

Thankfulness

Notes from Sermon Series

by Pastor Wayne Carson

“If anyone could tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness and perfection, he must tell you to make it a rule to yourself to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you. For if you thank God for it, you turn it into a blessing.”

~William Law, 18th-century clergyman

Thanking God for Everything

To thank God for the good, the bad, and the ugly may seem counter-intuitive to many of you.

I have always found that thanking the Lord for what He has done, and praising the Lord for Who and What He is, takes away my anxiety and gives me peace surprisingly fast. Now I am beginning to think that thanking God is *the secret of the universe*, or at least one of them, especially the practice of thanking God for the problems we have.

Do you thank God often? Do you thank God intentionally and routinely? Do you, as a matter of common courtesy, acknowledge God's benefits as you would acknowledge gifts from loved ones? Is your Christian life a life of thankfulness, a life full of continual and habitual thanksgiving to God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *for anything and everything*? **Let's take it to the next level.** Do you thank God the Father *for* hurts and disappointments, *for* accidents, *for* medical problems and financial set-backs, *for* troubles in your relationships and *for* a myriad of negative experiences that we have in this world?

God wants you thank Him *for* what He has done, *for* what He has not done, *for* what He has allowed to happen that He wouldn't have done. Praise Him for being all-seeing, all-hearing, all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, omnipresent, totally aware, completely interested, ceaselessly active, caring, loving, personal, good and true; for having a plan and a purpose, and for being perfect and immutable, which means He never changes.

Obedience to this holy imperative will release the power of God into your life and into your circumstances from Heaven. An aperture in a camera is an adjustable, usually circular opening that zooms open or becomes smaller to control the quantity of light that enters the lens.

Picture a thin barrier wall with an aperture between you on earth and God in heaven. As you thank the Lord, picture that aperture opening in that thin barrier wall, the fragrance of Heaven, the righteous aroma of the Throne Room itself, whooshes through into your world, into your soul, into your environment and into your circumstances.

The opposite of thankfulness is Grumbling.

Grumbling inwardly comes so easy to us that we often don't realize we are doing it. What does grumbling mean? To grumble means to murmur or mutter in discontent, to complain sullenly, to sulk, to be moody, cheerless, mournful and dark. To murmur is to utter low, indistinct sounds, or to growl inwardly. It means you have a complaint. The dictionary defines complaining as accusing. And guess who you are accusing? The Proprietor of the planet earth (i.e., God) of mismanaging the details of your day or life. If not God, then who?

Thanks and praise release the love, peace, joy, power, and fragrance of Heaven into our lives. Grumbling and discontent block the love, peace, joy, power, and fragrance of Heaven. Thanking God for negative things gets easier. **The results of our reactions are cumulative.** With each "Thank you, Lord!" it becomes easier to believe. But each time we allow unbelief, pessimism, or grumbling to deny God's presence and love in a difficult situation, the negative results pile up, accumulate, and it becomes increasingly difficult to be willing to exercise any faith at all. **The more we grumble, the more defeated we feel.** The more defeated we feel, the more we grumble. Instead of going from victory to victory, we go from victimhood to victimhood. Many little thankless grumbles add up to an overwhelming mountain of depression.

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious

about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which is more than having all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:4-7

Not Seeing the Big Picture

May we continue to look at the teaching of “*always giving thanks to God, the Father, **for** everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Ephesians 5:20) and the sister command to “*give thanks **in** all circumstances for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). We remember that *the Lord is near* and that He has told us *to not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving to present our requests to God*. And if we do that, He promises that the *peace of God* which is *better than all understanding* [and I might add all misunderstanding] *will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*. (Philippians 4:5-6) God knows we will have struggles, but **He has everything under control and He will guard us and keep us stable** if we merely obey these commands to thank Him and express our dependency upon Him by praying and asking for His help.

However, we find it easier or more natural to respond to our problems by saying things like: “This situation isn’t fair!” “I don’t see this as something to be thankful for.” “Why is this happening to me?” “I don’t accept this!”

