

SERMON OUTLINE

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

- a) Ephesians 5:20 contains a command which many believe may be the most difficult command in all of the Bible to obey.
 - i) At the same time, it may also bring the greatest blessing of all when it is obeyed.
- b) There are four levels of life when it comes to thanksgiving:
 - i) There are those who constantly complain.
 - (1) They cannot find good in anything.
 - ii) There are those who have simple ingratitude.
 - (1) They do not complain; they're just not grateful.
 - iii) There are those who are grateful for the obvious blessings, such as health, food, etc.
 - iv) The highest level is giving thanks always for all things.
- c) Seeds of discouragement will sprout almost anywhere except in the heart of a thankful person.

2) THE DURATION OF THANKSGIVING (Ephesians 5:20)

- a) Blessings never cease, therefore, thanksgiving should never cease.
 - i) We are to praise God always.
 - ii) Give thanks always.
- b) Psalm 68:19
 - i) God loads us with blessings daily.
- c) Lamentations 3:23
 - i) God's mercies are new every morning.
- d) Every prayer should be mixed with thanksgiving.
 - i) Philippians 4:6
 - ii) We would be wicked and foolish to ask God for more blessings and not thank Him for what He has already done.
 - iii) 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)

- a) We are to give thanks for all things.
 - i) God rules all things, and we should give thanks for all things.
- b) Ephesians 5:19-20
 - i) Thankfulness comes before praise.
 - ii) We are to have a song in our hearts no matter what happens.
- c) We should thank God for the very rudimentary and simple things in life.
 - i) We should be thankful for water.
 - ii) We should be thankful for dirty dishes because that means we had food to eat.
 - iii) We should be thankful for the obvious blessings in our lives.
- d) We are also to be thankful during the sorrowful times in life.

- i) When the apostle Paul wrote this passage, by divine inspiration, he was languishing in prison after having been unjustly accused of starting a riot.
- e) 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:
 - i) 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.
 - ii) It may cause us to have a greater dependency upon God.
 - (1) 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
 - (a) 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.
 - iii) 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
 - (a) The apostle Paul understood that his sufferings had caused the Gospel to go further.
 - (b) At the time Paul wrote this passage, he had already suffered greatly: shipwrecks, beatings, mocking, persecution, hunger, thirst, character assassination.
 - (c) God used all of Paul’s suffering as a platform for Paul to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - iv) It will bring us to a deeper maturity and more Christ-likeness.
 - (1) Psalm 119:67, 71
 - (a) 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
 - (a) The word “perfect” in this Scripture does not mean sinlessness, but maturity.
 - (b) The word “patience” means endurance and bearing up under suffering and problems.
 - (i) Patience is God’s path to perfecting us.
 - (c) When we endure, we become perfected or mature.
 - (4) God allows us to go through trials so that we might learn endurance; God is bringing us to maturity.
 - v) 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.
 - (a) The more we give God thanks during persecution, the more the glory of God will rest upon us.

- (b) 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
 - f) We do not live by explanations but by promises and commandments.
 - g) Romans 8:28
 - i) God's purpose is to make us like the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - ii) He is working on our behalf during trials and sorrows, and He is working to mature us and make us like the Lord Jesus.
- 4) THE DYNAMICS OF THANKSGIVING (Ephesians 5:20)
- a) Give thanks unto the Father.
 - i) James 1:17
 - ii) True thanks should be given to the Father through Jesus Christ.
 - iii) 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.
 - (a) Where God does not rule, He overrules.
 - (b) God takes all things and works them together for good to those who love Him.
 - (i) Romans 8:28
 - iv) Unthankfulness is sinful and one of the marks of paganism.
 - (1) Romans 1:21
 - b) Give thanks through the Son.
 - i) Ephesians 5:20
 - (1) The phrase "in the name" literally means "through the name."
 - (2) Jesus Christ is the dynamic.
 - ii) It is through Jesus Christ that we give thanks.
 - iii) 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.
- 5) CONCLUSION
- a) If you are saved today, then you can say with certainty, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."
 - i) 2 Corinthians 9:15
 - b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.

- c) 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.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16