

CALLED, GRATEFUL AND GIFTED

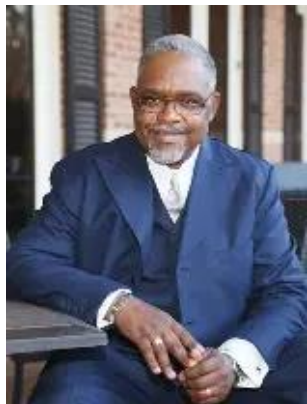
SERIES 56

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER – DECEMBER
SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS



MOUNT CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH-PASTOR GREG L. OLIVER, SR.
A CHURCH GROUNDED IN THE CROSS, GROWING IN CHRIST AND GIVING TO THE COMMUNITY.

From the Pastor:



Greetings, Saints of Mount Canaan Baptist Church.

We have now entered the final quarter of 2026, and my prayers for each of you continue to be lifted before our faithful God. I pray that God will continue to bless, keep, strengthen, and guide you as we journey together in faith.

Our Sunday School lessons for Series 56, “Called, Grateful, and Gifted,” are ready for us to take a deep dive into the study God has placed before us. This thirteen-week series provides a clear spiritual journey: from God calling His people, to God's people responding with thanksgiving and praise, and finally to celebrating the greatest gift God has ever given—the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we move through these lessons, we will be reminded that God calls ordinary people to accomplish His extraordinary purposes. We will examine the importance of gratitude and praise as responses to God's goodness and grace. And as we enter the Advent and Christmas season, our hearts will turn toward the greatest expression of God's love—the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. The birth of Christ is the beginning of God's great redemptive gift to humanity. Christmas is God's declaration to the world: “I love you, and I have come to save you.”

I trust that each of you will avail yourselves of this thirteen-week study. Join us each Sunday morning for Sunday School, or participate through the Usher Saturday Sunday School and Prayer Line. Come prepared to study, learn, share, and grow in God's Word.

Let us not simply study these lessons, but allow God's Word to transform our hearts and our lives.

And if you have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, today is the day of salvation. Open your heart to Him, place your faith in Him, and receive the gift of eternal life that God offers through His Son.

May God bless us as we begin this journey together, and may His grace continue to guide us, His goodness cause us to be grateful, and His gift of Jesus Christ remind us of His everlasting love. God bless you, and may God bless Mount Canaan Baptist Church.

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ly I. L.", written in a cursive style.

Called, Grateful, Gifted

Mount Canaan Sunday School Series 56

Fourth Quarter

October, November, December 2026

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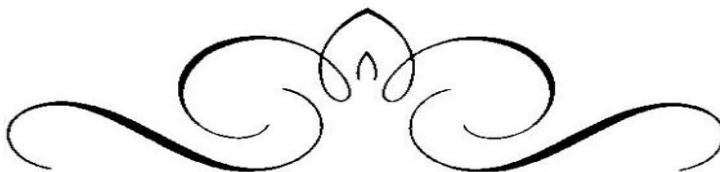
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Personalities God Used as Leaders

The Prophet Jeremiah – Called and Commissioned

Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD.” Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.” Jeremiah 1:4-10 ESV

Lesson Overview

- **The Main Principle:** God’s calling is completely independent of individual timelines, physical age, or personal feelings of inadequacy. Long before a person recognizes their purpose, God has already engineered their identity and destination.
- **The Problem:** Humans often allow current limitations, societal barriers, or self-doubt to overshadow a divine mandate.
- **The Promise:** God does not call the equipped; He equips the called by pledging His personal presence and placing His authority directly in their mouths.

Cultural & Congregational Context

In the history of the African American church, leadership has rarely been a matter of choosing convenience; it has historically emerged from divine necessity during societal crises. Much like the prophetic tradition that anchored the Civil Rights movement, Jeremiah’s call illustrates that God frequently selects unexpected, marginalized, or youthful voices to speak truth to power. This lesson dismantles the internalized lie that one is "too young," "too uneducated," or "too broken" to step into leadership.

Scripture Exposition

- **Jeremiah 1:4-5 — Sovereignty Before the Womb**
 - “*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...*” The word “knew” (*yada* in Hebrew) implies a deep, intimate, covenant relationship, not just passive awareness.
 - **The Theological Truth:** God consecrated (set apart) and appointed Jeremiah before his community ever had a chance to evaluate or critique him. His destiny was settled in eternity before it manifested in time.
- **Jeremiah 1:6-8 — The Excuse Met by Grace**
 - “*Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.*” Jeremiah points immediately to his lack of seniority and public speaking credentials. In the ancient Near East, elders held authority; youth were meant to look and listen.
 - **The Divine Rebuke:** God completely rejects the excuse: “*Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’...*” God shifts the weight of responsibility from Jeremiah’s personal ability to His own sovereign authority.
- **Jeremiah 1:9-10 — The Sovereign Equipment**
 - “*Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth...*” God physically and spiritually bridges the gap of inadequacy.
 - **The Mandate:** Jeremiah is given a dual authority—to tear down structural rot (pluck up, break down, destroy) and to establish new hope (build, plant).

The Master Artisan’s Ironwork

Across many historic Black church buildings, you will see stunning, intricate wrought-iron gates or stained glass. An apprentice looking at raw, distorted scrap metal might deem it entirely useless for a beautiful sanctuary. However, a master blacksmith sees the final design before the heat is even turned on. God is the ultimate artisan. He doesn't look at your current raw, unrefined state to judge your future use; He designed the architecture of your soul before the foundation of the world. Your feelings of inadequacy are simply the scrap metal arguing with the Blacksmith.

The Legacy of Unexpected Leaders

Consider the history of foundational leaders who were told they were too young or ill-equipped. When a 26-year-old preacher named Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was chosen to lead the Montgomery Improvement Association during the bus boycott, many wondered if he had the maturity or institutional weight to handle a systemic crisis. Like Jeremiah, his youth was secondary to the divine voice that compelled him forward. God constantly bypasses human hiring committees to select candidates who rely completely on Him.

