

## **Give Thanks in the Spirit**

### **Ephesians 5:20**

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Transcript:

In Ephesians chapter 5, we began a few weeks ago looking at verse 18 where he says, and be not drunk with wine for that is dissipation, but be filled today, we're looking at verse 20, which speaks of thanksgiving. Ephesians 5 and verse 20. Notice what it says. Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our lord Jesus Christ to god, even the father. Now I want you to take just a couple minutes and let that sink in, especially the words always and the words for all things.

There is a medieval legend that tells of 2 angels sent to earth by the Lord to gather the prayers of the saints. 1 was to gather the petitions and the other, the thanksgivings. The angel responsible for angel responsible for thanksgivings hand. That legend developed from the sad fact that God's children are more prone to ask him than to thank him. Think about that for just I we read the passage here in verse 20, I said, take just a moment and look at that.

Think about that. Now you may have already been hit with a few things this morning that challenged that very thought. And the question is, how did you respond? Were you thankful? Have you been able to maintain that particular attitude that God is calling for?

Because see, when we're not thankful, who are we acting like? We're acting like unbelievers. And we certainly have a lot of things to thank the Lord about, don't we? I mean, listen to how unbelievers respond. Romans 121, For even though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks.

Now, there's some people, they all sit down and get ready to eat their meal and they have a kind of a rope thing going on where they'll pray and ask the Lord to bless the food and that might be the only time that they thank God for something. Or it may be in other times when there's escaping a tragic situation. We've all had our shares of tragic situations. Some have been greater than others, obviously. But again, the question is, have we been able to give thanks?

So give thanks is more than sitting down at a meal, though we should be thankful for our meals. Right? We should be thankful for what God has provided for us, how he has provided it. But we are to be thankful in everything, and those words came from a man who suffered from many things. This is not coming from someone that doesn't know what they're talking about, or someone that doesn't understand human life, or human activity.

We all have our share of things that happen in our life. But listen for just a moment at some of the things that happened to the apostle Paul. Just a moment at some of the things that happened to the apostle Paul. In second Corinthians chapter 4 beginning at verse 7, he says, we have this treasure in earthen vessels so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of god and not from ourselves. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed perplexed, but not despairing persecuted, but not forsaken struck down, but not destroyed always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. Did you hear that? Afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, destroyed, or not destroyed, but struck down. I mean, but he has the opposite of that going on. He says we're not crushed.

We're not despairing. We're not forsaken. We're not destroyed. And then over in second Corinthians chapter 12, you remember the revelations that he had received. He was called up to paradise, to the 3rd heaven, and he was told not to talk about what he saw.

That would be some good advice for some of these people that go on TB and talk about having died and went to heaven and come back and report everything to us, and then some of the stuff they say is the most silliest stuff you'd ever heard. No toilets in heaven? Why would you need one? Right? It's stupid stuff.

But over in second Corinthians 12, he Paul had a thorn in the flesh. It was given to him to humble him, to keep him humble because of those revelations, and he asked the lord three times to remove it. And the Lord said, my grace is sufficient for you. And so since the Lord said that, he responded, most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. If God's grace is sufficient in my weakness, then I'm gonna find a way to boast in my weakness.

He says, therefore, I am well content with weaknesses. I'm well content with insults. I'm well content with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. That's a good verse to commit to memory, to be well content in weaknesses and insults and distresses and persecutions and difficulties, all for Christ's sake.

So that's the challenge right there. He said in Colossians 3:15, be thankful. He said, Philippians 4:6, stop worrying, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God. And then what he says after that, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. So when we are rejoicing in the Lord, when we are letting our gentleness be known to all men, when we're not worrying, we have everything by prayer and we're supplication and we have thanksgiving, he says, that's when you're gonna have his peace.

Notice there in Ephesians 5:20, he tells us that, always give thanks for all things. That means we are to pray with thanksgiving, that means we are to sing with thanksgiving, among many other things. That's because we have every reason to give thanks. Because we have experienced the forgiveness of our sins, we should be running around, jumping up and down with all kinds of enthusiasm, thanking the Lord for what he has done, not counting our sins against us any longer, having removed judgment and condemnation sins. That's every reason in the world to rejoice.

