

# Thanksgiving Sermon 2018

Pastor James Foley – Sunday, November 25, 2018

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**Main Theme** – Considering the theme of “THANKFULNESS” and its impact/influence on our lives.

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## WORSHIP & PRAYER

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Upcoming Events (Regular)**
  - Potluck Supper – Today Following the Morning Service
  - Men’s Ministry – Saturday AM, December 8, from 9–10am
  - Women’s Ministry – Tuesday, December 11, from 6:30–8pm
- **Upcoming Events (Holiday)**
  - During Potluck Today – Pictures w/ Ashley Hutton (Free Family Christmas Pics)
  - CYC Christmas Play – Friday Evening, December 21 (Time Yet To be Announced)
  - New Life’s Christmas Service – Sunday Morning, December 23 @ 10:30am–Noon
- **Upcoming Events (New Ministry)**
  - New Creations – Ministry Starting Wednesday, November 28 (6:30pm) **PRAYER...**

## MORNING OFFERING

At this time, I want to call forth our ushers.

-Thank you for your faithfulness in giving to the Lord/His work

-Your giving fuels the work of Christ in and through this church

May the Lord bless you as you give! May you experience His faithfulness in kind!

## GINGER ASEL UPDATING

Ginger Asel is back in our midst (praise the Lord)! This morning I want to give her the opportunity to share a few words. Ginger, would you please come and address your church family. Thank you!

## MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY

This morning is a very SPECIAL morning. Today we welcome new members into this local body of believers! We hold church membership to be both a privilege AND a responsibility. It is something to be entered into soberly, prayerfully and with great joy! Allow me to share a few WORDS regarding church membership:

-It is BIBLICAL – It was the norm for believers of the Early Church era to identify themselves with a local branch of the Church universal, wherein they functioned as committed and connected parts of a local church body. We do well to consider and comply with biblical precedent!

-It Promotes Spiritual HEALTH – Show me a person committed/connected to a local church and I will show you a person who is likely making great strides in the walk with Christ. Show me a believer who attends nominally—who's essentially going it alone—and the inverse is likely true.

-It Promotes Kingdom ADVANCEMENT – The only way that we are going to reach this world for Christ and make disciples is together. As we collectively work under a common vision, embrace biblical principles and pool our resources, time and talents, we can change the world.

This morning I want to present to you several candidates who have SUCCESSFULLY completed our membership PROCESS. As I call your name, please COME TO THE FRONT and FACE the Pastor:

-Rebecca Rice  
-Shawn Barry Jr.  
-Melanie Marble  
-Rose Marie Riedl

Allow me to speak to the CANDIDATES: As we gather today, I COMMEND you. Thank you for engaging our process and deciding to become a formally recognized part of our body. But let me offer you this CHALLENGE:

-Serve the Lord (Make Him First In EVERYTHING)  
-Connect with the Body (Build Relationship & Fellowship)  
-Be Committed to the Church (Participate, Attend, Give & Serve)

### PRAY OVER THE NEW MEMBERS

As each of you who stand before me today have satisfactorily completed the requirements for membership as outlined in Scripture and in our governing Bylaws—and upon the full recommendation and approval of the Board of Deacons and the Executive Board—it is my privilege to WELCOME you into the membership of this body. May this be the beginning of a long and wonderful partnership in the work of Christ! Please TURN and FACE the audience (APPLAUSE)

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- **CHILDREN DISMISSED FOR CHILDREN'S CHURCH**
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## INTRODUCTIONS

As always, it is wonderful to see you. I look forward to these weekly moments of worship and instruction. I pray that you are ready to receive what God has for you today! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes. We have an extreme amount of material to cover in a short amount of time.

## SETTING THE STAGE

I pray that you HAD a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends! Though I have come to have little use for the weather this season brings, I do LOVE the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays! They provide ongoing OPPORTUNITIES for us to consider topics of great significance.

**NOTE 1** – Next Sunday morning I will begin a new four-part series on Christmas-related themes

**NOTE 2** – Though Thanksgiving is past, I would be remiss if I failed to touch upon ‘thankfulness’

I want to delve fairly deeply into the Word today. Allow me to begin by asking a foundational Q...

