this sold out to praising and thanking God for the things that he has done. He's way past that little bit of encouragement that I had. He's already pouring encouragement back the other way. All I could do was starting thanking and blessing God. I could feel a witness as he started praising and thanking God. And he actually—there he was in I.C.U. and he got a little happy! He got happy in I.C.U.! He couldn't get out of bed; he couldn't walk, or anything like that... He got happy! He said, "God's good to me. If you could bring me anything when they come, just one of them little phone cords?" And so, we talked to some people to see if we could get him a phone cord, but he said, "That's all, because God's got my back on everything else. Brother, I can't tell you how good He's been to me!" He said, in the hospital, "He's good to me! You know, I had something to eat today! He's good to me! I woke up; He's good to me!" That went on and on, and my heart was about to bust. He took away all the complaining about this and about that. He took all of that away. The witness of somebody who chooses to be thankful. The witness of somebody who chooses to be thankful.

So, well, is it a wrong not to be thankful? Is it a wrong thing not to be thankful?

Romans 1:21 *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

So, to be NOT thankful is to deny the source of whatever your blessing or benefit is. To deny the source of whatever your benefit and blessing is. It is also to not acknowledge that something was done for you that you did not do yourself. To NOT be thankful is to not acknowledge that something was done for you that you didn't do yourself. And, lastly, to NOT be thankful is to say that whatever did that for you is not worthy of your praise, not worthy of your praise. So, is it wrong to not be thankful? As it says here, "...when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful..." And, therefore, they became vain.

Does it matter how thankful we should be? Does it matter what magnitude of thankfulness we should have? Because that, too, is a choice. That, too, is a choice.

We're just going to read one verse; to go over the story: It is where the Pharisee was preparing a meal for the Lord Jesus, and, as he did all the preps—Andy and Bob stole that part of the message, so go back and review that—as he prepared the steps for the Lord coming over to his house, and you can imagine the things that he had gone through and done. He might have, maybe, outside, things that you see very, very clean. But, the message, in Luke chapter seven, goes on to say that there was a woman who appeared. This woman that appeared, it says that she was a sinner. She was a sinner, but she came to Him, and she was on the floor, and she cried on the feet of the Lord; she washed His feet with her tears. She dried His feet with her hair, and she kissed His feet. And the Pharisee said—and I'm sure he had his idea of what would be the perfect setting for Jesus to be there. I'm sure he did. And, in his mind, he said, "If this man really were a prophet, He would know what manner of woman this is." And the Lord let him think that thought, and, as he completed thinking it, the Lord brought to him a situation, and He told him, "I have somewhat to say unto you, Simon. A certain Lord had two debtors. Of the two, one owed five hundred, and one owed fifty, but he forgave them both. Who would be the more thankful? Who would love him more?" He said, "I suppose the one who was forgiven more." And He told him, "You have well said." And then He went on to share about the woman that Simon didn't believe belonged there in the presence of the prophet, the Lord Jesus. He said, "When I came in, your house might have been great, but you gave Me nothing for My feet, but look at what she has done. You gave Me no water, but she washed them with her own tears. And you gave Me nothing to dry them, but she dries them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss, but she has not stopped kissing. Therefore..." in verse 47

Luke 7:47 *Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*

You notice that he didn't say anything about Simon's sins, because, He said He did not come to destroy people. He came to forgive, and restore people. In other words, "Simon, you have a chance. You still have a chance." Now, to whom much is forgiven the same loveth much; somewhere along the line, we all, in our minds, think, "well, I've been forgiven of a lot, and I have a certain amount to attest to. Everybody does. I'm not as bad as some people. I'm not good, I'm not perfect, but, I'm somewhere in the middle. I'm probably closer to the good side." That's a common thought that people have, but that kind of stops love from just breaking forth. And, if you if you want to say, "You know, I would really love to love the Lord more. I would love to love the Lord more." If you want to have a greater love for God, recognize more of the things that He has done for you. Be more thankful. Start counting your blessings. Go backwards; count them for the long time; people that you never thought would live for God. Count your blessings and be real specific about it.

And part four; our final part:

Part 4: There Is A Benefit Of Being Thankful.

Being thankful is a gateway; it's a gateway to our blessings. It is a gateway to Him pouring Himself into us, being thankful is. We've talked about the acknowledgement of Him doing something we couldn't do ourselves, but let's look at:

Psalms 22:3 *But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*

Inhabit simply means to dwell in, or to sit down; it also means to remain with. And, also, it actually means to be married with; to be married and joined with. Thou who inhabits... And praises mean a hymn, a song, but it also means a praise, and a celebration. It also means a commending and a thankfulness. So, Thou art holy, You who inhabits the praises; You who dwell in and sits in my praises and my celebrations, and my commendings, and my thankfulness, to You. And Israel, Israel, you might say Israel, at one time, might have been the nation, for, we look in the Book of Revelation, and the Bible says, "I will show you the Lamb's bride, and we see New Jerusalem coming down as a bride adorned for her husband." (Revelation 21:2) Thou that inhabits the praises of His people.

And, so, if we could say this properly, there's a benefit to being thankful. If we could say this properly, what we would say is, back in the time of Moses, he built the tabernacle—yeah, Bob and Andy stole that whole part of the message; you're lucky, I don't have to preach that—so, in the time of Moses, they had the tabernacle in the wilderness, and God gave them specifics on how they were to set it up. And then, in David's time, he built the Temple—well, David didn't build it, but his son did; he was to prepare for it. And there was a Temple built. The Tabernacle, and then the Temple, and, to say this properly, they were given instructions on what to do. They were given clearances, they were given lengths, they were given qualities, and the people, the people were instructed *how* they were to come before Him. And when the people came—yes, Andy. Yes, Bob—when the people came before God, when they came before the Tabernacle, and when they came before the Temple, when the Priests had done what they were supposed to do, when they had taken care of their offerings, and they had washed right, and they had dressed right, when they had cleaned it and made it... When the musicians and the singers, yeah, when they had done what they were supposed to do. They had practiced; they had honed themselves, they had gotten their hearts straight, they had gotten their minds straight... When the people came and they gave willingly, when they had spent their time preparing to come before the Lord, God, Almighty, when they did these things in their preparation, and they made themselves ready, the Bible says:

2 Chronicles 5:13 *It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD;*

When they came, and had everything as God had asked them to do, when they did that, and presented themselves, and worshipped wholly, the Bible says that God would come down in a cloud and fill the place. If we were to read on, we'd see that He'd fill it, and the priests that were in there had to get out, because no flesh was going to be able to stand in the presence of that much God. The flesh had to leave. So, God's people were of one mind, praising, lifting up their voices, thanking God for His goodness, thanking Him for His mercy; God filled the house, and God filled the Temple.

1 Corinthians 6:19 *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

So, it's wonderful when God fills this building, and any building where people come to worship Him in the beauty of holiness. It's wonderful when everything is done according to how God had asked, when the preparations are done, when the hearts are prepared, when the minds are prepared, and people have their sins remitted. But, God just doesn't want to fill a house. The Bible says that his spirit fills Heaven and Earth. God doesn't just want to fill Heaven and Earth; God wants to fill His people. He wants to pour Himself in His people.

2 Corinthians 6:16 *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

Dwell in us, and walk in us, and be our God, and be my God, and be your God. And all in part starts with thanks, thanking God for what he does for us.

Our last Scripture:

Psalms 100:4 *Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.*

And David says why; he gives us three reasons:

Psalms 100:5 *For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

He's good, His mercy, and His truth. Amen. Can we give the Lord a praise?

