

Being **THANKFUL** *always*, **IN** and **FOR ALL** things Philippians 4:6-7



December 2019

Philip Shields

www.LightontheRock.org

*Summary: This is one of the most important qualities we can master in our lives: always being thankful, all the time, **FOR** all things, in all things, no matter what. Being grateful and appreciative becomes a life style. You will receive more peace of mind, more joy in all circumstances and will be reflecting faith and trust in God.*

*** *****

(These are notes, not a word-for-word transcript)

As you know, we had a recent Thanksgiving Day here in the USA. I just gave a message about Thanksgiving DAY – but this time it's far more important: it's about being thankful, not just on one day, but always, in and for, everything in our lives. This topic is essential to every believer in every country.

So here's today's first question: are we thankful – always, not just on Thanksgiving Day – but all the time, no matter what – for good or bad -- throughout each hour, each day and each week? It's easy to be thankful when everything is going really well. But what about when things aren't all going very well? In fact, I'm referring to times when everything seems to be going **WRONG** in your life. Are you still a thankful person when that is the case?

I realize most people would rather have a sermon on some exciting topic on prophecy – but I assure you: **few topics will CHANGE YOUR LIFE more than learning this topic well.** I wish I had been doing what you'll hear today **YEARS AND YEARS** ago, much more than I was. But now that I've been practicing it diligently – a LOT --for a few months now, it is **changing my life.** Let it change yours too. So don't give this a pass... please take the time to hear and watch this vital topic.

For **the Feast of Tabernacles** (Sukkot) 2019, I gave a sermon largely on this subject. I hope you will all take time to hear it. It's called "**For when I am weak, then I am strong**" given in **October 2019**. The link is this: <https://www.lightontherock.org/message/when-i-am-weak-then-i-am-strong-2-cor-12-8-10>

Anyway, right after Thanksgiving Day, I had asked our 3 oldest grandsons – 8-13 years of age, to stay over for the weekend. On the Sabbath, I asked the 3 boys to go pray in the bedrooms for 5-10 minutes, thanking God for everything they could think of – with this warning or rule:

"Let's assume that everything you don't thank God for-- disappears tomorrow."

I'd like you to ask yourselves the same thing. Start with your past WEEK of your prayers with *the same scenario*: ***What if everything you have not thanked God for recently, in the past week, disappears tomorrow morning? For you – what would disappear?***

God wouldn't be that mean to take away everything we neglected to thank him for, but I do sometimes wonder if we lose some aspects of our lives from time to time because of our – ingratitude. I wonder. Yeshua did not put the leprosy back on the 9 lepers who didn't come back to thank him, however.

But if you consider yourself a very thankful person – how would you fare under those conditions?

There are **millions** of things we should be thankful for, but I just wanted to make a point. I too would fail to list many of the important things. But it was very interesting with the grandsons. More on that soon.

So hello and welcome everyone to Light on the Rock. This is Philip Shields welcoming you to enjoy our free messages and insights from the Word of God. Be sure to let others know about us if you benefit from our teachings. We have over 270 sermons on site.

MY TOPIC TODAY – WOULD GOD CONSIDER YOU A THANKFUL PERSON? Are we learning to be thankful all the time?

Is "thanksgiving" a DAY to you – or is it a *LIFE STYLE*, a WAY OF LIFE? It should be a way of LIFE. In all things, for all things, ALL the time, ALWAYS.

I have to admit – I have to get much better at being thankful, cheerful, no matter what as well. Remember, I preach to myself. Be aware that most of the time my sermons start as a study for *me*, to have God's word convict, teach and correct *me*, before I deliver it as a sermon for everyone.

So let's get into this. I believe God really appreciates thankful people.

And are we to thank God only for when times are going well, we're healthy, things are good?

Or do you all **also give thanks for when things are bad, painful, and horrible?** I want you to think about that! How many of you actually thank God even for the really bad stuff in your life (no money, no health, no job, no decent home, pain and suffering?) I'll get into all that also in the last half of this message.

Ephesians 5:19-20

“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to YHVH,
20 giving thanks ALWAYS FOR ALL things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

We are to give God thanks ALWAYS. FOR ALL things. ALL the time.

