

# Thank Him much

November 28, 2013

I am going to start this message in a very different way – more like storytelling . So hear me, please.

Let's say we all are invited to a Thanksgiving Dinner , hosted by someone who is very generous and godly. Our host not only prepared a scrumptious Thanksgiving dinner for all of us, but also he had a big surprise for us. He had a special pull with the Lord, so He allowed three guests to come join us at our dinner from heaven.

The first guest is none other than king David in his royal robe and a jeweled golden crown with his ruddy and aged, yet handsome face that was punctuated with a few battle scars.

The second guest who just arrived is a very unassuming man with a large hooked nose, bald head and thick eye brows. His back is a little hunched and he had a pair of bowed legs. But you can see wisdom and intelligence in his gentle eyes. When the host introduced him to us, our jaws dropped. He is the apostle P aul. That's right, the second-in-command of Christianity, Paul, formerly known as Saul of Tarsus.

The third and final guest is a woman of thirty something . Though she didn't have stunning beauty, she is a pretty woman. Her deep facial lines show that she didn't have an easy life, but she now has that impenetrable rock solid peace in her heart. You can easily tell that.

Soon we started to eat this lovely meal of turkey with all the trimmings. Of course, we can have all the yummy desserts we want. Since this is a sermon illustration, you don't have to worry about calories and I don't have to worry about blood sugar.

## **A. DAVID'S THANKSGIVING**

After the meal, the host said, "Before we all go watch a college football game in the media room, why don't we all share the goodness of the L ord and give thanks to Him."

As some of us started to share our own gratitudes to the L ord, king David raised his hand to the host and said, "I'd also like to give thanks to our Jehovah God." With a nod of approval from the host, David stood up and started to speak with his Hebrew accent:

"You all know about the time when I was a young man as a shepherd with my father's sheep on wind swept Judean hills and how the L ord my God protected me from bears and lions, and even Goliath; and He anointed me as the next king by prophet Samuel; while I was chased by king Saul in the wilderness, my L ord was the Strong Tower where I could find rest and peace; after I became the king of Israel, He continuously showered me with His favor and even established my house on the throne forever through Jesus Christ our Lord.

But in spite of all of His kindness and goodness, I've sinned against the L ord as you know. You've read and studied about my sins. I committed adultery with Bathsheba, and had her husband killed to cover up my sin. But when the L ord revealed my sins through prophet Nathan, I immediately repented from the bottom of my soul." Then he recited two of his psalms, Psalm 32 and followed by Psalm 51:

*Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.*

*Psalm 51:1-3 Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me.*

By now, there was not a dry eye around the table in the room as King David sat down.

## **B. PAUL'S THANKSGIVING**

Before anyone else said, apostle Paul stood up and said, "I, too, have a lot to be thankful to the Lord for His grace and mercy. You guys have been studying about me on Sunday morning services lately – what I was doing before I became a Christian. The Bible you read is correct. I persecuted the church with my passion. I thought I was doing a favor for the Lord.

I thought that I was good enough, actually more than good enough for the kingdom of God because I was circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless until I met the Lord Jesus on the way to Damascus. It was a literally eye opening experience, if you will. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!"

Then, Paul sat down.

## **C. THE SINFUL WOMAN'S THANKSGIVING**

Since two of the special guests gave their thanksgiving to the Lord, all of us were expecting the lady who came with them to speak. This lady realized that everyone in the room was looking at her and was anxious to hear from her.

She quietly stood up and introduced herself in this way: "You don't know me by my name, but you know me as a sinful woman who came to the home of a Pharisee named Simon to anoint the feet of my Savior Jesus."

*Luke 7:36-50 Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. 37 And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, 38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." 40 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." 41 "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." 44 Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do*

*you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. 45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. 46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. 47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." 48 Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."*

Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to a dinner, yet he considered the Lord below his average house guest. That is why he purposely didn't provide Him water to wash His feet, nor did he greet the Lord with a typical Jewish greeting kiss, or anointed the head of Jesus with oil.

Jesus didn't discount many sins of the woman, but because of her heartfelt repentance and devotion, and most of all, her faith in Christ, her sins were forgiven while Simon the Pharisee's sins were still with him to be judged in future.

Simon and the woman were both sinners. Simon was guilty of sins of the spirit, especially pride, while the woman was guilty of sins of the flesh. Her sins were known, while Simon's sins were hidden to everyone except God.

Simon's real problems were pride and spiritual blindness. He could not see himself, the woman, or the Lord Jesus. It was easy for him to say, "She is a sinner!" but impossible for him to say, "I am also a sinner!"

Do we possibly treat the Lord like Simon the Pharisee? Listen to me, please. Simon became a Pharisee because the Lord allowed him to be. Instead of being thankful for what the Lord has done, his accomplishment got into his head. He looked down on others and was not grateful to God.

Are we too busy and too distracted to give thanks to the Lord each and everyday? Are we saving all the thanks to the Lord for one day in a year at the Thanksgiving dinner table?

If we do not give thanks to the Lord daily for what He has done – starting with the salvation we have through Jesus Christ – as well as He did not allow us to have that we asked for, it is a good evidence that we are losing our first love for the Lord.

Let's go back to what Jesus said in v47:

*Luke 7:47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."*

We don't have to be forgiven murderers to love our God much. Just think about where we came from and where we are now spiritually. That would be good enough to burst out of praises and thanksgivings, don't you think?"

Some would say, "How can I thank Him for everything He has done for me? What can I possibly do to show my appreciation to Him who has everything?"

Fortunately, Scripture gives us a good blueprint for a couple of ways that we can show our gratitude to God:

## 1) We can give Him our praises in words and songs.

*Psalm 63:3-4 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. 4 Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.*

It's funny that we think it's perfectly normal for people to wear their favorite team's jersey to a sporting event, and go wild when their team scores. But the same people would not even sing worship songs out loud let alone lift their hands to praise Him. Yes, it is biblical to lift our hands to the Lord. It is a good thing to do. You shouldn't be reluctant to lift your hands in praise to God.

I've heard all the excuses from people for not singing worship songs to the Lord during the worship time in the church – "I cannot sing well," "I don't want to disrupt others with my bad singing voice." Who cares! God sure doesn't. If He cared, He'd given you the voices like our worship team people. You have the audience of One – the Lord. Sing your love song to Him from your heart. He loves it.

You don't have to make flowery phrases to thank Him, rather thank Him from your heart with sincerity.

## 2) We can give Him our praises in our obedience to His Word.

*John 14:15 If you love Me, keep My commandments.*

We are still flawed humans and we won't always do exactly as He says, but we still need to be obedient to His Word out of our love for Him.

Before you stuff yourself more than that stuffed turkey, or you fall asleep on the couch before the half time of the football game you watch, how about giving thanks to the Lord who has forgiven you from your sins and gave you eternal life in Christ Jesus?