These thankfulness commands certainly prove the verse in which God says “*My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.*” (Isaiah 55:8). **It may not be our way to thank God for what we perceive as bad circumstances**, but 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, “*This is God’s will.*” It is God’s way **for** us. It is the way we respond to Him.

But our attitude is “I don’t understand it; therefore I don’t buy it. I have trouble believing it.”

We need to apply a principle to this teaching: **Acceptance comes before understanding.** We don’t need to totally understand the command to obey it. We don’t have to like our circumstances. We don’t have to feel good about it. But we do need to be *willing*. God will not violate our will. If we wait until we understand it, we may never benefit from the command, which is God’s obvious intent in giving us the command. It is for our good. If you say, “Lord, satisfy my intellect about this teaching, then I will obey it,” the Lord says, “No, you accept my teaching and obey it, and then you will begin to understand it.”

Our understanding of “The Bigger Picture” is so puny and limited that we cannot grasp the magnitude of God’s plan and purpose for what and why He does what He is doing in the world--and in your personal world. You and I do not see what He sees or know what He knows.

So God’s questions to us are: “Am I all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful, good, just and true? Do I know what I am doing in the whole world and in your world? Do I love and care for you? If I can be trusted, start thanking Me now. If you approve of Me, start praising Me now because I dwell in your praises. Draw near to Me and I will draw near to you. I am already nearer than you think. Mix My promises with your faith. Faith pleases Me.

Complaining, un-thankfulness and distrust hinder Me from blessing your life. Cooperate with Me in what I allow to come into your life. Thank Me for it. Praise Me for Who and What I am. Then I will guide you, teach you, provide for you and protect you as I conform you to the image of My Son. I love you. I have always loved you, and I always will.”

Questions & Thoughts on Thankfulness *In* and *For* All Things

1. Does God speak to us through our *environment*: our circumstances or situations or the general state we are in?

2. When Paul says, “*Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus,*” does that include both good and bad circumstances?

3. If there are 100 factors in your life and you regard the 98 cheerful factors as merely normal, and worry, think and talk about the two things bothering you, you forget to say, “*The Lord giveth,*” as Job did when Satan, with God’s permission, targeted him. Job said, “*The Lord giveth,*” before he said, “*The Lord taketh away.*” Selah. What is your message to God? You are saying, “Take care of my two problems and I’ll throw them into the same ‘no big deal’ basket with all my other blessings.”

4. Let’s continually give thanks for the good things in our lives. Count your blessings; list them. Write down 20 tonight and another 20 tomorrow night. Then add more as you think of them. Then **use** your list.

5. Since the verse says “*all circumstance*” it includes bad circumstances, negative situations, all *sadness factors*. As I spoke with individuals about this, each one had a current difficult circumstance in mind as we talked.

6. The verse says *in* our circumstances, and it says that we are *in* Christ. Christ is also *in* us. “*Emmanuel*” means “God with us.” Jesus goes through it with us. He went through it Himself and knows how to get us through it and goes through it with us. He will go through your death with you, much less your greatest unpleasant circumstances.

7. “***Give thanks... for this is God’s will.***” When you say, “Thank you, Lord,” you are saying “I trust You; I believe You love me and that You know what You are

doing. I believe You are near, in my immediate environment.” When we complain, “Why did God let this happen to me?” we tacitly acknowledge that God speaks through our environment as well as by means of His Word and the Holy Spirit.

8. Many of us balk at the cross-reference on thankfulness in Ephesians 5:20: “*Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*” People say things like, “Okay, I can (cautiously) thank God *in* my situation, but I cannot thank God *for* my situation. I especially cannot thank Him *for everything.*” An understandable response. It is counter-intuitive for sure, but since “*we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose*” (Romans 8:28), we can begin to thank God for *all things*. If you thank God *for* everything, He can work it *for* good *for* you. God has a purpose and part of His purpose is to conform you to the image of Christ. This will happen; your “Thank You” helps to determine how soon. “Thank You for this problem, Father, how can I cooperate with you in the circumstances of my life?”