Thankful Leper

One time the Son of God – Yeshua the Messiah – performed a life-changing miracle. Let's read it. (I mentioned the former leper colony in Crete called Spinalonga). Let's review the story of 10 lepers and gratitude.

Luke 17:11-19

Now it happened as He [Yeshua] went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him **ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off.** 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "**Go, show yourselves to the priests.**" And so it was *that as they went, they were cleansed.*

All ten had tremendous faith to start marching to the priests in Jerusalem – or wherever they intended to find priests – even before they were visibly healed.

15 And ONE of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell

down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

He wasn't shy about *loudly* proclaiming appreciation for what Yeshua had done.

17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

You and I might shake our heads in disbelief that 90% of them failed to say "Thank you" for something so life changing – but I say to all of us: I believe MOST of us have not expressed thanks to God for equally life changing help from God in OUR lives. MOST of us are probably not any better than the other 9. Including me. That's why I'm giving the sermon, because I want to change that in MY life first – and hopefully in the lives of some of you.

So let's see how thankful you have been. ***I ask again – are you more like the 1 thankful leper – or more like the 9 who didn't say "thank you" to God for a lot of specific things?***

So my young grandsons returned. They had thanked God for their family, for their mom and dad and brothers and sister, for God himself, for their dog, for me and their grandmas, maybe for their home – or not, their bedroom, their bed – and that kind of important stuff. Good start.

I thought that was a good start for boys 8-13 years of age. VERY Good. And they had mentioned lots of other things too. But not everything. There are millions of things we could thank God for, so I'm not being critical but just wanted them to think of more things for which to thank God. *This is also for YOU.*

So as I asked them for more details, they had forgotten some of these (remember I'm talking to *children*, so we'll get into the spiritual aspects too very soon – but I want you thinking what YOU thank God for each day, and what you DON'T). Are you- or I-- more like the thankful leper or more like the other 9 who didn't come back to say "thank you"?

When was the last time you thanked God for....

- Your children, grandchildren – even if you're estranged from them.
- Your mom, dad, grandparents, uncles and aunts – perfect or not.
- Your **HOME** – 2 grandsons forgot that, one remembered.

- **CLOTHES**, shoes— what if tomorrow you're naked and shoeless?
- Having **FOOD** every day -- they hadn't thought of that.
- Clean **WATER** to drink right out of our taps; they'd forgotten to thank for that. Kenya story on audio – about the well dug in Kenya. We take our tap water for granted.
- How about being able to **BREATHE**? I told them about asthmatics.
- Had they thought of thanking God for their mom and dad's jobs – so there was some money for the family? Yes, I think they had.
-

So a bit of kidding around ensued with my grandkids – ***“So OK, all these things you forgot to thank God for are now taken away from you tomorrow. How would you like that?”*** I continued:

“So now you're outside; you have no home. You are naked. You have no clothes. No shoes on your feet. Did you thank God for having feet and legs? OK – we'll forgive that. But you're naked, no shoes, no home, and you have no food or water. And you can't breathe! And so 2-3 minutes later, you're DEAD... because things we take for granted, we forgot to thank God for.”

Then I told them – “you know what? I need to get better at all this too. God enjoys thankful people! And we haven't even really started yet to thank God for Jesus, for His Spirit, for his grace, love and forgiveness, for salvation, his mercy -- all the really BIG things in life.”

Ultimately thanking God for the spiritual things lets him see that we are not focused on just the physical. The car we drive, the house we live in, the shoes and watches we wear, don't mean that much to believers compared to what God has for us when we are changed to spirit.

I think thankful people are nicer people. They're less critical. They appreciate things and people much more. I also believe **deeply thankful people** show a much DEEPER level of maturity than unthankful people. They're more at peace, more appreciative generally. They complain less. They accept “what is” more – as Paul says in Philippians 4:11 that he'd learned how to be content with a lot, or with almost nothing.

- **Eyesight and hearing** – what if tomorrow you can't see or hear anything? One of my favorite couples are both deaf but they sure appreciate what else they have. They're lovely people. They're always so thankful.

- Your **health** – what if tomorrow you're wracked with pain and illness. My brother's story of pain, diabetes, 2 strokes, neuropathy, weakness – and his wife with Alzheimer's. What if you have constant severe pain?

