

## “THE VIRTUE OF THANKFULNESS”

Dr. Jay Zinn – River’s Edge – 11/28/10

**HOOK:** **Luke 17:11-19** (when I was a kid, Captain Kangaroo: “Please & Thank You”)  
**(2 Tim. 3:2** – trait of the people in the end times: *ungrateful*)

**Gulliver’s Travels: Laws of the Lilliputians** – Ingratitude is reckoned among them as a capital crime; for they reason thus, that “whoever makes ill return to his benefactor must needs be a common enemy to the rest of mankind, from whom he has received no obligation. And, therefore, such a man is not fit to live.” Though severe, the reason is sound: If someone does ill to one who has helped them, how much more will they do to those who have not helped them in any way?

### Quotes on Thankfulness:

- “When you drink from the stream, remember the spring.”
- “Nothing is more honorable than a grateful heart.”
- “A thankful heart is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all other virtues.”

### The Origin of Thanksgiving:

- 1621 – Celebrated by the Pilgrim Fathers for their winter in the New World
- 1789 - Washington issued a Thanksgiving Day Proclamation to commemorate the first Pilgrim celebration
- Thomas Jefferson discontinued it calling Thanksgiving a “kingly practice.”
- 1828 - Sarah Hale – (who wrote Mary had a little Lamb), began a campaign to restore Thanksgiving as a national holiday.
- 1863 – President Lincoln responded to her plea for the North & South to lay aside their guns on Thanksgiving Day. He proclaimed the fourth Thursday of November to be the official “National Thanksgiving Day.”
- 1941 – This day was finally ratified by the U.S. Congress.

**Thanksgiving = Giving Thanks to God!**

*George Washington:* “May the people of the United States be devoted to the service of that great and glorious being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be, that we may unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country.”

**George Washington acknowledged that God was the source of their peace and prosperity.**

### We Give God Thanks Through Our Sacrifices of Praise!

**(1 Peter 2:5)** “We are a spiritual house...a holy priesthood, offering **spiritual sacrifices**.

**(Hebrews 13:15)** “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a **sacrifice of praise**-the fruit of lips that confess his name.”

### PSALM 107:1-22

#### Thankfulness is a command:

- Colossians 3:15-16 – “BE thankful...sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with GRATITUDE in your hearts!
- Psalm 100:4 – “Enter his gates with THANKSGIVING!
- 1 Thessalonians 5:18 - “Give THANKS in all circumstances.”
  - **Gary Larson:** Man in hell-whistling while he was working. One demon to another: “We’re not reaching that guy.”
  - **Paul and Silas** – stripped, severely flogged, thrown in jail in the inner cell, feet fastened in the stocks.
  - About midnight, can’t sleep, Paul and Silas began praying and singing hymns to God. Earthquake. Deliverance.

**THERE is POWER in THANK OFFERINGS! Delivering Power!**

**Paul understood this delivering power. It permeates his letters. He gave thanks in:**

**2 Cor.** – for God’s unspeakable gift...**JESUS!**...and the **triumph** we have in Christ!

**1 Tim.** – for the **ministry** God enabled him to do.

**1 Thess.** – for **people** receiving God’s word of salvation.

**Col.** – for **deliverance** from the power of darkness.

**JONAH 2:9-10** verse 1: “From inside the fish Jonah prayed.”

“But I, with a song of **THANKSGIVING** will sacrifice to you...Salvation comes from the Lord!”

And the Lord **SPOKE** to the fish and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

This is why Paul says by his own experience: “**In every circumstance give thanks.**”

### **THANKSGIVING UNLOCKS GOD’S MIRACLE WORKING POWER!**

- JESUS gave THANKS to the Father...then distributed five loaves and two fish to 5000 people!
- JESUS gave THANKS to the Father for hearing him...then commanded Lazarus to come forth!

Thanking God when in TROUBLE, or in need for a miracle, is **AN ACT of FAITH in what God has done and can do again!**

**It releases his blessing!**

**GRATITUDE *not* GRUMBLING releases the blessings of God!**

Grumbling is an expression of disbelief and ingratitude for the other times God came through.

Grumbling is a lack of faith in God’s goodness.

Grumbling is releasing **NEGATIVITY** that speaks death to faith rather than life. (Death/life in the tongue’s power)

Grumbling kills faith!

Grumbling is an act of unthankfulness (the trait that will characterize the godless in the last days.)

**2 Chronicles 32:26-27** - Ever let a car come in in front of you and you get no response? You want to back end them!

- Quote: “The man who has forgotten to be thankful has fallen asleep in life.”

**Hezekiah forgot to thank God.**

When I worked for thankful bosses, it made me want to do more for them.

When I worked for ungrateful bosses, it made me want to do less for them.

God is at work on our behalf. He gives us richly all good things to enjoy.

We must consider that all good things come from God.

Therefore we need to offer continually a sacrifice of praise—to enter his courts with **THANKSGIVING!**

### **PRAYER:**

Father, thank you for our salvation. For the prosperity and peace our country our country has received.

We thank you for each other in the River’s Edge Church family.

We thank you for the unseen faces you will be sending in the coming year, to join our church family.

We thank you for our health and the bright future you promise in our walk with you.

We thank you for the victories you’ve given us in times of trouble and stress.

I thank you for giving me and my wife, the privilege to serve these wonderful people as their pastor.

I thank you for their encouragement, the financial support they’ve given to this church, and for the friendship and fellowship they’ve extended to me and my family.

I thank you for the sacrifices, partnership, friendship, and support of our leadership team in Kris & Lori Kawulok.

I thank you also for the Worship Team, the Stream Team Leaders, the Ushers, the Children's teachers and every member in this family who does their part to make River's Edge a home to the weary, the broken-hearted, the solitary, the hungry, the poor and the rich.

Thank you Father, most of all for sending us your son, Jesus, to die for our sins.

Thank you Jesus, for loving us with your very life so that we might be called the children of God.

Thank you, Holy Spirit, for your indwelling presence and the nurturing you provide for our spiritual growth.

Thank you, God, that you are faithful, just, beneficent, merciful, and loving unto us.

May we ever be a people who will show and express gratitude to you and to develop a culture of gratitude in our church family for one another. **Amen.**