

2024 B THANKSGIVING DAY NOV. 28

"Bless the God of all who has done wonderful things for us." 1st reading. "In all circumstances give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Thes. 5: 18 says: "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."

Gratitude is easy when life is smooth, but it's in the challenges where our faith in thanksgiving is truly tested.

How do we find the strength to give thanks when the storms of life rage?

Can we trust that God is working for our good even in the painful moments?

Today, we'll uncover the power of thanksgiving—not just for the good things, but in all circumstances. We'll see how giving thanks transforms our perspective and aligns our hearts with God's will.

I'll share a story of faith in adversity and invite you to respond to the ultimate gift of Jesus Christ.

1- Thanksgiving comes naturally when life is abundant—good health, stable jobs, loving families—we feel gratitude flowing easily.

- **Psalm 103:2**: "Bless the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

- Gratitude for blessings keeps our hearts humble and reminds us of God's faithfulness.

The good times are opportunities to give God glory and acknowledge Him as the source of all blessings.

Thanksgiving in the Hard Times. But life isn't always smooth. Trials, losses, and disappointments test our faith. How do we give thanks in these moments? Why Be Thankful in the Storms? God is in Control:

- Even when life feels chaotic, God is sovereign. **Isaiah 55:8-9** reminds us: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways."

- Trusting God's plan gives us peace amid uncertainty.

2. Trials Refine Our Faith: **James 1:2-4**: "Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." Thanksgiving in difficulty shapes us into Christlikeness.

3. God's Presence in Pain: **Psalm 23:4**: "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me." In our darkest moments, we experience the depth of God's comfort.

The Biblical Example: Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned for sharing the gospel. Yet, in **Acts 16:25**, they prayed and sang hymns of thanksgiving. God responded by shaking the prison, setting them free, and using their faith to bring the jailer to salvation.

I'd like to share a story about a man named Horatio Spafford, a 19th-century businessman and devoted Christian. Spafford faced a series of heartbreaking losses. First, his young son died of scarlet fever. Soon after, much of his wealth was lost in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Despite these trials, he and his family sought to trust God.

Two years later, Spafford planned a trip to Europe with his wife and four daughters. Due to unexpected business, he sent his family ahead while he stayed behind temporarily. Tragically, their ship collided with another vessel and sank. His four daughters drowned, but his wife survived and sent a telegram with the haunting words, "Saved alone."

Devastated, Spafford set sail to join his grieving wife. As his ship passed near the spot where his daughters had perished, he felt a profound sense of peace and trust in God. Inspired, he penned the words to the famous hymn, "All Is Well with My Soul."

The first verse reflects his faith in the midst of unimaginable sorrow:

*"When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot,
Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul."*

Spafford's story reminds us that even in the deepest pain, we can trust God's presence and give thanks for His unshakable peace. It is not about denying grief but about acknowledging that God's faithfulness transcends our circumstances.

Gratitude is a dialysis of sorts. It flushes self-pity out of our system. To say thanks is to celebrate a gift. Jesus was robustly thankful.

What sign God gave in the desert – a cure for ingratitude? Look up! Behold the dead snake on the pole. Lift up your eyes! Look what God has done!

The snake is defeated. Lift up! The Son of Man has come. Look up! You have a savior, forgiving sin. You have triumph over death. A universe is reclaimed! A victory that no one can take. God's solution to any challenge is simply A grateful spirit.

Let us give thanks and praise to God for democracy/Republic of our Country USA, safe guarded in recent Presidential election. God bless America!