

What Does the Christian Have to be Thankful For?

Hebrews 13: 12-15

As we approach Thanksgiving, I am reminded this is a wonderful time of year. It is a time to reflect on all the blessings we have received and praise the Lord for His gracious hand of mercy. There can be little doubt God has blessed each of us abundantly.

It is good to praise God for all His goodness. As I look around today, I see folks who have been blessed abundantly from a physical perspective. We are all clothed; we all enjoy a measure of health that has allowed us to gather here today; I am sure we have all had something to eat today. These are all good, but they are just temporal blessings. The clothes we wear will become worn out, our bodies suffer the effects of age, and the meal that I enjoyed this morning will not last much longer.

The majority of America will celebrate Thanksgiving in the coming days to count their blessings, but for many, the temporal things are all they have. They have no understanding of blessings that go beyond this life. I rejoice to know there is more to come for the children of God. We have a hope that is beyond this world. Of all people, the church ought to offer praise and thanksgiving unto the Lord. I hope we will be reminded of what we have in the Lord. You may be struggling from the pressures of life, but if you are saved you are not forsaken.

I want to consider the [certainties](#) in the text as I share this thought: [What Does the Christian Have to be Thankful For?](#) To answer that question, we need not look any further than who we are. Allow me to say that:

I. We are a Precious People (12) – [Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.](#) This verse deals with Jesus giving His life upon the cross of Calvary for the sins of men. He came to this earth so we might be reconciled to God through Him. If anyone has a reason to rejoice in this life, it is the church! Christ didn't die for angels, or kingdoms; He died for you and me.

- When we consider all that Jesus suffered for us, there is no doubt that we are a precious people. If you are saved, you are precious to the Lord. You are somebody to Him. I have been saved for 30 years and I still haven't gotten over the fact that Jesus loves me! He loved me enough to die for me. [Rom.5:8 – But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.](#) Jesus gave Himself for the church. Never think that you are not precious or loved. We can rejoice in the fact that we belong to the Lord and we are precious to Him. [1 John 4:10 – Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.](#) Would you not agree that we are precious unto the Lord? You are loved of Him!

II. We are a Pardoned People (12) – Jesus came [that He might sanctify the people with His own blood](#). The sufferings of the cross were no tragic mistake. Jesus came that He might die for our sins so we might be sanctified, or “*made holy, purified, consecrated in Him.*” We were all born in sin, separated and condemned of God. There was no way we could reconcile ourselves to God. The debt of sin loomed heavy over our heads. Apart from the sacrifice and atoning blood of Jesus we would all remain dead in our sin.

- Jesus came and purchased our redemption; He pardoned our sin. Jesus settled that as He cried, **It is Finished!** That is a term that was used of servants as they completed their task. It was a word used of an artist as he finished his masterpiece. It was a term used of merchants as they struck a deal, signaling that the haggling was over and both were satisfied!
- I no longer stand guilty and condemned before a holy God. I have been set free from the bondage of my sin and am counted worthy in the eyes of God. When God looks upon the redeemed, He doesn't see worthless sinners bound for hell, He sees those who have been pardoned, forgiven, set free. I am viewed through the blood of my Savior! [Rom.4:7-8 – Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.](#) ^[8] [Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.](#) [Rom.8:1 – There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.](#) Can we not worship and praise Him because we have been pardoned and forgiven of all our sin?

III. We are a Peculiar People (13) – [Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.](#) I rejoice that I don't have to depend upon this sinful world. Jesus suffered without the gates of Jerusalem for our sin. We have been separated in Him. We are not accepted of this world. They simply don't understand us or the life we live. We are viewed as fanatics, but there is One that we can go to and find strength for our souls.

- The world will tell you that you will miss a lot by not partaking of all that it offers. For once they are right and I praise God that I have missed much of what this sinful world has to offer! They seem to look on us with pity because we refuse to live as they do. Listen, don't feel sorry for me. I have a peace in my heart that passes all understanding. I have a Rock that I can go to when the storms of life are raging. I have a hope that this world knows nothing of!
- The world will never accept our Lord and it will never accept us, but we can hold our heads up because we belong to Him. There will be some reproach and persecution that we have to bear, but I will gladly identify with my Lord! He has done for me what no other could ever do. This world has nothing to offer but heartache and pain. It is a blessing to be part of the body of Christ. I will stand and boldly proclaim my love and devotion for Him. I may not be received or accepted of this

world but I am accepted of my Lord. We need to let the world know where we stand and what we believe. We belong to the Lord of glory!