Real-Life Application ("Bringing It Home")

1. **Silence the "I Am Only" Narrative:** We must identify the exact phrases we use to disqualify ourselves. Common examples include: *"I am only a layperson," "I am only a high school graduate,"* or *"I am too old/young to make a difference."* Replace the "I am only" statements with "God has said."
2. **Affirming the Next Generation:** Church leadership must actively open spaces for young people to lead, speak, and organize. If God explicitly commands us not to look down on youth, the church must ensure its structural setup matches that mandate.
3. **Accepting the Cost of the Touch:** When God touched Jeremiah's mouth, it meant his lips no longer belonged to his personal comfort. When we accept God's call, we have to accept that our gifts, careers, and resources are reassigned to His purposes.

Discussion Questions

- What is the specific "excuse" you find yourself repeating to God when you feel nudged to step into a leadership role or ministry?
- How can our church better recognize, protect, and build up the "Jeremiahs" (the unconventional or young leaders) in our community today?
- Jeremiah was called to both "tear down" and "build up." Why is it necessary for spiritual leaders to deal with broken realities before they can successfully plant something new?

Personalities God Used as Leaders

Mary of Nazareth – The Leadership of Surrender

Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” And then the angel left her. Luke 1:28 NLT

Lesson Overview

- **The Main Principle:** Faith requires a radical acceptance of God's assignment, even when the assignment is humanly impossible, socially costly, and difficult to comprehend. Leadership in the kingdom of God often begins not with a public platform, but with a private, risky submission to the divine will.
- **The Problem:** We frequently measure God's assignments by our own comfort, reputation, or logical capacity, leading us to reject mandates that carry immediate social risk.
- **The Promise:** God's assignments are backed by His absolute power and His abiding presence. What He initiates by the Holy Spirit, He sustains by His grace.

Cultural & Congregational Context

In our culture, Black women have long served as the anchors, institutional architects, and spiritual backbones of the community and the church. Mary’s story speaks directly to the profound weight of carrying a God-given promise in a hostile environment. Like the generation of grandmothers, mothers, and sisters who built movements, schools, and ministries out of absolute nothingness, Mary models a resilient, quiet strength. Her leadership is defined by spiritual authority, radical endurance, and an unshakeable trust in God despite systemic vulnerabilities.

Scripture Exposition

- **Luke 1:26-30 — Favored but Troubled**
 - *“And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!’ But she was greatly troubled...”* In first-century Jewish

society, Mary was a young, marginalized woman living in Nazareth—a town of low social status.

- **The Theological Truth:** Divine favor does not mean an easy life. The Greek word for troubled (*diatarasso*) implies deep agitation. God often agitates our normal routines when He introduces a monumental assignment.
- **Luke 1:31-34 — The Question of Complexity**
 - “*And Mary said to the angel, ‘How will this be, since I am a virgin?’*” Mary’s question is not one of unbelief, but of logistics. She recognizes her physical and cultural limitations.
 - **The Divine Blueprint:** God does not punish honest questions born out of limited human understanding. He addresses her reality but points her attention toward supernatural intervention.
- **Luke 1:35-38 — The Holy Spirit Shift & Total Surrender**
 - “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you... For nothing will be impossible with God.*” Gabriel shifts the equation from human capability to divine sovereign capacity.
 - **The Climax of Leadership:** “*Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to be according to your word.*” Mary steps fully into leadership by yielding her life, reputation, and body to God. Her surrender is her ultimate act of courage.

Teaching Illustrations

The Weight of Carrying the Vision

Imagine a young, visionary architect who is handed the blueprints to design a multi-million-dollar community center in a historic, underfunded urban neighborhood. She doesn’t have the personal funds, the political connections, or the elite status to build it herself. If she looks only at her bank account, she will throw the blueprints away. But her leadership shines when she accepts the job, trusts the master developer's backing, and carries that heavy blueprint to every meeting, ignoring the skeptics. Mary was handed the ultimate blueprint—the

Savior of the world. She didn't need to fund or engineer the miracle; she just had to be willing to carry it.

The Radical Risk of Reputation

In the Jim Crow South, individuals who decided to host civil rights organizers, hide runaways, or register people to vote knew it could cost them their jobs, their homes, or their safety. Their "yes" to justice meant risking their entire social standing. Similarly, Mary knew that an unwed pregnancy in her culture carried severe social stigma, public shame, and potential stoning under ancient laws. Yet, she valued God's purpose more than public opinion. True spiritual leaders are willing to let their reputation take a hit if it means God's promise gets birthed into the world.

Real-Life Application ("Bringing It Home")

1. **Move from "How?" to "Be It Unto Me":** It is completely normal to ask God *how* a vision will manifest. However, faith matures when we stop letting our lack of understanding paralyze our obedience. We must learn to say "yes" to the assignment before we see the full logistical roadmap.
2. **Protecting the "Holy Shifts" in Our Lives:** When God places a heavy, unconventional assignment on your life, protect it from negative voices. Mary immediately went to visit her cousin Elizabeth—someone who could understand and validate her supernatural burden. Surround yourself with people of faith when carrying a heavy vision.
3. **Redefining Leadership as Yieldedness:** Society teaches us that leadership is about taking control, projecting power, and dominating spaces. Mary teaches us that kingdom leadership is about yielding control to the Holy Spirit so that God can work *through* us.

Discussion Questions

- What is a specific assignment or direction God has placed on your heart that feels too difficult, complex, or risky to accept right now?
- Mary risked her reputation to carry out God's plan. In our modern context, how does the fear of what others will think prevent us from stepping into spiritual leadership?
- How can our church family better support, encourage, and protect individuals who are carrying heavy, non-traditional, or challenging visions for community ministry?



Dear God, thank You for sending Your angel Gabriel to Mary, showing her that You are with her and that You have chosen her for Your plan. Help us to hear Your voice, to trust Your word, and to say 'Yes' when You call. May we be open to Your will, like Mary, and may Your peace fill our hearts. Amen.

Personalities God Used as Leaders

Gideon – From Hiding to Leading

Then the angel of the LORD came and sat beneath the great tree at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash of the clan of Abiezer. Gideon son of Joash was threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress to hide the grain from the Midianites. The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said, “Mighty hero, the LORD is with you!” “Sir,” Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about? Didn’t they say, ‘The LORD brought us up out of Egypt’? But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to the Midianites.” Then the LORD turned to him and said, “Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!” Judges 6:11-12 NLT

Lesson Overview

- **The Main Principle:** God does not evaluate our leadership potential based on our current trauma, low social standing, or defensive postures. He speaks to our ultimate divine potential, completely disregarding our present fear and insecurity.
- **The Problem:** Internalized oppression and generational fear cause people to view themselves as perpetual victims, blinding them to the deliverer God has engineered them to be.
- **The Promise:** When God assigns a task, His personal presence replaces our structural weakness. He transforms a fractured self-image into a weapon of victory.