That's every reason in the world to be thankful. We don't have really any just cause for ungratefulness. And see, the key to all of this, because I know you probably been looking at it going, I don't know how I can do this. I really don't. But the key to all this is verse 18.

Because this is a consequence of being filled with the spirit. When you're filled with the spirit, you will sing and make melody in your heart and make melody with one another to the Lord, and you will be

thankful. You will give thanks. That's the only way we could do it, is by the spirit. We can't do this on our own.

We're naturally not thankful, grateful. Naturally, we are selfish. We're prideful. We're not humble. Supernaturally, we can be this. And like we said before, in order for this to occur, in order to be filled with the spirit, we have to die to ourselves.

We have to be willing to get out of the way, quit holding on to our life, yield ourselves. Submit ourselves to the spirit. Paul's already said in verse 4, there must be no filthiness and silly talk or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. See, that's the attitude, and all of this is possible because of verse 18. Now he says there, as I said, in verse 20, always give thanks.

This is continual. This is ongoing. This is all the time. I mean, do we really need to define the word always? Well, I'll define it in this way, at all times.

Are you thankful all the time? Am I thankful all the time? And let me shock you with this statement. If we're not thankful all the time, then we're disobeying this verse, and we're not honoring the lord who gave us this command. Isn't that true?

If he says at all times to give thanks, if he says to always give thanks and you're not giving thanks or I'm not giving thanks, is that bringing honor to the Lord? Is that trusting the Lord? You see, when you're thankful, you're trusting God. You're resting in him. You're leaving everything to him.

You're not trying to carry anything. You're not trying to figure anything out. It's like Proverbs 3, 5, and 6. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him and he will direct your paths.

You're not leaning on your own understanding. You're trusting the Lord. You're not trying to figure everything out. You're not trying to analyze everything. You're giving it to the Lord, and you're letting him carry it for you.

You're not worrying. You're not fretting about anything. Because when you trust the Lord, you know that he is in control of everything in your life, of everything in this world. Now that doesn't mean that we stop praying. God wants us to pray.

In fact, he tells us also to pray in everything, in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. That's what I quoted a minute ago. Philippians 4:6. We're pray about everything. We're to be thankful about everything.

And when he says, give thanks, it's almost as if he just nails it even further because the two words translated in English is one word in Greek, but it's in a tense that's indicating a ongoing attitude. It's continual. To thank God while we are in the midst of pain and trials or persecutions actually shows a level of maturity that few Christians seem to know, but that our heavenly father wants all of his children to have. Now Paul could say this because this was the disposition of his life. He wrote to Philemon in verse 4.

He says, I thank my God always for you. Out of the 13 letters that he wrote, most, if not all of them, just about all of them, begin with some form of thanksgiving. It's to be continual, ongoing, always, at all times. And it's also to be comprehensive for all things. You know, this morning as I was thinking about this verse, right after Samuel had some of his horrible seizures this morning, and I'm we're trying to work with him, and I'm I'm I'm leaning over the chair, and I'm trying to hold him and talk to him.

Teresa's doing things too, and we're trying to make sure he doesn't go into anymore. And immediately in my mind, the question came up. Lord, how can I thank you in this? I can thank him in that. Maybe the more difficult thing is thanking him for that.

And I'm not even sure if for that is really what we're talking about here because after it was all said and done, before I left, I ran back to my computer, pulled back up this text, and I opened up the Greek text to it, and I wanted to see the word for. Because that's, you know, because sometimes translators put words there to try to express exactly what is being said or make it more clear to express it. But sometimes, they don't always choose the best words. So I said, what is that word? Well, I found out it was a preposition.

It's the Greek preposition means to under. So it's almost like when you're under this situation, when this situation is going on and each one is gonna be different, but situation is going on and each one is gonna be different, but our response should be the same in each one of them, we should find a means of thanksgiving. Now I can thank the Lord when he stops it. I can thank the Lord that he survives it. I I can thank the Lord for many things like that.

