

Thanking God for Salvation

Over the next few weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, I would like to take the time to explore why appreciation and being grateful is so important. There are some important things that are part of our *basic* spirituality like knowing about God and His Word or loving and wanting the best for our neighbor. However, thankfulness and gratitude are not just a good idea to add on to our spiritual growth. They are at the *foundation* of our relationship not only with people, but also with God.

When people lose the habit of saying "thank you," they are not only being rude but they also reveal something deeper about their attitude toward others. Gratitude is a small acknowledgment that we are not self-sufficient. It acknowledges that we need others when they have contributed to our comfort, convenience, or well-being. When that simple courtesy is missing, it makes a person seem arrogant, unappreciative, or indifferent, as if they think kindness is owed to them. The tone of entitlement that comes from ingratitude also chills the spirit of generosity in others. We might naturally hesitate to help those who don't need us. What once could have been a relationship built on mutual respect becomes strained by the sense that one party is being used or taken for granted.

Worse still, such an attitude often blinds the ungrateful person to the fact that they actually *do* need help. Those who think they are too important to show thanks might begin to believe they are too capable to need others at all. They confuse independence with superiority and fail to see that their pride is slowly isolating them. In time, the very people they disregard stop offering assistance. The people they need do not stop helping out of spite, but because it is emotionally exhausting to keep giving where no gratitude is returned. When someone is a known ingrate, even those who might otherwise have helped them grow weary and hesitant. They become inured or calloused by repeated disappointment.

The helper begins to see that any gesture of kindness will be met with cold indifference or quiet contempt, and it feels like a battle to offer help at all. The tragedy is that the proud person does not realize the loss until they truly *do* need help and find no willing hearts left nearby.¹ Gratitude, then, is not just good manners; it is the grace that keeps human kindness alive.

Ingratitude is also what causes many to miss salvation from God whose help we definitely need.

First, let's consider our desperate condition of sin and spiritual need before God.

1. Man's Poverty -

Man's true condition before God is one of utter destitution. Sin has not merely weakened humanity. It has bankrupted us. We have nothing in our moral account that can begin to pay what we owe to a holy and righteous God. Every thought, every motive, every deed is stained by the corruption of sin.

Rom 3:10-12 As it is written,
There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Psa 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

That is not an exaggeration; it is the divine verdict. The holiness of God demands perfection, but man stands before Him not merely poor in virtue, but penniless in righteousness. We come

¹The spiritual response, however, of a Christian should be to still offer loving help.

with empty hands and guilty hearts, unable to purchase even a moment of favor from heaven.

Isa 64:6 But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Man walks proudly through life, imagining himself good, capable, and self-made. In truth he is morally destitute. The world may measure success by wealth, knowledge, or influence, but before the judgment bar of God, those things carry no currency. It is man's sin that has rendered him spiritually bankrupt. Every good intention is overdrawn. Every moral effort is insufficient. Every claim to righteousness is invalid. Man boasts of progress, but every political scheme comes with unintended consequences.

Modern welfare systems arose to relieve poverty and hardship, which are indeed noble goals. But when compassion was separated from personal accountability and moral structure, dependence replaced diligence. Multi-generational welfare dependency, broken family structures, and entitlement mentalities grew out of what was once considered progress. Aid without expectation of reform weakens both character and community.

The mid-20th-century movement promising liberation from "old moral constraints" claimed to free humanity from guilt and repression. Yet instead of fulfillment, it ushered in broken homes, rampant disease, fatherless generations, and emotional emptiness. The redefinition of love and marriage under the guise of progress left society with confusion about gender, identity, and purpose showing that unrestrained freedom quickly becomes bondage.

The digital revolution has supposedly evolved to handle ever more creative workloads in writing, art, music, and even moral decision-making. Instead it has produced a generation increasingly

dependent on technology to think, and now to decide, for them. Artificial intelligence, once meant to expand human ability, is often misused in ways that dull both intellect and conscience. When people stop reasoning deeply, they stop judging rightly. The influence of algorithms replaces moral discernment, rewarding emotion over conviction and normalizing whatever gains approval online. As convenience replaces curiosity and pleasure replaces principle, moral reasoning erodes. People begin to equate popularity with virtue and truth with what is trending. In making life easier, we are making minds duller and souls emptier.

In every age, mankind's attempts to construct a perfect society without divine wisdom follow the same pattern: good intentions divorced from godly principles produce moral collapse. Progress divorced from Providence becomes perilous. As Proverbs 14:12 warns,

Prov 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

God looks on the heart and finds it deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Our moral ledger shows red ink on every line, and no amount of good works can balance that debt.

And yet, man continues to try. He builds his religions. He performs his rituals. He trusts in his decency, thinking that if he can only do enough good, he might tip the scales in his favor. But salvation is not a wage to be earned; it is a gift to be received. Man's efforts cannot cancel his guilt any more than a thief can pay for his crime by promising to behave next time. Religion without regeneration is merely self-improvement without reconciliation. Pride blinds the sinner to his own poverty, making him unthankful and self-sufficient, convinced that he needs no help. But the truth is that the proud man stands as helpless before God as a beggar before a king, unable even to lift his head without mercy.

Until a man realizes his poverty, he

will never truly value God's provision. Thanksgiving does not begin with abundance; it begins with awareness that everything we have comes from the grace of God. When self-sufficiency ends, gratitude begins. Only when the sinner confesses his bankruptcy does he open his heart to receive the riches of God's saving grace. Until a man realizes his poverty, he will never truly value God's provision. Thanksgiving begins when self-sufficiency ends.

As bad as our condition is, God's provision is greater. He has provided the gracious and powerful gift of salvation through Christ.