I asked the boys, "Did you thank God for all he does?" and they all said yes. I asked how. The youngest said, "**Poppy, I said, 'thank you God – for being you.'**" I thought that was deeper than most might realize for an 8 year old. "For being you". For everything God is like. Beautiful.

Your family has TWO cars to drive. 2 of them had remembered that. I told the story of Kenya – how they have no car or motorcycle at all, but walk everywhere or take a bus.

Did you mention your home in your thanking God? Instead of wishing yours was more spectacular, I could put you in a home back in the back country of a 3rd world country – maybe in Keroka, Kenya. I grew up in a home without running water, without modern electrical appliances like fridge/stove – we had an ice box in the Philippines. No screens on the windows – so we slept in mosquito nets at night. No car, no phone, no bathtub, no TV.

Besides thanking GOD – let's learn to be more thankful generally – with everyone. We can be more expressive in thanking our husband or wife for many, many things. For example, when the grandkids come over, if they haven't thanked my wife already, I'll lead by saying, "Thank you Nan, for such a tasty breakfast." Then they get the cue and say something grateful as well. I will say that they are very expressive with gratitude 90% of the time.

Also take time to thank those who are helping you with God's word – online, for free. Believe me, a thank you call or email from a listener makes my whole day. So we can do this for one another too and for those serving all of you with websites.

SO... Are you seeing my point?

And we haven't even touched on the big, big spiritual things yet. But let me just say – on the physical things – start ***noticing* and thanking God** much more as you enjoy a cute bird like a **nuthatch** or a cardinal delighting in your bird feeder seeds or bird bath.

DOES GOD SEE YOU as a THANKFUL person – or NOT – for everything he's let you enjoy – and for everything he lets you go through?

- * butterflies, flowers, trees, grass, imagine if all that was taken away

- beautiful rain, clouds and sun
- The country you live in, without terrorist bombs going off all the time as they do in much of the world

The MOST important things to thank God for

Do we thank God for being Himself and for his son Jesus Christ who came and died FOR me and FOR you? Paul personalized it – “Who died for ME” he says in **Gal. 2:20**. Paul didn’t keep the death of our Savior as a general death for everyone, but rather for EACH one. Paul says “for ME”. See Gal. 2:20. Do YOU do that, and thank him for that, personally, that he is YOUR Savior, not just the Savior of the world?

Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved ME and gave Himself for ME.**”

How about these things? Do you often thank God over and over for these?

- God’s grace, his love, his mercy and his SALVATION
- God’s holy spirit
- God’s holy guardian angels (check out my recent blog on that)

OK – so when WAS the last time you gushed your gratitude to our Abba in heaven for those things? Are you the thankful leper who was healed and took time to come back and say so, or the 9 who never bothered?

In the Old Testament – or Tanakh – we read of a lot of thanksgiving going on. King David made it a point to have thanksgiving and praise every morning and evening and the holy days.

1 Chronicles 23:25

For David said, "YHVH God of Israel has given rest to His people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem forever";

The singers and 4,000 musicians were to:

1 Chronicles 23:30-31

“to stand every morning to thank and praise YHVH, and likewise at evening;

David’s psalms are full of thanksgiving. Here’s just one: 31 and at every presentation of a burnt offering to YHVH on the Sabbaths and on the New Moons and on the set feasts, by number according to the ordinance governing them, regularly before YHVH”

Psalms 119:62

At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You,
Because of Your righteous judgments.

I love **2 Chronicles 5**. Solomon and the Israelites were dedicating the new House of God, the Temple of YHVH. As the people offered thanksgiving, look at what happened:

2 Chronicles 5:13-14

“Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters [120 of them] and singers were as one, to make **one sound to be heard in praising and THANKING YHVH**, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised YHVH, saying "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever,"

that the house, the house of YHVH, was filled with a cloud, 14 so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of YHVH filled the house of God.”

God frankly loved being appreciated and so filled his house with glory. I believe he really appreciated being thanked.

God wants us to be thankful – NOT because HE needs it so much, but he knows it's good for us to express gratitude.

The New Testament also is full of the deep, deep gratitude expressed by Paul and the other apostles.