And I can, at the same time, keep praying as we have done for almost 15 years for the Lord to remove it. Take it away. Maybe this will help. John Piper, he writes, when Paul gets to verse 20 of Ephesians 5, he is not in some dream world where all is easy and healthy and holy. He's not telling us to do any more than the Lord has given him grace to do.

Be thankful for everything. It does not say in everything like it does in 1st Thessalonians 5 18. It says for everything. But let's be very careful here. It doesn't say you should dance dance around the coffin.

It doesn't say you can't cry if you have cancer. It doesn't say that there is no place for anger against injustice. But it does say always be thankful for everything, and this is the word of God, not merely the word of man. If it puzzles us, if it even provokes us, we must not become cynical or rebellious. We should be like Mary when the angel said she would conceive a son without a husband, and she asked humbly, how can this be?

And Gabriel gave her not a whole explanation, but all that she needed. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most high will overshadow you. With God, nothing will be impossible. With God, nothing is impossible. That's not the same answer Paul would give to our perplexity here in Ephesians 5.

Is it? What he say from verse 18, it is beyond your understanding and beyond your emotional ability to give thanks to god for all things. It comes spirit searches everything, even the depths of god. Right? That's what first Corinthians 210 says.

If you trust him, he will unfold for you how your and all wise father in heaven can even take the evils of this world and work them together for your eternal good. Romans 8/20 8, all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose. When he begins to teach you that lesson, thanks always evil, but give thanks always for everything to god, the father. Why? Because he's wise.

He is sovereign. He is good. This is the will of God. First Thessalonians 5 18, this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Paul wanted his readers to meet all of their adverse or difficult circumstances with a spirit of unfailing gratitude.

And that's only possible by the grace of God. Right? D. E. B.

Hiebert says, when in. When I'm leaning over the chair and Teresa's also in upset, and immediately, we should think of Romans 828. God, somehow, you're gonna bring good in all of this. I don't understand it. I don't comprehend this.

I'm human. I'm fleshly. I'm wicked. But, god, you're glorious. And somehow in all of this, you get the glory.

Can you say that too in your trials? The spiritual believer sees God's wise and loving care in the difficulties and the trials as well as in the blessing and the prosperity. He thanks God for a job that is demanding and even unfulfilling. He thanks God for his health even if it's far from being what he would like it to be. He thanks God even when his dearest loved one dies.

And he says with Job in Job 121, the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Or he's like the beggar that taller, the 14th century mystic and preacher met one day. And after meeting him, he said this to the beggar. He said, God give you a good day, my friend.

And the beggar responded, I thank God that I have never had a bad day. And Toller said, God give you a happy life, my friend. And the beggar said, I thank God I am never unhappy. And Toller said, what do you mean? And he said, well, when it is fine, I thank God.

When it rains, I thank God. When I have plenty, I thank God. When I'm hungry, I thank God. Why should I say I'm unhappy when I'm not? Did you hear that?

When I am fine, I thank God. When it rains, I thank God. When I have plenty, I thank God. When I am hungry, I thank God. Can we do that?

When you know and trust that God carries your burdens daily, you can say, as Psalm 6819 and 20 says, blessed be the lord who daily bears our burden, the god who is our salvation. God is to us a god of deliverances. And to God the Lord belongs escapes from death. Wow. That's a good verse.

So we're to do this always. That's continual. We're to do it for all things. That's comprehensive. Next, we're to be consistent.

Next, we're to be consistent. What do you mean by that? Well, look at the last part of verse 20. You're doing this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the father. What's he mean by the name?

Well, the word name, it refers to all that's implied in a name. When you think of someone, you think of their name, you think of their reputation, you think of their character. He says, we're doing this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. What do you think about when you think about the Lord Jesus Christ? When Paul says to give thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, he's saying that they are to give thanks consistent with who he is and what he has done, and this is given to God even the father.

Was Jesus unthankful? Was he ever unthankful? Did he experience sadness? Yes. One of the shortest verses in the bible that people like to memorize is the one that said, Jesus wept.

And then I say, Where is it at in the Bible? But it's true. He did weep. He wept there over Lazarus, and he's wept for many others. But you're thanking God in a manner that's consistent with the character of Christ, and you're doing that to God.