2. God's Provision -

Into the desperate poverty of man's sin stepped the immeasurable love of God. Though man had nothing to offer but guilt and rebellion, God's heart was moved with compassion. The riches of heaven were poured out when He gave His only begotten Son. In Christ, divine love took on human form, entering the poverty of our humanity so that we might share in the riches of His righteousness.

2Cor 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

The gift of salvation is therefore not the result of man's pursuit of God, but of God's pursuit of man.

1John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

Rom 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

God's love stooped down to lift the helpless. His grace offered the wealth of His righteousness to the morally bankrupt.

God's provision was not only

gracious, it was powerful. The cross was not merely a gesture of goodwill; it was the decisive act of redemption. There, the full debt of sin was paid, and at the resurrection, God declared the payment accepted. No further work remains, no installment plan, no probationary period. The blood of Christ settled the account completely. Salvation is not a loan to be repaid through good behavior or religious ritual. It is a finished work, freely offered and fully sufficient. God's power in salvation is absolute: what He begins, He completes; what He promises, He performs.

Titus 3:4-7 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,
5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;
6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;
7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

If man's poverty reveals his helplessness, God's provision reveals the heart of God. Salvation shows not what man can achieve, but what God has given. However complete and available this divine gift is, it must be personally received. That brings us to the final truth: the faith that makes salvation personal. This is where gratitude comes in. It is essential that we gratefully *and* humbly accept the promise of God's salvation.

3. Faith's Perfection -

It is certainly right and good to praise God for His grace in salvation and for the power by which He provides such a great deliverance. Yet in saying "thank You," we do more than recognize His greatness. We acknowledge our own need and willingly submit ourselves to

Him and His saving work.

Faith begins with trust but is *perfected* by gratitude. It starts when the sinner believes God's promise, but it is *completed* when he *rests* in that promise with thanksgiving. Asking is the expression of *hope*. Thanking is the expression of *assurance*. Many cry out to God for salvation, yet never find peace because they continue to wait for some external sign or emotional confirmation. But true faith takes God at His Word.

When someone offers you a blessing, you might thank them for considering you, but you can't thank them for the *actual* blessing until after you receive it. When you pray for salvation, you don't just thank God for *maybe* saving you. When you pray for salvation, you know that His "yes" has already been spoken at the cross. To say "thank You" to God for salvation is not presumption for what He *might* do, but knowing that is already done the moment you ask because He said so in His Word.

Rom 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Sometimes when I am explaining salvation and leading someone in prayer to ask God for total forgiveness, I will follow up with the question "Did God hear your prayer?" Many people understand what I am asking and acknowledge that the God Who hears all things and that He certainly did. Others respond a little tentatively which is a healthy desire to not be presumptuous. They will express it this way, "I think so." I will then encourage them that God gives us the assurance that if we ask Him for salvation that He will certainly say "Yes." When we exercise the good manners that our parents tried to teach us and say "Thank you," we are acknowledging that salvation. I could just tell them to now say "Thank you" but that gratitude should well up from within the person.

At some point, as you asked questions so that you can understand God, at some point you have enough to

go on from the Bible and when you pause in gratitude and say "Thank you" to God, that is when you can have the attitude needed for true salvation.

A proud heart cannot truly give thanks because thanksgiving acknowledges dependence. But when the sinner humbly thanks God for salvation, that gratitude itself is the evidence that grace has been received. The transaction of faith is complete when the heart turns from striving to resting, from begging to believing, and from doubt to delight.

Eph 2:8,9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Faith's perfection, then, is not in effort but in acceptance—in the quiet assurance that God has done exactly what He said He would do.

The soul that is truly saved cannot help but be thankful, and the thankful soul continues to live in the joy of that salvation every day. Gratitude becomes the natural language of faith—a daily confession that what God has begun in grace, He will continue in glory.

Phil 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

For those who have not yet turned to God for salvation, understand that no matter how carefully you try to construct a successful life, it will end in defeat without Him. You may build wealth, reputation, or comfort, but none of it can erase sin or purchase righteousness. The soul cannot climb its own ladder to heaven, it must be lifted by the grace of God.

Heb 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was

confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

God has already provided it through Christ, complete and free, but it must be received. Stop trying to justify yourself, stop patching your own goodness together, and instead turn humbly to God and say, "Thank You." That simple act of faith is both surrender and trust. Cease from your labors and rest in the finished work of Christ, who has done all that is needed for your salvation.

For those who are saved, let thankfulness be the melody of your life. If someone gave you a thousand dollars, would you snatch it and walk away without thanks? Would you avoid the giver the next time you saw him? You might if you squandered the blessing and were embarrassed. Otherwise, you would feel a lasting sense of appreciation, showing it through respect and kindness. How much more should we show gratitude to God, who has given us not silver or gold, but eternal life! When the Lord calls us to worship, do we come joyfully, or treat the day as casual and optional? When He invites us to serve, do we respond with gladness or complaint? George Matthewson the well known blind preacher of Scotland now with the Lord said,

"My God, I have never thanked thee for my *thorn*. I have thanked thee one thousand times for my roses, but never once for my thorn. I have been looking forward to A world where I shall get compensation for my cross as itself a present glory. Teach me the glory of my cross; teach me the value of my thorn. Show me that that I have climbed to thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow."

– Moody Monthly

True thanksgiving is more than words. It is devotion. Every act of obedience, every moment of worship, every expression of love toward others is a thank-you to God for His unspeakable

gift. Let your life say what your heart feels: "Thank You, Lord, for saving my soul."

1. Man's Poverty - Rom 3:10-12, Psa 51:5, Isa 64:6, Prov 14:12
2. God's Provision - 2Cor 8:9, 1John 4:19, Rom 5:8, Titus 3:4-7
3. Faith's Perfection - Rom 10:13, Eph 2:8,9, Phil 1:6, Heb 2:3