Cultural & Congregational Context

Throughout history, the African American community has frequently had to battle systemic oppression, economic disenfranchisement, and structural trauma. In times of prolonged struggle, it is easy to adopt a survivalist mentality—doing just enough to get by, hiding our resources, and feeling too small to change the surrounding environment. Gideon's story is a powerful reminder for the Black church that God refuses to define us by our survival mode. God calls

us out of the structures of hiding and crowns us as agents of community transformation, validating the latent greatness within our neighborhoods and pews.

Scripture Exposition

- **Judges 6:11-12 — The Paradox of the Winepress**

- “...*Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites.*” Wheat was traditionally threshed on an open hilltop where the wind could blow away the chaff. Gideon is threshing in a cramped, sunken winepress out of sheer terror.
- **The Theological Flashpoint:** The Angel of the Lord appears and says, “*The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor.*” God does not address Gideon's physical reality (hiding and afraid); He addresses his true identity. God calls him a hero while he is still behaving like a captive.

- **Judges 6:13-15 — The Trap of Cultural Despair**

- “*Please, my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?*” Gideon responds with a communal complaint and personal disqualification: “...*my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.*”
- **The Divine Mirror:** Gideon views himself through the lens of scarcity and structural hierarchy. God completely ignores Gideon's family resume and economic ranking.

- **Judges 6:16-24 — The Shift to Peace and Power**

- “*But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.*” The solution to Gideon's weakness is not a self-help course; it is the presence of Yahweh.
- **The Altar of Transformation:** Upon realizing he has spoken with God, Gideon builds an altar and names it *Jehovah-Shalom* ("The Lord is Peace"). Before Gideon can fight the enemy outside, God has to establish peace on the inside.

The Master Art Restorer

Imagine an old, priceless oil painting from a legendary Black artist that has been sitting in a damp, smoky basement for fifty years. It is covered in soot, dirt, and water stains. To an untrained eye, it looks like a piece of worthless

junk ready for the dumpster. But a master art restorer looks past the grime, recognizes the genius brushstrokes underneath, and says, "This is a masterpiece." God looks at Gideon—and looks at us—through the eyes of the Creator. He ignores the soot of our past failures, the grime of our bad environments, and the stains of our insecurities. He sees the masterpiece He originally designed.

The Hidden Royalty of the Underground Railroad

During the era of enslavement, there were men and women working in the fields who were viewed by society as mere property, uneducated, and powerless. Yet, within those same individuals lived the spirits of generals, strategists, and conductors—like Harriet Tubman. To the plantation owners, they were just laborers; but to God, they were "mighty people of valor" capable of outsmarting tracking hounds and leading hundreds to freedom. Leadership potential does not depend on a title or a high social status; it depends on the divine authority hidden inside a person waiting to be called forth.

Real-Life Application ("Bringing It Home")

1. **Step Out of Your "Winepress":** We must identify the psychological "winepresses" we hide in—such as staying in dead-end situations, suppressing our talents, or refusing to volunteer because we feel unqualified. God is calling you out of survival mode and into your true assignment.
2. **Agree with God's Vocabulary:** When God calls you a leader, a teacher, an organizer, or a healer, stop arguing with Him by listing your flaws. Your response to God should not be "Look at my weakness," but rather "Let it be according to Your word."
3. **Build Your Altar of Peace First:** You cannot successfully lead a ministry, a family, or a community initiative if your mind is an active war zone of anxiety. Before taking on big projects, spend time at the altar of *Jehovah-Shalom*, allowing God to settle your internal fears.



Discussion Questions

In what ways do we let our family background, economic status, or past mistakes trap us in a "survival mentality" like Gideon?

How can we as a church community help call out the "mighty men and women of valor" who are currently sitting quietly or hiding in the back rows of our congregation?

God called Gideon a hero before he actually performed a single brave act. Why do you think God speaks to our future identity rather than our present reality?

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for meeting me where I am — not perfect, not strong, but Yours. Like Gideon, I often wonder where You are when life feels heavy. Help me remember that You are always with me, even when I don't see it. Teach me to speak honestly to You, to trust Your promises, and to obey even when it seems foolish. May my courage come from You, not from my own strength. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Notes:

Personalities God Used as Leaders

The Prophet Isaiah – The Leadership of Consecration and Commission

Then I heard the Lord asking, “Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?” I said, “Here I am. Send me.” Isaiah 6:8 NLT

Lesson Overview

- **The Main Principle:** A true encounter with the holiness of God completely transforms our self-awareness, cleanses our deep-seated imperfections, and compels us to volunteer for His service with radical availability.
- **The Problem:** We often try to lead or speak for God based on human talent, intellectual strategy, or personal ambition without ever being broken and put back together by His holy presence.
- **The Promise:** God does not leave us in our state of broken unworthiness. When we confess our shortcomings, He provides immediate, purifying grace that makes us fit to stand as ambassadors for His kingdom.

Cultural & Congregational Content

The African American church has traditionally held a deep reverence for the "Holy, Holy, Holy" majesty of God, often expressed through moving testimonies, standard hymns, and fervent altar prayers. In times of national grief or political uncertainty—much like the year King Uzziah died—the Black church has historically looked past earthly rulers to behold the Sovereign King sitting high and lifted up. Isaiah's call reminds us that leadership in the faith community is born out of a deep spiritual encounter. It challenges us to move past casual church attendance and step into a life of active, sacrificial service.

Scripture Exposition

- **Isaiah 6:1-4 — The Vision of the Unshakable Throne**
 - *“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up...”* King Uzziah had ruled for 52 years,

bringing stability and prosperity. His death triggered a massive national crisis and widespread anxiety.