9. The Nate Bethel Illustration: Years ago I would be with Pastor Charlie and Dorothy, often seated next to little Nate. I discovered that Nate had an unusual ability. He would let me draw slashes, spirals and markings of any kind. Then he would convert my scribblings into a good recognizable picture of something. What's more, Nate could do it *every time!* Similarly, God can take any mess we have made, or any fix we are in, and work it together for good, for His good purpose and for your good in some way.

10. In science there is the **Heisenberg Principle** which states that the act of observation affects whatever you are observing. If you put a meat thermometer at room

temperature into a hot roast, the thermometer affects, slightly to be sure, the temperature of the roast. We need to be better observers of what God is doing or allowing in our lives. When you thank the Lord for the state you are in, it affects your state. Actually, your thankfulness takes you out of the precise circumstances because you have changed the circumstances. You are both the observer and you are part of the circumstances. You change yourself by choosing to be thankful, and then there is the grace of God that your “Thank You” releases into your situation, not to mention the filling of the Spirit that results from yielding to God's command to say, “Thank You.”

Experiment with this holy imperative. As situations arise say, “Thank You, Lord,” and see what happens. He doesn't say you have to like the circumstances, He simply says, “Give thanks in all circumstances.”

Questions from God

“Hello, son, daughter, do you believe that I am all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful, good, just and true? Do you believe that I know what I am doing in the whole world and in *your* world? Am I observing, caring, and being active in the Big Picture and in your Personal Picture?

“Can I do more than one thing at a time? **Am I doing a good job or a bad job of working things out for good in your fallen world?** Am I being responsible? Can I be trusted? Do I love you?

“Am I deferring to mankind's proprietorship over the earth, given to you in the Garden of Eden and retrieved for you by the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and exaltation of My Dear Son?

“Am I courteously yielding to the decisions, choices, opinions and judgments of the genuine persons with wills of your own that I created you to be and to have?

“Am I deferring to the will on earth of my people, the invisible, unorganized, reborn body of Christ, whose power is the second strongest force in all reality, potential as it may be?

“Have I given you enough revelation for you to go on, for you to know that what is happening is meaningful and purposeful?

“Do you believe that I love and care for you personally?”

“Do you believe that your own future praises of Me in Heaven, recorded in the book of Revelation will be offered by you willingly, based upon your greater awareness, then, of my utter “responsible-ness” in how I dealt with the complexities of man’s will, man’s fall, man’s sin, and especially in how I responded to your “yes’s” and your “no’s” as creatures with volitional freedom?

“Or do you think you will praise Me in Heaven under coercion, because you will be afraid not to? Do you believe in my whole plan and purpose for bringing other persons into existence and letting them choose for themselves whether they want to live with Me in harmony in Heaven forever, or not? Do you think this was right?

“If you *do* believe that I can be trusted, start thanking Me now for everything, because I *am* being responsible, because I *am* working in all things for the good of those who love Me, for the benefit of those who responded to My call.

“If you approve of Me, start praising Me *now* because I dwell in your praises. Draw near to Me and I will draw near to you. I am already nearer than you think.

“Mix My promises with your faith. Trust pleases Me because I know how trustworthy I am. **Complaining, unthankfulness and distrust hinder Me from blessing your life** because I *will not* violate your will. Your will is

sacred to Me. It is an important part of My image in you. It is what makes you a person like I am a Person.

“Cooperate with Me in what I allow to come into your life. Thank Me for it. Praise Me for Who and What I am. This will allow Me to guide you, teach you, provide for you and protect you as I begin the process of conforming you to the image of My dear Son. I love you. I have always loved you, and I always will.”

Thankfulness + Rejoicing = Joy

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness;

come before him with joyful songs.

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.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving

and his courts with praise;

give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;

his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Three important themes are included in Psalm 100: joy, thanks, and praise. I want to keep our minds on **thanking God in all circumstances and for everything**, but I want to say a lot about joy.