## DELVING IN – WHAT?

### Q. WHAT is Thankfulness?

If you were at home reading the Word, and you came across one of the many texts that command thankfulness, how would you DEFINE that word? What is this thing called ‘thankfulness’? Good question – I am so glad that you asked!

**KEY** – Thankfulness is DEFINED as ‘the mental and/or verbal expression of appreciation’ of God’s person and work in one’s life and the world (REPEAT). i.e., It is the sense of gratitude I feel or express in response to the Lord.

**ILL** – When I consider God’s \_\_\_\_\_, it is fitting to feel or express appreciation.

## **DELVING IN – WHY?**

Having established what thankfulness is, let us move on to ask ANOTHER vital Q...

### **Q. Why Should We Be Thankful? Why is this Activity and Attitude of the Heart So Essential?**

#### **1) It is COMMANDED of God**

Scripture continually calls us to gratitude and the expression of thanks. Allow me to give you the briefest sampling, illustrating the reality of my remarks:

##### **Psalms 100 (NIV, 1984)**

1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

2 Worship the LORD with gladness;  
.... come before him with joyful songs.

3 Know that the LORD is God.  
.... It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
.... and his courts with praise;  
.... give thanks to him and praise his name.  
5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
.... his faithfulness continues through all generations.

##### **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18**

16 Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

#### **2) It HONORS God**

When we are thankful we HONOR Him. To thank the Lord is to recognize His existence. It is to act on the reality that His life is the source and means of our lives. True thankfulness recognizes our total dependence on God and stems from realizing that every aspect of our lives is the product of His sovereignty, wisdom, purpose, grace, work and love. To thank Him IS to honor Him!

#### **3) It SPARES US from the Cost of Thanklessness**

If thanksgiving honors and pleases the Lord, it is logical to conclude that the inverse is true: i.e., thanklessness DISHONORS and DISPLEASES Him. A thankless heart is a heart riddled with pride and bitterness. A thankless heart manifests in a thankless life, filled with unceasing complaint and murmuring. All of this carries a penalty of judgment. Don't believe me? Ask the children of Israel if CONSTANT ingratitude and complaint was worth it?

## **DELVING IN – WHEN & WHERE? PT. 1**

Having established what thankfulness is & why we should practice it, let's consider the following:

### **Q. WHEN and WHERE Should We Be Thankful/Offer Thanks?**

#### **1) We Should Offer Thanks WHENEVER & WHEREVER We Pray**

A) Scripture teaches that thanksgiving and prayer are connected by biblical **ILLUSTRATION** (Paul)

##### **Ephesians 1:16**

16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.

##### **Philippians 1:3–4**

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy

##### **Colossians 1:3**

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you...

##### **1 Thessalonians 1:2**

2 We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.

B) Scripture teaches that thanksgiving and prayer are connected by biblical **ADMONITION**...

##### **Philippians 4:6–7 (Emphasis Mine)**

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, **WITH THANKSGIVING**, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## **DELVING IN – WHEN & WHERE? PT. 2**

Back to the question at hand...

**Q. WHEN and WHERE Should We Be Thankful/Offer Thanks?**

**1) We Should Offer Thanks Whenever & Wherever We Pray...**

**2) We Should Offer Thanks IN Everything and FOR Everything...**

**1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (Emphasis Mine)**

16 Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks **IN ALL** circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

**Ephesians 5:15–20 (Emphasis Mine)**

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father **FOR EVERYTHING**, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Q. Pastor, are you saying that we are to be thankful IN the midst of adversity?**

**Q. Pastor, are you saying that we should even be thankful FOR adversity itself?**

In short, it's not me saying it – but the Word of God. Though it goes well beyond our time this morning, there is a **PLACE** in the life of the believer for pain. Though no one enjoys affliction, God **USES IT** to bring about good and to deepen our faith. As I noted last Sunday, ...

**Romans 8:28 (Emphasis Mine)**

28 And we know that in **ALL** things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

## **DELVING IN – WHAT? PT. 1**

**KEY** – Having established a suitable foundation with these introductory Q's, let me ask 1 more...

### **Q. WHAT Should We Be Thankful For?**

As one author notes, "Being thankful requires a proper comprehension of the reasons why we should be thankful. Thankfulness cannot occur in a 'vacuum of ignorance.' The Word does not just tell its readers to be thankful, but points them to various blessings that they possess through the provision of God."