- **The Theological Truth:** When earthly leadership fails or passes away, God remains completely secure on His throne. The shaking of the temple thresholds highlights that His glory eclipses any human institution.
- **Isaiah 6:5-7 — The Crisis of Personal Holiness**
 - *“And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips...’”* Contemplating God's absolute holiness immediately exposes Isaiah's inner brokenness. He doesn't point out the sins of others; he identifies his own spiritual bankruptcy.
 - **The Divine Purgings:** A seraphim touches Isaiah's mouth with a burning coal from the altar, declaring his guilt taken away. The fire that could have consumed him is instead used by God to cleanse him.
- **Isaiah 6:8-13 — The Radical Volunteer and the Difficult Assignment**
 - *“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me.’”* Notice the order: Isaiah is cleansed *before* he is called. God does not draft Isaiah; He puts out a call for volunteers, and Isaiah eagerly steps forward.
 - **The Reality of the Mandate:** God warns Isaiah that the people will be hard-hearted and slow to listen. True spiritual leadership requires enduring faithfulness, even when the immediate results look like a desolate landscape.

The Diamond Under the Jeweler's Loupe

A person might think a diamond ring looks completely flawless while sitting under the dim lighting of a living room lamp. However, the moment a master jeweler places that diamond under a high-magnification loupe beneath a harsh, bright light, every single microscopic fracture, cloud, and carbon spot is instantly revealed. Isaiah thought he was a righteous man until he was placed under the brilliant light of God's absolute holiness. True encounters with God don't puff us up with pride; they show us exactly how much we need His cleansing fire.

The "Send Me" Legacy of the Black Church

Think back to the formation of the early Black mutual aid societies, independent congregations, and underground schools during and after emancipation. The pioneers who built these institutions did not wait for a perfect budget, societal permission, or an easy assignment. They looked at the immense needs of their broken communities, felt the inner tug of the Holy Spirit, and said, "Here am I; send me." They stepped out into hostile territory, fully aware that their message would often face rejection, because their ears had caught a whisper from the throne room of heaven.

Real-Life Application ("Bringing It Home")

1. **Stop Leading on an Uncleansed Lip:** We must stop attempting to do holy work with unholy habits. Whether we serve on the deacon board, in the choir, or behind the pulpit, we must regularly present ourselves at the altar for spiritual cleansing, asking God to remove the gossip, malice, and pride from our lives.
2. **Remove Your Conditions from God's Contract:** Many of us say, *"Here am I, send me... if it's convenient, if the people are nice, and if it fits my personal schedule."* True discipleship means signing your name to a blank check and letting God fill in the destination, the cost, and the assignment.
3. **Find Hope in the "Holy Seed":** Even when Isaiah's assignment seemed entirely fruitless, God promised that a small remnant—a holy seed in the stump—would survive to rebuild. When your ministry, family situation, or community work feels completely dead or unrewarding, trust that God is preserving a hidden seed of transformation that will blossom in due season.



Discussion Questions

- Why does a true glimpse of God's holiness always cause us to see our own faults and mistakes more clearly rather than the faults of others?
- What holds us back from giving God a completely unconditional "Here am I; send me" when we recognize a major need in our church or neighborhood?

- Isaiah was told up front that his audience would be stubborn and closed-minded. How do we keep our passion alive as leaders when the people we are called to serve refuse to listen or change?

November Week 1

The Grace of Gratitude ***Oh, Give Thanks Unto the Lord***

Oh, give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy. (Psalms 107: 1-2, KJV)

The Setting of Psalm 107: Psalm 107 serves as the opening chapter of Book V of the Psalms. Historically, it is widely understood by scholars to be a post-exilic psalm, written after God gathered His people (the Jews) out of captivity from Babylon and the surrounding nations.

Teaching Emphasis: We must not give thanks only because of what the LORD God gives us. But we must give thanks because God is good, His mercy endures forever and He alone deserves the highest adoration from His created beings, especially those that are redeemed. The phrase “*O give thanks unto the LORD*” is a powerful biblical command and invitation to worship Him God is spirit and truth. The psalmist wants God's people to respond to God's greatness with deliberate, verbal, heartfelt thanksgiving every day.

1. “**Oh**” is a passionate appeal of urgency to God’s people to Come, acknowledge God! And to praise God and give Him the honor He deserves! Further, “Oh” expresses intensity and urgency. Also, the psalmist is not making a casual suggestion. It carries the sense of: Come, let us give thanks to our supreme Creator! Let us praise the Almighty God; the all-knowing Sovereign God and King; and the ever-present God! We must respond to God's goodness with sincere worship. Yes, there is emotion and earnestness in the command; however, the psalmist is calling God's people to stop and recognize what the everlasting God has done, is doing, and will do.

2. **Give Thanks:** The Hebrew verb translated “give thanks” is *yādâ*. The word carries the ideas of giving thanks, confessing, acknowledging, and praising the

LORD. In the context of Psalm 107, it involves openly acknowledging God's goodness and steadfast love. Therefore, biblical thanksgiving is much more than simply saying "Thank you, Lord." It is publicly acknowledging who God is and what He has done. It involves the heart, the lips, and ultimately the life. When we give the supreme God thanksgiving, it recognizes Him as the ultimate source of our blessings, our deliverances, our provisions, and our salvation.

3. Unto the LORD: The Hebrew name for LORD is YHWH, which is the covenant name of God. That means all our thanksgiving and adorations must be directed towards God Himself. Giving thanks unto the LORD is the Language spoken in Heaven by the angels and the 24 Elders. Thanksgiving unto the LORD is not a temporary earthly duty; it is an eternal reality. By practicing gratitude now, we are joining in the ongoing worship taking place in the heavenly throne room. Revelation 7:11-12 says *The angels... fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever.* This means we don't merely celebrate the blessing—we adore and worship the **Blessor**. We don't merely rejoice in deliverance—we magnify and praise the **Deliverer**. We don't merely appreciate good things—we thank the **Provider**. The LORD is worthy of universal honor.

4. For the LORD is Good: This is clearly the purpose statement and reason for thanksgiving. This is the theological foundation of the entire verse. We take notice of the order of the first verse in Psalm 107. **Command:** Oh give thanks. **Object:** Unto the LORD. And the **Reason:** He is good. The psalmist does not say: "Give thanks because everything around you is good." He says: Give thanks unto the LORD for He is good. Our thanksgiving is ultimately grounded in God's character, not our circumstances. When circumstances change, God's character never changes because He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. When life is painful, **God is still good.** When prayers seem unanswered, **God is still good.** When we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, **God is still good.** When we stand on the highest mountain top, and all is well, and we have more than enough, **remember God is still good.**

5. For His Mercy Endureth Forever: Another major reason for thanksgiving is because His mercy endureth for ever. The Hebrew word (Hesed) is often

translated as mercy, steadfast love, lovingkindness, or covenant faithfulness. Mercy is one of the great theological words of the Bible. God's *Hesed* means that God is faithful to His covenant promises and steadfast in His love toward His people. Therefore: God is good because God is faithful to give people His Mercy. God's mercy has no expiration date. His faithfulness will always remain in this life and the life to come in heaven. That means it will never run out for those who accept and love Jesus Christ. His love is never exhausted like an emotional human, nor ever reach a point where God says, "I've had enough of you."

