

SERMON & DEVOTIONAL OUTLINE

November 23, 2025

Thanksgiving Changes Everything

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Text: 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Psalm 100:4-5;
John 10:7-9 NIV

MAIN TEXT

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

1 — THE CULTURE HAS TRAINED YOU TO COMPLAIN

Numbers 11:1-6; Philippians 2:14-15

"And before you know it, you've caught the DIS-EASE!"

- The enemy has strategically deployed a system to keep you dissatisfied, discontented, and discouraged.
- Complaining creates DIS-EASE: you're no longer at ease, no longer comfortable, no longer at rest.
- Israel wandered 40 years because complaining delays your destiny, blocks your breakthrough, and locks you in the wilderness.

Cross References:

- Numbers 14:1-4 — The wilderness generation refused to enter
- 1 Corinthians 10:10 — "Do not grumble..."
- Philippians 4:6-7 — Prayer with thanksgiving brings peace

Application:

- Check what's coming out of your mouth — your words either build walls or break them down.
- Thanksgiving RESTORES your ease; gratitude returns you to your natural state of REST in God.

2 — JESUS IS THE GATE - THANKSGIVING IS THE PROTOCOL

Psalm 100:4; John 10:7-9

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise."

- Jesus declares: "I AM the gate" — not A gate, but THE gate. The ONLY way to the Father.
- You can't separate thanksgiving from Jesus — HE is the gate you're entering through.
- Every time you give thanks, you're declaring: "I didn't EARN this access — JESUS did!"

Cross References:

- John 14:6 — "No one comes to the Father except through me"
- Hebrews 10:19-22 — We have confidence to enter through Jesus' blood
- Ephesians 2:18 — Access to the Father through Christ

Application:

- You can't enter God's presence through complaining, self-righteousness, or good works alone.
- The ONLY way in is through JESUS (the Gate) WITH thanksgiving (the protocol).

3 — THANKSGIVING POINTS TO THE CROSS

Matthew 27:51; Romans 8:32

"Jesus is both the GATE and the SACRIFICE that opened the gate."

- In the Old Testament, access required sacrifices and blood.
- When Jesus died, the temple curtain tore — "THE WAY IS OPEN!"
- Your gratitude is CHRISTOLOGICAL — it celebrates what Jesus accomplished on the cross.

Cross References:

- John 1:29 — "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"
- 1 Peter 2:24 — "By his wounds you have been healed"
- Colossians 3:17 — "Give thanks to God through him"

Application:

- Every complaint questions the cross; every thanksgiving CELEBRATES it.
- When you give thanks in hard times, you declare: "Jesus, the cross is SUFFICIENT!"

4 — GRATITUDE IS YOUR WEAPON

Acts 16:25-26; 2 Chronicles 20:20-22

"When you praise God through Jesus, you remind the enemy of his DEFEAT."

- Paul and Silas praised at midnight in prison — chains fell, doors opened, prison shook.
- Jehoshaphat sent SINGERS first — God set ambushes against the enemy.
- Your thanksgiving declares: The CROSS defeated him! Jesus disarmed powers and authorities!

Cross References:

- Psalm 22:3 — God inhabits the praises of His people
- Colossians 2:15 — Christ disarmed the powers and authorities
- Psalm 149:6-9 — Praise as a weapon in the hand of believers

Application:

- Your praise through Jesus is PROPHETIC — it declares victory before you see it.
- When you enter His gates with thanksgiving, you tell the devil: "Jesus ALREADY WON!"

5 — THE CHOICE TO BE RADICALLY GRATEFUL

Philippians 4:11-13; Colossians 3:15-17

"Gratitude is not a FEELING — it's a DECISION!"

- Paul said give thanks IN all circumstances — not FOR all, but IN them.
- You're not praising your CIRCUMSTANCES — you're praising through the GATE of Jesus.
- Specificity activates sensitivity to what the cross accomplished!

Cross References:

- 1 Timothy 6:6-8 — "Godliness with contentment is great gain"
- Hebrews 13:15 — "Continually offer the sacrifice of praise"
- Matthew 11:28 — "Come to me... and I will give you rest"

Application:

- Start every day with SPECIFIC, Christ-centered gratitude connected to the cross.
- Replace every complaint with gospel truth that points to Jesus as the gate.
- Praise Him BEFORE the breakthrough — your thanksgiving through Jesus is prophetic!

6 — GOOD FRIENDS BECOME WITNESSES THROUGH GRATITUDE

Romans 8:38-39; 1 Peter 3:15

"People are watching how you handle hardship."

- When they see you praising through trials, they ask: "What do you HAVE?"
- You tell them: "I have a GATE! His name is JESUS! The CROSS changed everything!"
- Your gratitude becomes your witness; your thanksgiving becomes your evangelism.

Cross References:

- Matthew 5:16 — "Let your light shine before others"
- Acts 16:25-26 — The jailer saw their praise and believed
- Psalm 107:2 — "Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story"

Application:

- Be the person whose gratitude in trials points others to Jesus.
- Your response to hardship is your testimony to a watching world.

7 — THE FOUNDATION: GOD'S GOODNESS, LOVE, AND FAITHFULNESS

Psalm 100:4-5; Romans 8:32

"For the Lord is GOOD and his love endures FOREVER."

- God's goodness isn't determined by your circumstances — it's rooted in His character.
- Ultimate proof of His goodness? He sent JESUS to be the gate!

- The CROSS is ultimate proof that God is good, His love endures, and He is faithful.

Cross References:

- Lamentations 3:22-23 — "His compassions never fail... new every morning"
- James 1:17 — "Every good and perfect gift is from above"
- Psalm 23 — "He restores my soul"

Application:

- When life is hard, remember: His goodness sent Jesus, His love is unfailing, His faithfulness is proven.
- Thanksgiving isn't based on circumstances — it's rooted in the unchanging character of God.

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE:

"From Stress to Thanksgiving"

Day 1 — "Recognize the DIS-EASE" (Philippians 2:14-15)

Reflect: Where has complaining created DIS-EASE in my life?

Action: Replace one complaint today with specific thanksgiving.

Day 2 — "Jesus Is The Gate" (John 10:7-9)

Reflect: Have I tried to enter God's presence through anything other than Jesus?

Action: Thank Jesus specifically for being your access to the Father.

Day 3 — "The Cross Changes Everything" (Colossians 3:17)

Reflect: How does my gratitude connect to what Jesus did on the cross?

Action: Write down 3 blessings and connect each one to the finished work of Christ.

Day 4 — "Praise as Warfare" (Acts 16:25-26)

Reflect: What battle am I facing that needs the weapon of thanksgiving?

Action: Praise God in the middle of your hardest circumstance today.

Day 5 — "Be a Witness" (1 Peter 3:15)

Reflect: Who is watching my response to difficulty?

Action: Let your gratitude in trials point someone to Jesus today.