Scripture doesn't just command thankfulness. It informs us as to what we should be thankful for.

## **DELVING IN – WHAT? PT. 2**

Numerous texts could be put forth to illustrate the validity of these remarks. There are many texts that outline the blessings afforded us in the Lord (in the OT and the NT). However, this morning I have settled upon a passage from the Book of Colossians (a text I have touched on at times before).

**NOTE** – I want to consider a passage penned by Paul while he was imprisoned. Let's consider...

### **Colossians 1:9–14**

9 For this reason [i.e., because of their reception of the Gospel], since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. 10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.



### **DELVING IN – WHAT? PT. 3**

There is MUCH that we could address in this text:

v. 9 – Paul and his ministry partners had PRAYED for the believers at Colossae CONTINUALLY (since the moment they first heard about their faith in the Lord/reception of the Gospel message).

v. 9–12a – Paul and his ministry partners prayed SPECIFICALLY for these new believers: a) that they would be filled with the knowledge of God’s will; b) that they would be a people who live pleasing and fruitful before God; c) that they would know God’s empowerment—an empowerment that catalyzes endurance, patience, thanksgiving, etc.

**NOTE** – Paul believed thankfulness was a vital COMPONENT in the Christian experience. Thus said, Paul outlined FOUR elements that should have compelled thanksgiving in their lives and living:

- 1) God Had Qualified Them to Share in The Inheritance of The Saints in Light
- 2) God Had Delivered Them from The Dominion of Darkness
- 3) God Had Transferred Them into The Kingdom of His Son
- 4) God Had Redeemed Them – Providing the Forgiveness of Sin

**KEY** – I posit that these same four elements should compel thankfulness in US:

- 1) God Had Qualified Us to Share in The Inheritance of The Saints in Light
- 2) God Had Delivered Us from The Dominion of Darkness
- 3) God Had Transferred Us into The Kingdom of His Son
- 4) God Had Redeemed Us – Providing the Forgiveness of Sin

LET’S DELVE IN

## REASON #1

**Q. What is the 1<sup>st</sup> Reason We Should Be Thankful According to this Text?**

**A. God has Qualified Us to Share in the Inheritance of the Saints in the Kingdom of Light (v. 12)**

**NOTE** – God has QUALIFIED us.

The Greek word herein for qualified MEANS, “To make sufficient; to make fit; to enable (empower).” Thus, God has made us sufficient to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. He has made us fit to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. He has enabled us to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

**Q. But What Have We Been Qualified For? What Is Our Inheritance in the Kingdom of Light?**

**NOTE** – The Greek underpinning of this phrase indicates that which is allotted or apportioned (that which belongs to the saints) in this life and the life to come. This is an UMBRELLA TERM that is meant to encompass a wide ARRAY of things. Consider...

- In Christ, *joy* is our portion
- In Christ, *hope* is our portion
- In Christ, *peace* is our portion
- In Christ, *healing is our portion*
- In Christ, *protection* is our portion
- In Christ, divine *favor* is our portion
- In Christ, *pardon* for sin is our portion
- In Christ, *intimacy* with God is our portion
- In Christ, eternal *life* is our portion & allotment

**NOTE** – This inheritance is connected to the image of LIGHT (i.e., “inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light” v. 12). How does the image of light play in to these themes? ‘GREAT’ question...

Biblically, light is an IMAGE for life, truth, purity and holiness. We who were dead in sin, ignorant/blind to the truth and morally bankrupt have been brought into a kingdom of light (i.e., a kingdom of life, truth and purity), wherein we experience the manifold blessing of God (noted above).

**Q. When We Consider the Inheritance that is Ours in Christ How Can We Not Offer Thanks?**

## REASON #2

**Q. What is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reason We Should Be Thankful According to this Text?**

**A. God has Delivered Us from the Dominion of Darkness (Colossians 1:13)**

The Greek word for 'DELIVERED' carries the idea of 'rescue.' We have been rescued (liberated or saved) from the dominion of darkness. We who are NOW part of the kingdom of Christ in light were ONCE subject to a very different kingdom and authority.