- The expanded meaning of *Hesed* is covenant-keeping love, self-giving love, lovingkindness, action-oriented love, and loyal love. Because the word is so rich, early English translators had to invent a new term—"**loving kindness**"—to try and capture *Hesed*'s true essence.
- *Hesed* is not based on emotion or feeling; it is God's legal and relational commitment. It refers to the act of freely binding oneself to another person and completely fulfilling the promises made to them, even if the other party fails to keep commitment.
- God's relationship with Israel is the ultimate display of *Hesed*. Even when the nation broke their promises, God's *Hesed* endured. Humanly, **Ruth** shows *Hesed* to her mother-in-law Naomi by refusing to abandon her, going far beyond what society required. *Hesed* is God's unshakeable, non-abandoning commitment to keep His promises to His people, even when they are unfaithful.

6. Let the Redeemed of the LORD Say So: The word Redeemed is rooted in the Hebrew word *ga'al*, this does not just mean "saved" in an abstract sense. It refers specifically to the cultural practice of a kinsman-redeemer. They were close relatives who legally stepped in to pay off the debts of a family member, buy them out of slavery, or reclaim their lost land (as seen in the story of Ruth and Boaz). The emphasis of this text is entirely on the LORD, not the attributes of the person redeemed. The redeemed has nothing to boast about regarding their own strength. The main job of the redeemed is to acknowledge God's immense goodness with their testimony. The text commands every Christian to use your voice to tell the world your testimony. Theological speaking, Jesus is our ultimate Kinsman-Redeemer who became flesh to pay our sin debt on the

cross, rescuing us from the ultimate foes of Satan, sin, darkness, and death. The NIV translates the phrase as: *"Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story."*

7. Take Home Challenge for the Believer: Give thanks and adoration to the LORD every day. Openly acknowledge God as your Provider, Deliverer, and Savior. Since you are redeemed by the LORD, do not remain silent. Open your mouth, heart, and life and tell your story and give your testimony about the goodness of the LORD and what great things He has done for you.



The Grace of Gratitude

The Leper Who Came Back to Say Thank You

While He was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing between Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered a village, ten men with leprosy who stood at a distance met Him; and they raised their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! When He saw them, He said to them: Go and show yourselves to the priests. And as they were going, they were cleansed. Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. But Jesus responded and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?” And He said to him, “Stand up and go; your faith has made you well. (Luke 17 11-19, NASB)

The Lesson’s Aim: When you encounter Jesus passing your way, He has all the power to transform your situation, respond to your cry, and work miracles for you as you trust and obey Him. Also, Jesus will give you a testimony of His mighty power that will cause you to return to Him with vociferous gratitude and worship.

I. Something Supernatural Happens When Jesus Pass Your Way

- **Jesus can meet you in the place of your greatest need.** The ten lepers encountered Jesus while they were still suffering and separated from others. When Jesus passes your way, your situation does not have to remain the same.
- **Jesus can turn a desperate cry into a miraculous testimony.** They cried, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” and Jesus responded with an instruction that led to their cleansing. Your cry for mercy can become the beginning of your miracle.
- **Obedience to Jesus can position you to experience the supernatural.** The lepers were cleansed **as they went** to show themselves to the priests. Sometimes the miracle unfolds as we take the step Jesus has instructed us to take.
- **An encounter with Jesus can bring more than what you were originally asking for.** Ten were cleansed, but the one who returned received

Jesus' declaration that his faith had made him well. When Jesus passes your way, He can do something deeper and more complete than you expected.

- **When Jesus passes your way, you have a reason to return with thanksgiving and praise.** The Samaritan recognized what had happened, turned back, glorified God, and fell at Jesus' feet. Your encounter with Jesus is not just about receiving a blessing—it is also an opportunity to become a testimony of His goodness.

II. Jesus Requires Our Faith, Trust, and Obedience

- **Have faith in Jesus.** The lepers believed Jesus could change their situation, so they cried out for mercy. Faith believes Jesus can do the impossible and He can do anything but fail.
- **Trust His Word.** Jesus told the 10 lepers to go show themselves to the priests before they saw their healing. Trust means believing Jesus even when you cannot see Him working. Moreover, when we cannot see Jesus nailed scared hands we must trust His loving heart.
- **Obey His instructions.** “As they were going, they were cleansed.” Their miracle came as they obeyed Jesus. Faith moves when Jesus speaks. Partial obedience is blatant disobedience.
- **Always Give Jesus thanks.** One leper returned to Jesus and glorified God with a loud voice. The Samaritan leper also fell and bowed at Jesus' feet. Only one, (10%) came back and gave Jesus the praise, adoration and thanks He deserves. **Never receive the blessing and forget to thank the Blessor.**

III. Do Not Dishonor Jesus and Be Ungrateful Like the Nine Lepers:

- **Never forget who blessed you, healed you.** The nine were healed, but they forgot to return to Jesus and say thank You Lord for doing for us what we could not do ourselves. Never let the blessing become more important than the One who blessed you.
- **Don't take God's goodness for granted.** Jesus showed mercy to all ten, but only one stopped to give thanks. Every blessing deserves a grateful response.
- **Don't receive a Miracle from Jesus and just walk away.** The nine received their healing but did not return to worship Him. When Jesus does something for you, come back and give Him glory, adoration and thanks.

- **Never be too busy rushing home to hug family without giving Jesus gratitude.** The Samaritan stopped, turned around, and fell at Jesus' feet and gave Him glory for his supernatural healing. Make and take time to thank Jesus for what He has done for you.
- **5. Choose to be the one (10%) who returns.** Ten lepers were cleansed, but one returned with praise and thanksgiving. Be that grateful person Jesus loves to see and hear. And be that one person who remembers Jesus, honors Jesus, and gives Him all the glory and adoration for His miraculous acts.