Perhaps the subject of joy will lead us into worship. Paul tells the believers, **“Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice!”** (Philippians 4:4) When the Holy Spirit inspires a Bible writer to repeat something, we need to pay attention. John Wesley wrote: “Our Lord has purchased joy as well as righteousness for us. It is the very design of the gospel, that being saved from guilt, we should be happy in the love of Christ. Thanksgiving is inseparable from true

prayer... He that always prays is ever giving praise, whether in ease or pain, both for prosperity and for the greatest adversity. He blesses God for all things, looks on them as coming from Him, and receives them only for His sake; not choosing nor refusing, liking or disliking anything, but only as it is agreeable or disagreeable to His perfect will.”

Nehemiah 8:10 declares, “*The joy of the LORD is your strength.*” It is certainly true that the opposite of joy saps our strength. Sadness, disappointment, sorrow and grief weaken us. Sometimes it temporarily incapacitates us. **We are settling for second best if we are only happy when circumstances are relatively pleasant,** or when we are in an altered state of consciousness, or when we are getting our way and no one in particular is crossing us at the moment.

We Believers already have the joy of the Lord because we **possess** the Lord, *Christ in you, the hope of glory!* Also, love, *joy* and peace are ingredients in the nine-flavored fruit of the Spirit. The source of joy is God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. That is a lot of joy! If “*God is love*” we could just as surely say, “God is joy!” **You have this joy of the Father resident in your new birth, your regenerated, born again human spirit.** You just have to do what is necessary for that spiritual joy to be released into your soul, that is, your mind, will, and emotions.

We say, “Lord, give me joy and I will start rejoicing.” God says, “No, daughter, son--**you start rejoicing and My joy, which is already in you, will well up within you. You keep insisting that I go first,** that I show *you* something. I SHOWED YOU SOMETHING WHEN I DIED ON THE CROSS. Now you show *Me* something.” Hebrews 13:15 says, “*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise.*” **Thankfulness and praise**

are a sacrifice when you don't *feel like* thanking and praising God. When thanking God is the last thing you want to do, when you are so upset you would rather blame God, cuss at loved ones, and curse God Himself; when you are so angry, sick and tired and helpless-feeling; but you **choose** instead to give God the glory, THAT IS WHEN PRAISE BECOMES A SACRIFICE!

If you *rejoice in the Lord always*, you will have the strength to do that. *"Shout praises to the LORD! Our God is kind, and it is right and good to sing praises to him."* Psalm 147:1

In His Presence in the Present Tense

I see another major teaching, inherently present in the very same verses we have been inspired by, to thank God in difficult situations and to even rejoice in the midst of trials. Resident in these verses is the great truth that we are supposed to live in God's presence in the present tense. It is our current time--that is, now, today--that God meets us when He reaches out to us from His timeless, eternal dimension. **When God commands us to thank Him *in* our circumstances He means for us to give thanks *during* our circumstances.**

Let's look again at 1 Thessalonians 5:18: *"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* We must remember that *present tense* verbs in our English New Testament are the translations of *present continuous tense* verbs in the New Testament Koine Greek. So our verse should read: *"Keep on giving thanks in all circumstances for this keeps on being God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* Why does Paul say, "*keep on*" and "*all circumstances*"? Because our circumstances keep on changing. The Holy Spirit is saying through Paul to the believer in time *keep on giving thanks during each and all of your sequential circumstances and situations.* Since the Thessalonian believers were experiencing severe

suffering and persecution, it is obvious Paul means especially in all difficult circumstances.

Time stands still for no one. The current of time keeps on flowing to us from the future, and beyond us to the past. The *present continuous* Greek verb seems to take into account the ceaseless march of time. So the command is not saying, “*Give thanks for your last set of difficult circumstances that turned out okay, while you yourself are now in a new set of circumstances.*” It’s okay to be thankful after the storm has passed, but those circumstances are gone. **To live by faith means we thank God now, *during* the storm, while we cannot see how things will turn out.**

2 Corinthians 5:7 says, “*We live by faith, not by sight.*” That verse in its context is saying that when we are absent from the body, after we have died and gone to Heaven, we will no longer be able to operate on faith, but by sight. **Only now, only here, only in this mortal body will we ever have the opportunity to live by faith.** We prefer to live by sight, don’t we? “Okay, Lord, now that I see how things turned out, I will thank you.” But you missed your opportunity to trust Christ and to give glory to God during the pressure period, when it took a little faith! Even a non-believer could be thankful afterwards. And a pressure period is just that--an intense period of time that comes to an end eventually.