**KEY** – If light is connected with life, truth and purity, then DARKNESS is connected with death, deception, and evil. We were once subject to and lived under such darkness (i.e., subject to the powers of death, ignorance, deceit and—worst of all—Satan). Christ indicates that those who do NOT belong to Him inherently have a different ruler and 'father' – Satan (cf. John 8:44–45). Terrible!

-Satan OVERSEES a kingdom that exercises authority in this world.

### **Ephesians 6:12**

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Though we are NOW to resist it, we were ONCE part of it. We languished under his rule, lost and condemned in this world. We were once allied to the great archenemy of the Lord (i.e., we were criminals in league with/enslaved to Satan).

**KEY** – But we have been RESCUED from such evil, misery and the consequences thereof.

### **Ephesians 2:1–10**

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

These latter points touch upon the 3<sup>rd</sup> reason we should offer thanks! (Complementary Reason)

## **REASON #3**

**Q. What is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reason We Should Be Thankful According to this Text?**

**A. God has Transferred Us into the Kingdom of His Beloved Son (Col 1. 13)**

**NOTE** – God didn’t just deliver us FROM one kingdom. He brought us INTO another kingdom! i.e., We have experienced a dramatic change in CITIZENSHIP. Apparently, citizenship is something that God places extreme value upon. Consider, again, Ephesians 2...

### **Ephesians 2:1–5a, 19–22**

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

**KEY** – The Greek wording for ‘brought us into’ or ‘transferred’ carries special significance. In the ancient world, when one empire won a victory over another, it was the custom to take the population of the defeated country and transfer it to the conqueror’s land (**NOTE** – we see this in the OT, when the people of Israel were carried off to Assyria and the people of Judah were carried off to Babylon).

SPIRITUALLY, Christ—the Great Victor—has rescued and transferred us. We who were under the tyranny of Satan have been brought to a place where God’s love abides. From this place and position of love, we are free to experience every spiritual blessing of the Lord in Christ! This is a significant allotment/inheritance (noted above)

### **Ephesians 1:3 (Emphasis Mine)**

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

**Q. When We Consider Our Deliverance from the Kingdom of Darkness...**

**Q. When We Consider Our Deliverance into the Kingdom of Light in Christ...**

**. . . How can we not be moved to a place of thanksgiving?**

## **REASON #4**

**Q. What is the 4<sup>th</sup> Reason We Should Be Thankful According to this Text?**

**A. God has Provided for our Pardon (i.e., the Forgiveness of Sin) (Col. 1:14).**

**NOTE** – Let’s talk about REDEMPTION for a moment. Sometimes we use this term rather loosely. We use it to mean little more than ‘deliverance or rescue.’ To be clear, redemption does mean deliverance, but it means a ‘very particular kind of deliverance.’ i.e., A deliverance that results from the PAYMENT of a great price.

**KEY** – Redemption means deliverance because of a PAYMENT made...

### **Mark 10:45**

45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- Your rescue from the dominion of darkness came at a high price
- Your transference into the kingdom of light (citizenship) was costly
- The pardon of your sin came at an incalculable and unaffordable cost

**Q. That COST? The Death of Christ. His Broken Body and Shed Blood...**

- We have all sinned (Rom. 3:23)
- The penalty for sin is ‘death’ (Rom. 6:23)
- Jesus Christ took our penalty for us (Rom. 5:8)

### **2 Corinthians 5:21**

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**KEY** – Pardon for sin is available to you today. You can be forgiven of your crimes against God!

### **1 John 1:8–9**

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

### **Isaiah 1:18**

18 “Come now, let us reason together,”  
says the LORD.

“Though your sins are like scarlet,  
they shall be as white as snow;  
though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

**Q. When We Consider the Pardon He Freely Offers, How Can We Not Give Thanks?**

## CONCLUSION

Christian, consider what has been afforded you in Christ:

- 1) God Had Qualified Us to Share in The Inheritance of The Saints in Light
- 2) God Had Delivered Us from The Dominion of Darkness
- 3) God Had Transferred Us into The Kingdom of His Son
- 4) God Had Redeemed Us – Providing the Forgiveness of Sin

**Q. How can we not EMBRACE such wondrous gifts with a spirit of thankfulness!**