IV. May We Hear Jesus Say: Stand Up, Go Your Way, Your Faith Has Made You Whole:

- **Jesus has no respect of person.** In reality, for Jesus to heal them, it didn't matter to Him whether the lepers were Jew, Greek, Gentile, or Samaritan. Jesus has greater love for the world and will respond when anyone calls upon Him in sincerity, honesty and transparency.
- **Jesus says stand up:** Only Jesus can raise us from brokenness to wholeness. Christ gives us a new beginning and a new position after He speaks over us and or touch our situation.
- **Jesus said go thy way** — Jesus' transformational work in us physically, spiritually and emotionally sparks a testimony in our hearts and on our tongues to tell of what Christ has done in us and for us. Then, we must tell the least, lost and left behind how great God is and worthy to be praised.
- **Your faith have made you whole** — True faith responds to Jesus presence. Put its trust in His Word, obeys His voice, and returns to give Him glory. Jesus does more than transform our circumstances. He brings healing, restoration, salvation and sanctifications and a deeper and daily relationship with Himself.

In conclusion, when Jesus passes our way, we should respond with faith, trust, and obedience, believing that He has the power to transform any situation. Like the one leper who returned, may we never become so focused on the blessing that we forget the Blessor. When Jesus answers our cry, heals our brokenness, or performs the supernatural in our lives, let us be the one who turns back with thanksgiving, worship, and praise.

The Grace of Gratitude ***Give God Thanks in the Midst of Every Situation***

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NKJV)

One Sentence Background: “*Rejoice always*” means keep Christ-centered joy; “*pray without ceasing*” means maintain continual dependence and communion with God; “*in everything give thanks*” means respond to every circumstance with gratitude grounded in God's faithfulness—never implying giving gratitude for bad circumstances but while in them.

Introduction: Rejoicing always and being thankful in everything are the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. It doesn't mean ignoring difficult days or pretending everything is perfect in our lives. But it's about focusing on the good, and finding meaning and purpose in the bad. Gratitude enriches our lives and helps us to stay grounded and to be positive in every situation.

1. Rejoice Always and Give Thanks in Every Circumstance:

The phrases “rejoice always and in everything give thanks” does not mean that everything that happens to us is good or that we should thank God for evil, suffering, or sin. Paul teaches believers to rejoice and give thanks in the midst of every circumstance because God remains faithful regardless of our situation. Thanksgiving is therefore a response of faith rather than merely a response to favorable conditions.

Central thought: Our circumstances may change, but God's character and trustworthiness do not.

2. Thanksgiving Is an Act of Faith:

The command “give thanks” calls for an intentional response. Biblical thanksgiving recognizes God's presence, provision, sovereignty, and faithfulness even when we cannot understand what He is doing. Gratitude shifts our attention from what we lack to what God has already done and continues to do.

Central thought: Faith learns to thank God even before the circumstance changes.

3. Thanksgiving Is A Command and is Part of God's Will:

Paul says, “this is the will of God.” The immediate context of 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 contains three short commands: “Rejoice always,” “pray without ceasing,” and “in everything give thanks.” These commands describe a continuing posture of Christian living. God's will is not presented here as a hidden mystery but as something believers can practice daily: rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks.

Central Thought: We know that God desires a grateful heart, because Scripture tells us He does.

4. Thanksgiving Is Rooted “In Christ Jesus”

Paul does not merely say that thanksgiving is God's will; he says it is God's will “in Christ Jesus for you.” Christian thanksgiving is ultimately grounded in our relationship with Christ. Because of Christ, believers have received salvation, reconciliation with God, hope, and the promise of eternal life.

Therefore, our gratitude does not depend entirely upon what is happening around us. It rests upon what God has accomplished for us through Jesus Christ.

Key thought: We must give thanks because our blessings come from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

5. A Thankful Attitude Must Become the Believer’s Daily Action:

The command is not limited to special occasions. “In everything give thanks” describes an ongoing attitude of gratitude. Thanksgiving should influence how we respond to blessings, trials, uncertainty, relationships, ministry, and everyday life. A thankful believer does not deny difficulties; rather, the believer faces difficulties head on while continuing to recognize God's greatness, goodness, and faithfulness.

Central thought: Thanksgiving is a defining quality of a believer’s attitude. Christians should be seen smiling in difficult and painful seasons as well as in wonderful and joyful times. In Job 13:15, Job said of God: Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.

6. We Have So Much to Thank God For:

First, we are grateful for God's graciousness, goodness, mercifulness, faithfulness, lovingkindness and so much more. Second, we thank the Lord for the gift of life and for our health, strength, and well-being. Third, we thank God for our biological and church families, friends who love, encourage, and stand beside us through every season of life. Fourth, we thank Him for our jobs and the opportunity to work, provide for our families, use our gifts, and fulfill our purpose. Fifth, we thank God for His protection and safety, for watching over us day and night when we travel, when we sleep, and when we face unknown dangers.

Central thought: When we look back, look around, and look inside of us, we notice how we've been showered with so many blessings from God. These countless, undeserved blessings cause us to give God all the glory, honor, praise and thanks He deserves both day and night.

7. Pragmatic Benefits of Having an Attitude of Gratitude

- ✓ **Promotes Spiritual Health and Growth:** Our Christians faith tradition emphasize gratitude as a way of honoring God and life itself. Gratitude is known to strengthen spiritual health and provides a sense of peace and purpose.
- ✓ **Promotes Positive Mental Health:** Practicing gratitude can shift our focus from negative distractions to positive outcomes. Positive outlooks can combat negative emotions like bitterness and resentment. It also reduces and lowers symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- ✓ **Improves Physical Well-being:** Studies show that regular gratitude practices—such as keeping a gratitude journal or taking time to appreciate small blessings—are linked to better sleep, increased happiness, lower stress, improved immune system and much improved physical health overall.
- ✓ **Strengthens Relationships:** When we express gratitude to others, it deepens social connections and fosters trust and appreciation. People feel valued when their actions are acknowledged, which strengthens relationships, whether personal or professional. Mutually beneficial relationships that express gratitude elevate resilience and well-being for every person involved.