He's the chief element in all of this. Colossians 3:17, and whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name, there it is again, of the Lord Jesus giving thanks through him to God, the father. Now we could we could think of thousands of things to thank the lord for. And since we can think of thousands of things to thank the lord for, can't we let that kinda drown out the horrible things that happen? Let me just give you some things to thank the lord for.

Psalms 30 and verse 4 says, you can thank God for his holy name. Sing praise to the Lord, you his godly ones, and give thanks to his holy name. Psalm 106 verse 1, we can thank God for his goodness and mercy. It says praise the Lord. Oh, give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his loving kindness is everlasting.

We can thank God for those who receive and apply his word. Paul was that. First Thessalonians 2:13, when speaking of the Thessalonians, he says, and for this reason, we also constantly thank God that when you receive from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. He said we were constantly thanking God about their reception of the word. Romans 7:23, 3, we can thank God that Christ has delivered us from the power of indwelling sin.

Paul says, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, which is in my members. Wretched man that I am. Who will set me free from the body of this death? And then he answers his own question. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So then on the one hand, I myself with my mind, I'm serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh, the law of sin. We can also thank God because he's given us victory over death. It says in 1st Corinthians 15:57, but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. We can thank God for his wisdom and strength, Daniel 2:23. To you, oh god of my fathers, I give thanks and praise for you have given me wisdom and power even now.

You have made known to me what we requested of you, for you have made known to us the king's matter. He's given us wisdom. In Romans 6:17, we can thank God when he saves somebody. But thanks be to God that through that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed. We could thank God for those who share the gospel

with others, Romans 1:8, for I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.

You thank God when you see people sharing Christ and sharing the gospel Paul gave us gave me a good idea this morning. He said, I called everybody in my contacts in my phone and every mess, every recorder I got, voice mail I got, I left the gospel on it. That's great. You know, we ought to obviously we ought to do that with telemarketers. You know, we get annoyed by telemarketers it and start sharing the gospel with them, not hatefully because we're annoyed over the spam call, but lovingly because, you know, they're trying to do their job.

Unfortunately, it's a job that a lot of people don't like. Like. But, you know, I found too, sometimes you get those annoying, spam emails and sometimes you decide to read it and here you are, something that went in your spam folder, you're sitting there looking at you go, oh, that is a good idea. We can thank God when we see believers working hard for the sake of the kingdom and showing love to one another. 2nd Thessalonians 13, we ought always to give thanks to god for you, brethren, as it is only fitting because your faith is greatly enlarged and the love of each one of you toward one another grows even greater.

You know, back on Mother's Day as well as Father's Day, you know, when you ladies took over and showered gifts and just showed affection and things like that. That was that was an encouragement. You know, when y'all did it on Mother's Day, and I'm I'm just observing this, and I'm thinking this is this is really good because I didn't have to tell you to do it. You did it on your own. That's great.

Then us guys were waiting to see if you'd do it again, and you did. It's amazing. But when we see believers interacting like that, that's encouraging. Right? Have you ever thanked the Lord for his grace?

First Corinthians 1 4, I thank my god concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus. All of us have experienced the grace of God. We ought to be thanking the Lord for that grace that everyone in here has received. And how about when you run into those who have a zeal for Christ and it's manifested in their life? 2nd Corinthians 8 16, but thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

Or how about this one? Do you thank God that Jesus is coming back soon? Be focused on the soon return of Jesus. Revelation 11 17, we give thanks, oh, Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. That's in the book of Revelation as things are coming to a climax.

Is thanksgiving a part of your life? What's opposite of thanksgiving? Yeah. It's in gratitude, but let's use another word we're all familiar with, complaints. If you're not thankful, then the opposite is certainly possible.

If not gonna happen. You complain. And if complaints come more from your mouth than thanksgiving, then you should realize or recognize right then, you are not filled with the spirit. You are being controlled by the flesh. See, when the spirit of God controls you, we already learned there's gonna be a song in your heart, and you're gonna express thanksgiving in verse 20.