Paul, who saw his human frailty and failings, and openly confessed that he still sometimes did the things he didn't want to do (Romans 7:15-20), ends like this in Romans 7:21-25:

Romans 7:21-25 Holman Apologetics Study Bible

“So I discover this principle: when I want to do good, evil is with me. 22 For in my inner self I joyfully agree with God's law. 23 But I see a different law in the parts of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body.

24 *What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*

25 ***ITHANK GOD*** through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I myself am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh, to the law of sin.”

Do you and I often thank God for Jesus Christ and what He's done for us?

Colossians 2:6-7

“as you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, ***ABOUNDING in it with THANKSGIVING.***”

Now let's kick it up a notch or two!

The rest of this sermon is the HARD part to practice, but I promise you—if you practice it, and get better and better at always thanking God, no matter what it is about, it will CHANGE your life!

Hebrews 13:14-15

“For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. 15 Therefore by Him let us ***continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving THANKS to His name***”.

A sacrifice costs you. It's not easy. But it says we must continually offer this sacrifice of praise to God.

But what about when everything's going badly – still thank?

Turn to 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Paul struggled with something he called the “thorn in the flesh – a messenger of Satan to buffet me” and he cried out 3x for God to give him relief. The answer he got is the whole point of my **sermon on “For when I am weak I am strong” – Oct. 2019.** Please hear it with Bible open, as I won't have time to repeat that whole sermon here. Here's the scripture:

2 Corinthians 12:7-8 NIV

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me ***a thorn in my flesh***, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 ***Three times I pleaded*** with the Lord to take it away from me.

That “thorn in the flesh” was something severely affecting Paul. But now learn what excited Paul. Remember, God had let this same Paul be stoned and left

for dead, to be beaten and flogged several times, shipwrecked several times, robbed and attacked, maligned and lied about. I mean the famous apostle Paul! Yes, God let him go through all that. Let's see what Yeshua told him about this thorn in the flesh he had (probably not a literal thorn but something upsetting to Paul):

2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that CHRIST'S power may rest on me.

Christ told Paul basically "I'm using your hurt, your pain, your agony, your disappointments, what seems like unanswered prayer – to mold and shape you so that MY power is what is letting you do great miracles, raise the dead, heal the sick, and to convict people and win them over.

2 Cor. 12:10 NIV

10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I ***delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships***, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

So once it was explained, Paul – a quick learner – exclaims: "I GET IT! So now "when everything goes bad" – I say "thank you" to Jesus Christ. WHY? Because as bad as it may seem, God's going to do what he promised, and work it all out for good in the end (Romans 8:28), even if I have to DIE for my beliefs or from a dread disease that God could heal but so far isn't healing!

But in my Feast 2019 sermon I showed how so often it is when our attitude and mindset *changes* from WORRY, depression, and focusing on our pain and issues - when our attitude changes to THANKSGIVING and praise -- THAT'S so often when we see in the Bible how God changes everything!

So often it's after we are praising and thanking God in and for our pain – that God acts to give us relief! Scripture is VERY clear –we are to thank God no matter what!

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NIV

"Be joyful **ALWAYS**; 17 pray continually; 18 **give THANKS in ALL circumstances**, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus".

DO you believe the Bible here? It says we are to thank God ALWAYS, in ALL circumstances, ALL.... Always GIVE THANKS!!!!

Ephesians 5:19-22

“...speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, **20 giving thanks ALWAYS for ALL things to God the Father** in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God”.

Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV

“**Be anxious for NOTHING, but in EVERYTHING by prayer and supplication, with THANKSGIVING, LET your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”.

When Paul wrote this, he was in JAIL in Rome. Can you imagine? He would die by beheading soon. Look at Paul’s example. And he lived it.

In my Feast sermon (Sukkot) I showed how 10 years earlier than his epistle to Philippi, Paul and Silas lived what Paul was saying – “in EVERYTHING give thanks”. He was beaten and thrown in jail in this very city – Philippi – ten years earlier. And here’s how he and Silas handled something so “bad”:

Acts 16:22-24

Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and **commanded them [Paul and Silas] to be beaten with rods.** 23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Having received such a charge, **he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.**

So they could have had broken ribs, a concussion, bleeding stripes, can’t move much – their feet are in stocks and they’re chained to the wall in a stinking dungeon. What would you feel like? What would you say, or do? Here’s what Paul and Silas did.