Conclusion: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 teaches that Christian thanksgiving is a continual expression of faith. We give thanks in every circumstance, not because every circumstance is good, but because God is so good; His mercy is new every morning; Christ has redeemed us; and God's faithfulness endures forever.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

The Grace of Gratitude ***Enter Into His Gates With Thanksgiving***

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His Name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations. (Psalms 100, KJV)

Lesson's Preview: God's people are called to worship Him with joyful confidence and grateful obedience. Psalm 100 is a summons to God's people to come and worship Him. This is clearly a psalm of **thanksgiving**. The psalm also tells us the reason **why** we worship: The Lord is our Creator, Shepherd, Savior, and covenant-keeping God from generation to generation. God alone deserve our Best adoration, worship and thanksgiving.

The Call to Worship Is Universal:

- ✓ The psalm begins with a command: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord." Worship is not presented as an optional activity but as the proper response to who God is.
- ✓ The phrase "all ye lands" expands the invitation beyond Israel. The God of Israel is the God of the nations. Biblical worship is therefore centered on God's glory rather than human preference.
- ✓ Christ fulfills this universal scope of worship by establishing a kingdom that includes people "of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9).
- ✓ The church's mission is consequently connected to Psalm 100: the nations are being called to recognize and rejoice in the Lord's revealed supremacy in Jesus Christ.

Key thought: Jesus is not merely the Savior of one ethnic group. He is the promised King whose gospel goes to the nations. When we understand who Jesus is, worship becomes a summons to not remain silent.

The Lord Is to Be Served with Gladness:

- ✓ The Hebrew idea of **serving** carries the sense of laboring, ministering, or worshiping God. Service and worship belong together; what happens in God's presence should shape what happens in everyday life.
- ✓ The psalm specifically commands God's people to **serve with gladness**. Biblical service is not merely external duty but a response of the heart towards God, our family, and our neighbors.
- ✓ “Come before his presence” pictures worship as approaching God’s presence rather than merely attending a religious gathering.
- ✓ In Christ, believers have extraordinary confidence to approach God because Christ has opened the way into God's presence (Heb 10:19–22). Jesus alone is the perfect Servant and Mediator.

Key thought: We do not serve Christ merely because we must; grace teaches us to serve Him because of His supremacy and superiority. Also, we serve Him because while we were yet sinners He loved and died for us.

3. Know That the LORD Is God:

- ✓ Worship begins with heart knowledge. Biblical worship is grounded in truth, not merely emotion. The psalm declares that **the LORD is God**. He alone is worthy of allegiance and worship.
- ✓ “It is He that hath made us” confronts human self-sufficiency. “Not we ourselves” destroys the illusion that our identity, existence, or salvation originates in us.
- ✓ The New Testament reveals that creation itself is connected to Christ: **“All things were made by Him”** (John 1:3), and “by Him were all things created” (Colossians 1:16).
- ✓ The One who created us entered His creation. The Creator became 100% God and 100% man in Jesus Christ. This means the gospel is astonishing: the hands that formed humanity in creation were the same hands stretched out upon the cross for humanity's redemption.

Key thought: We did not create ourselves, and we cannot save ourselves. The God who made us is the God who must save and redeem us.

4. We Are His People and the Sheep of His Pasture

- ✓ The language changes from creation to relationship. God did not merely make His people; He claims them as His own. “His people” speaks of belonging. The believer's deepest identity is in a vertical relationship with God and a horizontal relational with their neighbors.
- ✓ “The sheep of his pasture” emphasizes God's care, provision, guidance, and protection. Sheep are dependent creatures; they need a shepherd to lead them to food, water, safety, and rest.
- ✓ Jesus explicitly takes this imagery upon Himself: “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Psalm 100's Shepherd imagery reaches its fullness in Christ. Jesus does not merely guide sheep; He dies for them. He knows His sheep, calls them by name, protects them, and gives them eternal life (John 10:14, 27–28).

Key thought: The sheep do not survive because they know the way; they survive because they have a Shepherd who knows the way.

5. Enter His Gates with Thanksgiving & His Courts with Praise

- ✓ The imagery is that of entering the presence of God with an attitude of gratitude. Thanksgiving and praise recognize what God has done; Worship and adoration rejoices in who God is.
- ✓ The worshiper does not approach God's presence demanding recognition but acknowledging God's worthiness. In the Old Testament, God's people approached through the structures and sacrifices of the covenant worship system.
- ✓ In the New Testament, Christ becomes the fulfillment of that entire sacrificial system, giving believers access to God through His finished work.
- ✓ Jesus is the only true and living way into the Father's presence. Hebrews 10:19–20 teaches that believers have confidence to enter God's presence through the blood of Jesus.
- ✓ Therefore, the Christian's thanksgiving is profoundly Christ-centered: We do not enter God's courts and presence because we are worthy enough. We enter only because Christ is more than worthy and His sacrifice is totally sufficient for us.

Key thought: The cross is the doorway through which surrendered sinners become glorious worshipers.

[illegible]

The Grace of Gratitude

Thank You Lord for Every Opened and Closed Door

And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write, These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts And no one opens: I know your works. See, I have set before you ^{an} open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My Name (Revelation 3: 7-8.KJV)

Scriptural Background: In Revelation 3, Jesus declares His sovereignty to the Apostle John on the Island of Patmos. Jesus is dictating letters to John for the seven churches of Asia describing their true spiritual standings. Jesus commended and praised the faithful church of Philadelphia for the following: 1. They had an open door. 2. They had little strength. 3. They had kept the Word of God and 4. They had not denied the Lord.

Introduction: There are moments in life when we thank God for the doors He opens, but struggle to thank Him for the doors He closes. We rejoice when an opportunity comes, when a prayer is answered, when a relationship is restored, or when a path becomes clear. Yet sometimes the same God who opens one door deliberately closes another. Scripture teaches us that God is not only Lord over our opportunities; He is also Lord over our limitations, interruptions, disappointments, and divine redirections.

A. We Are Thankful Because Jesus is the Door Himself:

- ✓ Jesus declared in John 10:9, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” This gives us the deepest reason to thank God regardless of what opens or closes.
- ✓ Our confidence is not ultimately in doors; our confidence is in Jesus Christ. Doors change. Seasons change. People change. Opportunities come and go. But Jesus Christ remains the same “yesterday, and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).
- ✓ If our joy depends entirely upon open doors, we will become discouraged when something closes. But if our confidence is in Christ, we can worship Him on both sides of the door. We can thank Him when He says yes, thank Him when He says no, and trust Him when He says wait.
- ✓ Psalm 37:23 says, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD.” That means even when the road takes an unexpected turn, God has not lost control of our journey.