We're gonna give thanks in the name of the lord Jesus to God. I want you to listen to this these verses I quote from the Psalms and see if you can find a common thread that's running through all of them. It'll be quick. Psalm 717, I will give thanks to the Lord according to his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of Lord most high. Psalm 91, I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart.

I will tell of all of thy wonders. Psalm 1849, therefore, I will give thanks to to to God God among the nations, oh Lord, and I will sing praises to your name. Psalm 50 4:6, Willingly, I will sacrifice to you. I will give thanks to your name, oh Lord, for it is good. Psalm 57 9, I will give thanks to you, oh, lord, among the peoples.

I will sing praises to you among the nations. Psalm 8612, I will give thanks to you, oh, lord, my god, with all my heart and will glorify your name forever. Psalm 109 and verse 30, with my mouth, I will give thanks abundantly to the Lord, and in the midst of many, I will praise him. Psalm 111 and verse 1, praise the lord. I will give thanks to the lord with all my heart in the company of the upright and in the assembly.

Psalm 118 verse 21, I shall give give thanks to you, for you have answered me, and you have become my salvation. Psalm 119 verse 7, I shall give thanks to you with uprightness of heart when I learn your righteous judgments. Psalm 139 verse 14, I will give thanks to you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works, and my soul knows it very well. What's that common thread?

The psalmist is personally giving god thanks. I'm doing this. I am giving you thanks. Now again, he's not doing that in his flesh. I believe he's doing that by the very help of God.

You know, when you can give thanksgivings in difficult situations, that's not you. That's God in you. You're seeing God at work right then. And you know what? If if if you feel like you can't see it, thank him anyway and watch him work.

I will say this about Samuel's seizures. Many times, when we pray and we ask him to make him stop, many times he does make them stop immediately. That is the most amazing thing because it's not us doing it. And I think he does it so many times to remind us how much we need him, and that's him that's stopping it, not us. I mean, we come up with little things to try to distract him and but we couldn't have come up with any of those things without his help.

We're always asking for his help. And so we have all kinds of things around the room that we use. Sometimes they don't work at all. Again, just to remind us, he's the one that's gotta stop it. Doctors can't do it.

I can't do it. My wife can't do it. My kids can't do it. Samuel can't even stop himself. God does it.

That's my comfort. I just wait and watch and plead and beg, sometimes cry. Listen. If you wanna be this kind of person, there's only 2 possible ways that it's gonna happen. 1, you have to be a believer in Christ.

And number 2, you have to be filled with the spirit. That's the only way it's gonna happen, to where you're gonna be able to give thanks and humility, all for his glory, all for his honor, all for his praise. Sometimes I pray, Lord, would you do this just so that we know without a shadow of a doubt, it's you



and my kids can see it, and they can praise and be in marvel, be in wonder as they see your mighty hand at work. This is not the only thing the lord does. And this is certainly not the only activity in our life, though some days it feels like it is.

The Lord is good. There's no evil in the Lord. None. No wonder the psalmist could say, the Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.

Knowing that the the Lord is my shepherd, I don't have any needs. He takes care of them, and I praise him for that. And I hope that you can do that today and every day. And my prayer is as you have your Thanksgiving meal this week and should get together with your family, friends, that you can just praise the Lord and thank him for your family. Thank him for your friends.

Thank him for that meal. Thank him for providing that meal. Thank you for the home that you're in eating that meal. Right? Thank you that you're eating it on clean dishes.

You have running water in your house. You have, you know, a wooden floor or concrete floor or whatever kind of floor you have, but it's not dirt. Right? You're not living in a hut. You're not living in a tent.

And even if you were, you could thank him then too. Some people are living in those kind of shelters. Let's thank him now. He is, again, so good to us. Lord Jesus, we just worship you.

We thank you. We praise you. Thank you for all your goodness to us, and we just thank you for the reminder of your word. It tells us how this is even possible in our life. I pray that we will pursue getting out of the way, dying to self so the spirit of God can reign supremely in our life and control everything that we think, control everything that we say and do because our desire, Lord Jesus, is that you be glorified and that your father be glorified.

Thank you. Thank you so much. And all God's people said