Acts 16:25-27

But at midnight Paul and Silas were PRAYING and SINGING hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. [So it wasn’t whispering but singing out loud] 26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and **immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.**

As a result of this, the jailer and his family all came to repentance, came to faith in Christ, and were baptized. Hallelujah. I have many other examples and thoughts in the Feast sermon on "For when I am weak, I am strong." Please listen to it with your family.

ONE more example not in my Feast sermon. Imagine this: You're **the prophet Jonah**, and you've rejected God's command to you. You decide to flee from God in the wrong direction, you get cast overboard a small ship – and eaten by a special fish God had prepared for this very moment. You're in that fish for 3 days and 3 nights, being digested. What would YOU do?

Jonah 1:17

Now YHVH had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.

Jonah 2:1-10

Then Jonah prayed to YHVH his God from the fish's belly. 2 And he said: "I cried out to YHVH because of my affliction, and He answered me.

"Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice. 3 For You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the floods surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me. 4 Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.'

5 The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; **Weeds** were wrapped around my head. ...

7 "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered YHVH; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple.

8 "Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own Mercy.

9 But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of YHVH."

Are you kidding me? You're going to thank God while you're being DIGESTED by a specially prepared fish? YES, YES, YES....

That's what it means when we're told to thank God in all things, all the time, FOR all things, and count it all JOY when we're in various trials (James 1:2) – HOW? Why? Because we know our God knows all about us, wants only good for us, and is shaping and molding us in the furnace of affliction – to perfect us! So we have to learn to sincerely thank God IN and FOR all trials.

So Jonah finally does the right thing – and THANKS GOD for being alive inside a great fish! SO then what happens? Jonah 2:10

Jonah 2:10

So YHVH spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

OK, I have been trying to practice thanking God always, *for all things, in everything* literally for a few months now, no matter what. I'm not perfect on this yet, but getting better at thanking God all the time, for anything and everything. For all things – and always.

Sometimes it's super hard. Sometimes we struggle with it, then my wife whispers "Shalom" into my ears. But it's getting easier to realize my life – your life – is in God's hands. So why do we fret and worry and get upset when things seem to go wrong? They're not going wrong. You and I will "get it" someday. Let's be like Paul – and "GET IT" now and mature to his thinking where he delighted in distresses, calamities and hard times, for he know GOD was working his marvelous grace and wonders in his life. Let's review it again:

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NIV

But he said to me, "MY grace is sufficient for you, for MY power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul realized he was **a work in progress. God was perfecting him in the crucible and fire of affliction.** The same is happening to you and FOR you. It's also preparing us for whatever God has in store for us for all eternity – just as Yeshua himself was perfected/completed for his role as king and priest, how? By the suffering he had to go through (Hebrews 5:7-11).

I'm doing more and more what Phil 4:6-7 says – to let my requests be made KNOWN – but with THANKSGIVING – knowing He hears me. Knowing he has a plan. Knowing it will work out for good (Romans 8:28) no matter what. Knowing God is love, even though at times I still falter back into wishing he'd take away all the "bad stuff".

You thank God even if you are estranged from your family. You thank God even if you are dying. You thank God even if you just lost your job or recently were told your wife is dying. You thank God for your wonderful or horrible husband or wife. You thank God, you thank God, you thank God.

If you really apply this message today to thank God no matter what -- always, all the time, for all things – your LIFE WILL CHANGE. You'll experience much more peace, much more joy, much less depression and worry. Trust me. It works!

And be like the healed Samaritan leper. So when wondrous things DO happen for you –please go back to God, face on the ground, and deeply thank him.

That's all for today. This can change your life if you start to apply it. And I thank you for coming to our website. I also want to thank those of you who help with the work God has given us to do here and in Kenya. Thank you, thank you for your financial assistance. Go to our home page and look at the top – “Kenya photos”. Thank you for letting others know about us. Thank you.

And thank you Abba in heaven in all things, for all things, all the time.

So until next time, may our blessed Father bless you all and may we always be thankful, because He and our Lord Jesus Christ – Yeshua the Messiah – are always there.

Short closing prayer: “We're so thankful as you watch over us. Help us be more thankful – all the time, in everything, for everything. In Yeshua's mighty name, Amen”

See you at the next sermon.