IV. We are a Promised People (14) – [For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.](#)

We sing an old song that says, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passing by, My treasures and my hope are all up in the sky; My friends and loved ones wait who trod this way before, And I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.” The saved are all on a journey for that blessed homeland of the redeemed! We are just pilgrims and strangers passing through this lowland of sin and sorrow, but one bright day the Lord will call for His bride. We are going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and enter into the joys of the Lord.

- This world has little to offer, but we will one day enter into our brand new home that the Lord is right now preparing for those who love Him. I kind of feel like Abraham as he was mentioned in [Heb.11:9-10 – By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:](#) ^[10] [For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.](#) Life is hard to bear and we all get weary in the journey, but this life is not all there is for the children of God. We will one day fold up this worn out tabernacle for a new glorified body and dwell in the presence of the Lord throughout eternity.

- We are going home one of these days and oh what a home that will be. It will be a land where sin, suffering, sorrow, and death will not be welcome. It will never come night there for Jesus Himself will be the light. All of our friends and loved ones who have gone on in the Lord will be there. We will just spend the day with the Lord!

- There can be no doubt the saved are a blessed people. We have received far more than our minds can comprehend. Because of all we’ve considered, we discover finally:

V. We ought to be a Praising People (15) – [By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name.](#) If anyone has a song to sing and a reason to rejoice it is the Christian. I don’t know about you, but when I begin to think about where I was when Jesus found me and what He delivered me from, I can’t help but praise Him. He has been far better to me than I will ever deserve. If He never offered another blessing, I would still have to say that God has been good! There are a couple of things we need to consider regarding our praise. We see that:

A. Real Praise is Costly – We are commanded to [offer the sacrifice of praise to God](#). Many times we come to church and never really praise the Lord because we can't focus on Him for ourselves. We are usually so consumed with our own wants and desires that we fail to worship the Lord.

- Real praise requires that we empty ourselves and see Jesus for who He is. Real praise doesn't worry about what others might think or say. Real praise is offered out of a heart of love and devotion. Real praise is the priority and focus of worship rather than an occasional by-product. Has God not been good to all of us? Are we willing to pay the price so that we might offer the sacrifice of praise to Him?

B. Real Praise is Continual – We are to [offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually](#). Do you know what that word continually literally means? It means continually, constantly, at all times. The Bible reveals our praise should never end. We are to continually offer praise unto the Lord. How many days have you spent in life where the Lord didn't supply your needs and provide abundant blessings? He is always faithful on His end, but I fear we come short much too often on our end.

- What if today's blessings were dependent on yesterday's praise? How many blessings would we enjoy? You might argue that you just don't feel like praising the Lord every day. You just don't know what I'm going through right now. Well do you think that Jesus, in His humanity, felt like going to the cross? He endured all of that so that we might be saved. The least we could do is praise Him. If you haven't praised the Lord in a while you need to get started and praise Him continually!

C. Real Praise is Comely – Our praise is to be the [fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name](#). It appears that Jesus wants to hear from the redeemed. He desires the praise of those whom He has saved. I'm sure the praise of angels is good, but Jesus didn't die for them. He died for us.

- I love to hear good singing. I like to see folks get full of the Holy Ghost and worship the Lord. But you know what I like to hear more than anything? I like to hear a broken sinner who has been saved by the marvelous grace of God simply say, "I want to thank God for saving me!" I am confident that type of praise is received in heaven. I can just imagine the Lord perking up His ear when He hears someone offer praise for their salvation. You don't have to be an accomplished singer or speaker to offer the fruit of your lips. Just offer from the abundance of your heart and the Lord will be pleased!

Conclusion: How long has it been since you praised the Lord? Maybe you just need to come today, gather around this altar, and thank the Lord for all He has done for you. We are the most

blessed people on earth, but many times we fail to realize all that we have been given. If you belong to the Lord, He is waiting to hear from you. If you have never been saved, Jesus stands ready to eternally save your soul. Why not come as the Lord leads?