



1. Dear Families of Gilead Bible Church,

The season of thanksgiving is almost upon us. Have you at times, found it difficult to give thanks? Recently, I read an article that spoke to my heart on this. It's called, *'38 Ways to Give Thanks in Hard Times.'* *

The Bible instructs us to "give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

We know this is biblical, but it is not always easy.

The question revolves around the expression "in all circumstances." We know that we should give thanks when things are going well. It is right and good to "praise God from whom all blessings flow." We shouldn't take our blessings for granted or think that we somehow deserve them. But if you only give thanks when you have money in the bank, when your marriage is good, when the deal goes through, or when the doctor says, "You don't have cancer," when your kids are doing well, when the church is growing and your friends are glad to see you, if that's the only time you give thanks, what will you do when trouble comes?

What will you do when your company downsizes and you are out of a job, when your retirement fund loses 45% of its value, when your marriage collapses, when your daughter gets pregnant out of wedlock, when the cancer returns, or when your friends betray you?

I freely admit that often things happen to us (and to our loved ones) that make no sense. Try as we might, we cannot trace God's hand in every circumstance because God paints on a canvas much larger than our tiny vision. How do we give thanks when our hearts are broken? How do we give thanks when we are confused? How do we give thanks when we are angry at what sin has done in the world?

I think it is biblical to give thanks in the following manner even in the worst moments. We give thanks . . .

- *That God is sovereign.*
- *That nothing happens by chance.*
- *That God causes all things to work together for good for his children.*
- *That hard times reveal our weakness, break our pride, and show us our total need for God.*
- *That God has triumphed over sin and death through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- *That God uses the worst that happens to promote our spiritual growth.*
- *That God is faithful even when we are faithless.*
- *That God's Word will be vindicated.*
- *That God's promises are true.*
- *That evil will not reign forever.*
- *That heaven is real.*
- *That this world is not the "real" world.*
- *That when we are weak, he is strong.*

- *That his grace is sufficient for every situation.*
- *That nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.*
- *That our salvation rests on God and not on us.*
- *That there is no pit so deep that the love of God is not deeper still.*
- *That the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from every sin.*
- *That God delights to save sinners.*
- *That the Lord can soften the hardest heart.*
- *That there are no impossible cases with God.*
- *That even when we feel alone, we are never alone.*
- *That our Father will not test us beyond what we can bear.*
- *That the Holy Spirit abides with us always.*
- *That the Lord Jesus feels our pain.*
- *That the Holy Spirit prays for us when we are too weak to pray for ourselves.*
- *That the Lord Jesus intercedes for us so that we are finally saved.*
- *That God uses everything and wastes nothing.*
- *That our doubts cannot cancel God's work in us.*
- *That someday we will be conformed to the image of Christ.*
- *That God is faithful to finish his work in us.*
- *That our hardships equip us to minister to others.*
- *That we are invited to come boldly to the throne of grace.*
- *That God's plan far exceeds our puny imagination.*
- *That weeping endures for a night, but joy comes in the morning.*
- *That we are still God's children even when our faith falters.*
- *That while we suffer outwardly, we are being renewed inwardly.*
- *That our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal weight of glory.*

Eugene Peterson nicely captures the meaning of verse 18 this way. "Thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live" (MSG). I like that phrase "no matter what happens" because it perfectly describes life in a fallen world.

I do not mean to suggest that this is easy, only that it is absolutely necessary. As hard as it may be to rejoice always, what is your alternative? To give in to despair and anger? If you refuse to give thanks in every situation, you are virtually saying that you know better than God how to run the universe. By giving thanks when we don't feel like it, we are proclaiming that God's wisdom is greater than ours. That simple act of giving thanks in the midst of sorrow is a testimony worth more than 10,000 words spoken when things are going well.

If we know the Lord, we can still give thanks even when life makes no sense.