Don’t forget, the Lord promised us in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that “*God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted [or tested] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*”

Think of your relationship to time as a surfer riding on a smooth wave of time called the present. Then you will belong to the time actually passing, the only time that is real for you. What percentage of emotional stress is due to being preoccupied with our past or future? Give the past

and the future to God; they belong to Him anyway. **Today is the only time we really have.** This is our time to shine as trophies of God's grace. And the time is now, today.

Jesus Lived One Day at a Time

Based on the teachings of Jesus and the Bible, generally, we can safely say that God meant for us to **live one day at a time**, to live in the moment, to do what we are doing, to concentrate on today, right now, the present time--and to not live in the past, for it is gone, and not the future, because it isn't ours yet. Let me affirm that Jesus lived one day at a time. He practiced what He preached! Jesus said how we should regard time in Matthew 6:34: *"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*

Probably most of His life, but certainly during his three and a half year ministry, Jesus knew what waited for Him in Jerusalem--crucifixion! Mark 8:31 says, *"He then began to teach them [His disciples] that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again."* And so He was determined all along to go to Jerusalem and die. Luke 9:51 says, *"As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."* **And yet, Jesus restrained His mental contemplation and His human fears of the cross until the same day of the crucifixion!**

After the Last Supper, Luke 22:39-44 records that *"Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, 'Pray that you will not fall into temptation.' He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.' An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish,*

he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.”

The Jewish Day begins in the evening when you can see three stars in the sky. Jesus waited approximately 1,260 days before letting Himself be troubled emotionally by the prospect of all the indignities of interrogations and beatings, of the carrying of His cross and His terrifying and tortuous death on the cross. That He knew about it all along is pure poetry! Even up to and including the Last Supper meal, He calmly took care of business with Judas and ministered to the Eleven during the unhurried Passover Seder. Then, finally, He gave vent to His quite appropriate and healthy human fears of that “cup,” which included physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual terrors.

Jesus’ earthly life was perfectly consistent with His heaven-sent words. He, Who said that we should take no thought for tomorrow until tomorrow comes, lived it! Non-Jewish believers might miss this because, to them, the *night* before was the *day* before. Strongly consider this concept of living one day at a time. **Mentally and emotionally we spend a lot of our precious present time preoccupied with the past and the future.**

If we stop holding onto the past, the past will stop holding onto us. No matter how good a planner you are, you are presumptuous to engage in loose *future talk*.

You are one heartbeat from eternity. God wants us, like a surfer, to live on that smooth wave of time called the present, to keep living in His Presence in the continuous present tense. Don’t miss the wave!

Faithful and True

You will be able to rejoice and be thankful all the time if you believe the Lord Jesus is ***faithful and true***. Consider all the things, all the variables, all the fluctuating

variations and mathematics of all the decisions the Lord has to make in order to interact with each and every one of us 24 hours a day in all our circumstances. God monitors and moderates our circumstances and our general state based upon how cooperative **or** uncooperative we are; our thankfulness **or** ingratitude; our rejoicing **or** complaining. God weighs our prayers, **or** lack of them. He notes our approving praise of Him **or** our disapproving judgment of Him evidenced by our endless lamentations and sulking. He blesses or does not bless our finances based upon how stingy or generous we are, and the spirit with which we give, either joyously or grudgingly. He blesses our relationships based upon our willingness or unwillingness to forgive and forebear. He controls the rate of our spiritual growth by how much we have applied, by faith, the Bible knowledge already stored in our right frontal lobe. He gives us bigger responsibilities based upon His meticulous assessment of our faithfulness in smaller duties. Just how measured and precise is God in all His interactions with the whole world and with your personal world? That's where the word "true" comes into play. The word "true" is used about Jesus over and over:

He is called Faithful and True. (Revelation 19:11)

He is the true light that gives light to every man. (John 1:9)

He is the true bread from heaven given by the Father. (John 6:32)

He is the true vine that sustains and nourished us who are called the branches so we can bear fruit in our lives here. (John 15:1)

And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. (1 John 5:20)

So what does "true" mean? In the Greek true is "alethinus," meaning precise and accurate, as in true north; consistent with the facts, not false or erroneous;

exactly conforming to a standard or pattern; proper alignment or adjustment.

