

“THANK YOU, GOD!”

Presented by

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I would like to ask you today to consider with me the following scenario. Imagine for just a moment that a good friend of yours unexpectedly had his life thrown into complete disarray as the result of a terrible tragedy that had befallen him. For the purpose of this illustration, let’s say that a nearby river had overrun its banks and flooded his house—filling it with water three-feet high in every room. In the process, your friend’s house was badly damaged, all of his clothes were ruined, and most of his other possessions were destroyed as well.

When you heard about this horrible series of events, you rushed over to your friend’s house that very hour. You helped him gather up what little was salvageable from his house. You towed his car to a local garage in the hope that the mechanic could repair it. You drove him to Wal-Mart to buy him some clothes to wear over the next several days. You took him out to supper that night. And then you even invited him over to your house—where he ended up living for more than three months while his house was undergoing repairs.

During that time, your friend ate your food, watched your television set, wore your clothes, and borrowed your car. Finally, when his house was once again inhabitable, you drove your friend back to his home and dropped him off in the driveway. He got out of the car, walked to his front door, turned, and gently waved good-bye to you. Yet he never said, “Thank you for all you’ve done for me.” In fact, **not once** during all the time he lived at your house, ate your food, and accepted your assistance, did he **ever** express his gratitude. **Not once!**

As you backed your car out of his driveway and began to drive away, how would you feel? If you are like most of us, I suspect that you would feel “a bit down.” And, I also suspect that you would be experiencing a tinge of anger, too, because of the way your friend had acted. After all, you had done a great deal for him, and had invested a lot of time and money in an effort to help him. Yet he never even bothered to say “Thank you.” Tell me—honestly—what is the chance that you would ever want to help that person **again**? Pretty slim, eh?

Was the only reason you helped him just so he would have to feel indebted to you and express his gratitude for everything you had done for him? **Of course not!** You helped him because he was your friend, and because the Bible command us, “As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people” (Galatians 6:10). Still, wouldn’t it have been nice—after all you had done for him—if he simply had uttered those two little words, “Thank you,” to let you know that he recognized and appreciated your efforts on his behalf? Yes, it would have been nice—**really nice!**

Now I would like to ask you to stop and think how **God** feels when **we** treat **Him** the same way. The psalmist once wrote, “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24). That single statement should serve as a reminder of all that God has done for us. Moses wrote in Genesis 8:22, “As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” God has given us seasons, changes in weather, time to work, time to sleep, food to eat, air to breathe, clothes to wear, houses in which to live, cars to drive, friends to enjoy, **and so much more**. As Jeremiah observed, “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end” (Lamentations 3:22-23). Oh how true!

As you read through the Bible, did you ever consider how some of the people mentioned in its pages might have felt after what God had done **for them**? For example, how do you think:

- Abraham felt when God spared his son Isaac—just as Abraham was about to offer him as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:11-12)?
- Isaac felt, when his life was spared by God as He stopped Abraham from offering him as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:11-12)?
- Rahab felt when her life was spared, along with the lives of everyone else in her family, when the Israelites destroyed her home city of Jericho (Joshua 6:22-25)?
- Jeremiah felt when he was rescued from King Zedekiah’s prison by Ebed-Melech, one of the king’s slaves (Jeremiah 38:1-13)?
- The widow of Nain felt when Jesus raised her son from the dead (Luke 7:11-15)?
- Mary and Martha felt when their brother Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus (John 11:43-44)?
- Jairus felt when Christ raised his little 12-year-old daughter from the dead (Mark 5:22-42)?
- The blind man felt whom Jesus healed after the poor fellow had been blind since birth (John 9:1-7)?
- Peter felt when he was rescued from a Roman prison by an angel (Acts 12:5-8)?
- Paul felt when he narrowly escaped death at the hands of a mob of angry Jews in Damascus by being lowered over the city’s wall in a basket by faithful Christians (Acts 9:23-25)?
- Paul and Silas felt when they were released from a Roman prison by an angel (Acts 16:25-34)?
- Dorcas felt when Peter raised her from the dead (Acts 9:36-41)?
- Dorcas’ friends felt after Peter raised her from the dead (Acts 9:36-41)?
- The lame man felt when Peter healed him after the poor fellow had been lame since birth (Acts 3:1-7)?
- First-century Christians felt when they began to finally comprehend that they had received “the free gift of God, which is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23)?
- First-century Christians felt when they realized, “By grace you have been saved through faith, not of yourselves, but by the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8)?

Honestly, can you imagine the heartfelt joy that these people—and so many others discussed within the pages of the Bible—must have expressed to God on such occasions? King David wrote, “I thank you,

Lord, with all my heart.... O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever.... I thank You that You have answered me and have become my salvation” (Psalms 138:1; 30:12, NAB; 118:21, NRSV).

In fact, the Bible even records an instance in which Jesus Himself expressed gratitude to God. In John 11:41 He said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.” If Jesus Christ—as the Son of God—understood the necessity of being grateful to God, shouldn’t we today strive to understand that concept as well? Indeed we should! King David also wrote, “We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks because Your wondrous works declare that Your name is near” (Psalm 75:1). How true that is! God’s gifts to us are too numerous to name, much less fully comprehend. He is, after all, the One Who has given us “life, breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25). It is **in Him** that we “live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). As the writer of 1 Chronicles put it,

“Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name” (1 Chronicles 29:11-13).

We would not appreciate it if we did as much as we could for a friend of ours who needed our help—and that friend walked away from us without even bothering to say, “Thank you.” Do you think **God** feels any differently when **we** treat **Him** the same way? He is the One Who “has made everything beautiful in its time, and has put eternity in our hearts” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Plus, of course, He is the One Who has given us “the free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). All of this being true, let us then join the psalmist in saying to our heavenly Father, “I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever. I will thank you forever because of what you have done. In the presence of the faithful I will proclaim your name, for it is good” (Psalm 52:8-9, NRSV).