God Bless,

Pastor and Helen Moy

* <http://www.keepbelieving.com/2014/07/24/38-ways-to-give-thanks-in-hard-times/>

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親愛的基列主內弟兄姊妹，

感恩的季節快到了。在這時候你會否很難感恩？最近，我讀了一篇很有同感的文章。這就是所謂的，'在困難時三十八個感恩的方式。'*

聖經教導我們要「凡事謝恩；因為這是神在基督耶穌裡向你們所定的旨意。」(帖撒羅尼迦前書 5:18)。我們知道這是聖經的教導，但這不是容易做得到的。

重點是要「在任何情況下都要感恩。」事情順利時，我們要感恩。“讚美真神是萬福之根”這是正確的態度。我們不應該把我們的祝福視為理所當然，又或是應得的。但若你只會在銀行有錢時，婚姻美好時，交易順利通過時，或者當醫生說：“你沒有癌症，”時，孩子乖巧時，教會增長時，朋友對你好時才會感恩，那麼一旦麻煩來時，你會怎麼做？

當你因公司裁員而失業時，退休基金報損時，婚姻失敗時，女兒未婚懷孕時，癌症復發時，或當朋友背叛你時，你會甚樣做？

這些不順境的事情往往會發生在我們或我們所愛的人身上。儘管我們嘗試了解這一切，但我們是不可能理解到神所有的作為，因祂的意念高過我們的意念。那麼當我們肢離破碎時，感到混亂時，對世界的罪惡感到憤怒時，我們又如何感恩？

即使在最不如意時，聖經教導我們要通過以下方式來感恩。我們要感恩...

- 神是主權的。
- 沒有任何事是偶然發生的。
- 我們曉得萬事都互相效力，叫愛神的人得益處。
- 這艱難的時刻揭露我們的軟弱，打破我們的驕傲，讓我們完全地依靠神。
- 神通過祂的兒子，耶穌基督戰勝了罪惡和死亡。
- 神使用艱難的境況，以促進我們靈命的成長。
- 即使我們沒有信心，神是信實的。
- 神的話語會被證明是正確的。
- 神的應許是真實的。
- 邪惡不會永遠的掌權。
- 天堂是真實的。
- 這世界不是“永恒”的世界。
- 當我們軟弱時，祂是堅強的。
- 祂的恩典是夠我們用的。
- 沒有什麼可以使我們與基督的愛隔絕。
- 我們的救恩是本乎恩，而不是靠我們的行為。
- 神的愛是長寬高深。
- 耶穌基督的寶血洗淨我們一切的罪。
- 神喜悅拯救罪人。

- 主可以軟化剛硬的心。
- 沒有神不可能成的事。
- 即使當我們感到孤獨時，我們永遠不會孤單。
- 我們的天父必不叫我們受試探過於所能承受的。
- 聖靈常與我們同在。
- 主耶穌感到我們的痛苦。
- 當我們軟弱時，我們本不曉得怎樣禱告，聖靈會親自替我們禱告。
- 就是主耶穌為我們代求，使我們終於得救贖。
- 神使用一切而不浪費任何事物。
- 即使我們疑惑也不能消除神在我們身上的工作。
- 有一天我們會效法基督的形象。
- 神是信實的，祂會在我們裡面完成祂的工作。
- 我們的艱苦會裝備我們去服事別人。
- 我們只管坦然無懼的來到施恩的寶座前。
- 神的計劃遠遠超出了我們微不足道的想像。
- 一宿雖然有哭泣，早晨便必歡呼。
- 即使我們的信心動移，我們仍是神的兒女。
- 外體雖然毀壞，內心卻一天新似一天。
- 我們這至暫至輕的苦楚，要為我們成就極重無比、永遠的榮耀。

尤金·彼得森很好地提住十八節的意思，“無論發生什麼事情都要感謝神。這才是神要你在基督耶穌裡的生活”（MSG）。我很喜歡這句話“無論發生什麼事情”，因為它完美地描述出一個墮落世界的生活。

我並不認為這是容易的，只知道它是絕對必要的。當不如意時是很難歡欣快樂，但除此以外你還有什麼辦法呢？屈服於絕望和憤怒中？如果你拒絕在任何情況下感恩，你實際上是說你比神更知道如何運行這宇宙。在沒有什麼可感恩的情況下感恩，這樣做我們宣告神的智慧是高於我們的。在悲傷之中感恩這簡單的動作比當事情進展順利時說出的見證更有力量。

如果我們認識主，即使生命在最低潮時我們仍然可以感謝主。

願主祝福你們，

梅牧師及師母

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