**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | What to do When You Don’t Feel Thankful |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Ephesians 5:20 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #2446 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Ephesians 5:20 contains a command which many believe may be the most difficult command in all of the Bible to obey.
      1. At the same time, it may also bring the greatest blessing of all when it is obeyed.
   2. There are four levels of life when it comes to thanksgiving:
      1. There are those who constantly complain.
         1. They cannot find good in anything.
      2. There are those who have simple ingratitude.
         1. They do not complain; they’re just not grateful.
      3. There are those who are grateful for the obvious blessings, such as health, food, etc.
      4. The highest level is giving thanks always for all things.
   3. Seeds of discouragement will sprout almost anywhere except in the heart of a thankful person.
2. THE DURATION OF THANKSGIVING (Ephesians 5:20)
   1. Blessings never cease, therefore, thanksgiving should never cease.
      1. We are to praise God always.
      2. Give thanks always.
   2. Psalm 68:19
      1. God loads us with blessings daily.
   3. Lamentations 3:23
      1. God’s mercies are new every morning.
   4. Every prayer should be mixed with thanksgiving.
      1. Philippians 4:6
      2. We would be wicked and foolish to ask God for more blessings and not thank Him for what He has already done.
      3. We need to pull some of the groans out of our prayers and shove in some hallelujahs.
3. THE DIMENSIONS OF THANKSGIVING (Ephesians 5:19-20)
   1. We are to give thanks for all things.
      1. God rules all things, and we should give thanks for all things.
   2. Ephesians 5:19-20
      1. Thankfulness comes before praise.
      2. We are to have a song in our hearts no matter what happens.
   3. We should thank God for the very rudimentary and simple things in life.
      1. We should be thankful for water.
      2. We should be thankful for dirty dishes because that means we had foot to eat.
      3. We should be thankful for the obvious blessings in our lives.
   4. We are also to be thankful during the sorrowful times in life.
      1. When the apostle Paul wrote this passage, by divine inspiration, he was languishing in prison after having been unjustly accused of starting a riot.
   5. We can be thankful even in sorrowful times because of the overruling hand and providence of God. He can take even sorrow and use it for good in our lives:
      1. It may correct us.
         1. Hebrews 12:11
         2. Psalm 119:67
         3. If suffering and pain correct us, we need to thank God for it.
      2. It may cause us to have a greater dependency upon God.
         1. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
            1. The apostle Paul took pleasure for the “thorn in the flesh” that he had been given because God’s grace was sufficient, and he depended upon God.
      3. It may confirm our testimony to other people.
         1. When we endure sorrows and keep praising God, it shames the devil.
         2. Philippians 1:12, 29
            1. The apostle Paul understood that his sufferings had caused the Gospel to go further.
            2. At the time Paul wrote this passage, he had already suffered greatly: shipwrecks, beatings, mocking, persecution, hunger, thirst, character assassination.
            3. God used all of Paul’s suffering as a platform for Paul to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
      4. It will bring us to a deeper maturity and more Christ-likeness.
         1. Psalm 119:67, 71
            1. Affliction can be a wonderful teacher.
         2. God’s priority for us is not primarily health and wealth, but to make us spiritually mature and more like the Lord Jesus Christ.
         3. James 1:4
            1. The word “perfect” in this Scripture does not mean sinlessness, but maturity.
            2. The word “patience” means endurance and bearing up under suffering and problems.

Patience is God’s path to perfecting us.

* + - * 1. When we endure, we become perfected or mature.
      1. God allows us to go through trials so that we might learn endurance; God is bringing us to maturity.
    1. It will bring the excelling glory of God into our lives.
       1. 1 Peter 4:12-14
       2. As we get closer to the end time and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can expect increasing persecution.
          1. The more we give God thanks during persecution, the more the glory of God will rest upon us.
          2. When we are persecuted for the Lord’s sake, we can offer that criticism and that persecution to the Lord as a praise offering.
       3. Acts 6:15
       4. Daniel 3:25
       5. God will never be more real or more near to us than when we are thanking Him.
       6. 1 Peter 4:14
  1. We do not live by explanations but by promises and commandments.
  2. Romans 8:28
     1. God’s purpose is to make us like the Lord Jesus Christ.
     2. He is working on our behalf during trials and sorrows, and He is working to mature us and make us like the Lord Jesus.

1. THE DYNAMICS OF THANKSGIVING (Ephesians 5:20)
   1. Give thanks unto the Father.
      1. James 1:17
      2. True thanks should be given to the Father through Jesus Christ.
      3. God is good, and He daily loads us with benefits.
         1. This is not to say that we are to give thanks for the bad things that happen in life; there are some things in life that are bad or sinful, but God is good.
            1. Where God does not rule, He overrules.
            2. God takes all things and works them together for good to those who love Him.

Romans 8:28

* + 1. Unthankfulness is sinful and one of the marks of paganism.
       1. Romans 1:21
  1. Give thanks through the Son.
     1. Ephesians 5:20
        1. The phrase “in the name” literally means “through the name.”
        2. Jesus Christ is the dynamic.
     2. It is through Jesus Christ that we give thanks.
     3. We cannot truly give thanks to God in a biblical manner unless we do it through Jesus.
        1. He is the power of thankfulness.
        2. His name stands for authority.

1. CONCLUSION
   1. If you are saved today, then you can say with certainty, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”
      1. 2 Corinthians 9:15
   2. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   3. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16