Jesus is the *exact expression* of God the Father.

This means that Jesus takes everything into consideration using all His infinite attributes, and does or allows precisely the right thing in every situation. He is true blue, perfectly loyal to the Father, to the Spirit, to His creation, and He is perfectly consistent with His own Name and His righteous words above all things. And He is unfailingly loyal to those who love Him, the called according to His purpose, and He makes all things work together for good for them (*Romans 8:28*).

Graduating from Thanks to Praise & Worship

What sacrifices can we *Believer Priests* in our time offer to the Lord?

In Romans 12:1, Paul urges us to offer our “*bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*” Our bodies, our lives, ourselves are living sacrifices as opposed to dead sacrifices, but willing to live or die for Christ! Note the word “*worship,*” because worship is our goal.

In the Old Testament there were “thank offerings,” and thankfulness is referred to as a sacrifice in a number of places. Thankfulness seems to be the spirit of offering up sacrifices. To thank God when we are going through what we see as negative problems has an element of sacrifice in it.

Hebrews 13:15 says, “*Let us continually offer to God the sacrifice of praise.*” Just as we learned that thankfulness is appropriate in, or during, hard circumstances and that we are supposed to *keep on giving thanks in all circumstances*, so we

should also *praise God* continually in and through all successive situations. **This is a step up from thankfulness.** We thank God for what He is *doing* in, through, and by means of a difficult situation. We praise God for *Who* and *What* He is even as we go through the storm of a difficult time or pressure period. We are promised that God inhabits our praises. **This is the “I don’t understand why this is happening and I don’t feel good about this, but I am going to praise God anyhow” scenario!**

We are moving toward the intimacy of truly worshipping God. There are gradations of overtures to worship, and the higher up we go, the more we experience the ecstasy and intimacy of our love affair with God! Since God compares marriage and the marriage act to His living relationship with us, let me, as delicately as I can, compare thankfulness, rejoicing, praise, delight, and surrender to God in worship to one’s relationship with a spouse. Thankfulness is a sweet step towards intimacy. Imagine thanking your husband or wife (whether you have one, or may have one someday) sincerely and often. Doesn’t God deserve our *expressed* gratitude? Now take loving overtures to the level of admiration for God’s goodness and character--His qualities of love and compassion, grace and mercy, holiness and humility; His righteousness and justice, power and perfection, faithfulness and wisdom; and all His unchanging, infinite attributes: all-knowing, all-seeing, all-hearing, totally interested; and His ceaselessly active attention to all of His creation, but especially to those who love Him.

But we are largely a race of ingrates. Show me a thankful person, however, and I’ll show you a person whose future with God looks promising! Show me a

praising person and I'll show you a person who cannot stay depressed.

Gift of Salvation

“And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.” Philippians 3:9

Salvation is a gift paid for by God, by giving us His Son to become the satisfaction for all of our sins. Jesus' mighty death satisfied the just demands of God's holy Law. But you must receive His gift of salvation by faith, by trusting Him to be your total and perfect Savior.

Christ died; that's history.

Christ died for *me*; that's salvation.

God says in 1 John 5:13, *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life.”* Notice, God does not say, “hope,” “guess,” “perhaps,” or “maybe.” God says you can *“know that you have eternal life”* while still in this life.

In 1 John 5:13 is God's *written guarantee* to us that we can **KNOW** that we have eternal life once we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). If God puts it in writing you can count on it.



IN ROCK HILL

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Directions to Clayton Community Church from I-64/Hwy 40:

- ~ Exit on McKnight Rd.
- ~ Head south on McKnight Rd. toward Manchester Rd.
- ~ Go past Tilles Park and Litzsinger Rd.
- ~ Go left (east) on Golden Gate Dr.
- ~ The church is down the street one block on the right. It sits on the corner of Rockford Ave. and Golden Gate Dr.