B. We Give Jesus Thanks for Every Open Door:

- ✓ Revelation 3:8 says, “I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” An open door is not merely a favorable circumstance; it can be an assignment, an opportunity for ministry, a season of growth, or a pathway into God's purpose.
- ✓ Therefore, when God opens a door, we should walk through it with humility rather than pride, recognizing that we did not create the opportunity ourselves. We can say, “Lord, thank You for making a way where I could not make one.”
- ✓ James 1:17 declares, “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.*” When God opens a door, it is evidence of His providence and grace. **No one can ever bless you like the Lord.**
- ✓ Paul told the Corinthians, “*For a great door and effectual is opened unto me*” (1 Corinthians 16:9). Notice that Paul recognized the opportunity as a door that God had made possible.

C. We Give Jesus Gratitude for Every Closed Door:

- ✓ One of the hardest acts of faith is thanking God for something we wanted but did not receive. Yet Proverbs 3:5–6 tells us, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.” We see one moment; God sees the whole journey.
- ✓ Also we see the opportunity; God sees the consequences. We see the entrance; God sees what lies beyond it. In Acts 16, Paul wanted to preach in Asia, but the Holy Spirit prevented him. He also attempted to go into Bithynia, but again God redirected him.
- ✓ The closed doors were not signs that God had abandoned Paul; they were evidence that God was directing Paul. Sometimes God closes a door because the timing is wrong. Sometimes He closes it because the destination is wrong. Sometimes He closes it because He is protecting us from harm.
- ✓ Isaiah 55:8–9 reminds us that God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours. Therefore, faith says, “Lord, I may not understand why You closed it, but I trust the wisdom of the One who closed it.”

D. Opened and Closed Doors are God's instruments of Protection, Preparation, and Redirection:

- ✓ Romans 8:28 assures believers that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Paul did not understand every opened and closed door immediately, but eventually he discovered that God's redirection was connected to a greater mission.
- ✓ The Macedonian call led him to Philippi, where Lydia believed, a demon-possessed girl was delivered, and the Philippian jailer and his household came to faith in Christ (Acts 16). What Paul initially experienced as restriction became the pathway to divine assignment.
- ✓ Joseph's story illustrates the same principle. Joseph had a dream from God that he would be over his family and nations. His brothers sold him, Potiphar's house became a place of false accusation, and prison seemed like another closed door.
- ✓ Yet, God used every painful interruption to position Joseph for the purpose He had prepared (Genesis 50:20). This does not mean every painful event is good in itself, but it means God is able to work through circumstances that appear to contradict His promises. Further, an opened and closed door is God protecting our future, preparing our character, and re-directing our steps for His purpose & glory.

Take Home Challenge: Starting today, let our prayer be bigger than, “Lord, open doors for me.” Let us pray, “Lord, give me the grace to recognize the doors You open and the faith to accept the doors You close.” Thank Him for the opportunity that came. Thank Him for the opportunity that did not come. Thank Him for the relationships He allowed. Thank Him for the relationships He removed. We may not understand every open and closed door today, but we can trust the God who stands on both sides of it.

Closing Prayer: Almighty and All Knowing LORD. Thank You for every opened door, and thank You, Lord, for every closed door. Thank You for what You allowed, thank You for what You prevented, and thank You for leading me according to Your perfect will and purpose. I trust You with every door, because I trust You with my life. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

The Grace of God's Gift to Us in Christ Jesus ***God Promised to Give the World a Savior***

*“For a Child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us...Isaiah 9:6
(NASB2020)*

Introduction — The Promise God Made

The birth of Jesus Christ was not accidental, sudden, or reactive. It was the unfolding of God’s promise made long before Bethlehem. From Genesis to the prophets, Scripture reveals a God who sees humanity’s need, cares deeply and acts intentionally

Christmas is the celebration of God who always keeps His word. Christians can rest in the truth that God’s promises are rooted in His character not circumstance.

The Gift Originated by a Promise of God

“I will put enmity between you and the woman... he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” Genesis 3:15 (KJV)

Salvation began with God—not with humanity. When sin entered the world, God did not abandon mankind. Instead, He initiated a redemptive plan.

The Promise of Redemption was the first promise and it pointed toward the defeat of Satan and the coming Redeemer. The Promise teaches a powerful truth for Humanity who may become discouraged by failure, past mistakes or weakness. The gift of Jesus Christ reminds us that God’s grace does not begin with our own ability to fix ourselves—it begins with God’s promise to rescue us.

God already had a plan for your destiny. So when you cannot see a way forward, please know, circumstances don’t cancel a God promise.

The Promise Was Given Long Before Bethlehem

“In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” — Genesis 12:3

Jesus' birth fulfilled a promise that had been developing throughout Scripture. Before Bethlehem God had established a plan for His blessings and His salvation reach all nations.

The prophets gave details about the coming Savior:

- Isaiah 7:14 — A virgin would conceive and bear a Son.
- Micah 5:2 — The ruler would come from Bethlehem.
- Isaiah 9:6–7 — A child would be born who would reign with righteousness and peace.
- Isaiah 53:1–6 — The Servant would suffer for the sins of others.

These promises reveal the divinely appointed character of Jesus: righteous, peaceful and sacrificial.

THE PROMISE FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST

“All the families of the earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:3)

John 3:16 reminds us that God's love for the world was so great that He gave His only Son. The Savior is God's answer to humanity's deepest need.

The message of Jesus is a message through Abraham, of hope for everyone—the broken, discouraged, weary, forgotten, and those who feel far from God.

Jesus Was the Fulfillment of God's Promise

“These things took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet...”
Matthew 1:22–23

Connection Jesus' birth directly to Isaiah's prophecy is important to prove Jesus' that God's promises are not empty words. That He has the power and faithfulness to bring all His promises to completion.

The Promised Savior Would Bring Light

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.” — Isaiah 9:2

Darkness represents hopelessness, bondage, sin, fear, and separation from God. But God promised light—and Jesus came as that light.

Christians do not have to surrender to darkness. Even in difficulty, God has already provided hope through Christ.

The Promised Savior Would Bring Peace

“Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

The peace Jesus gives is deeper than circumstances. It is peace with God and the assurance that He remains present even when life is uncertain or timing is off.

- God’s timing may differ from yours, but His faithfulness never changes.
- God’s timing regarding the birth of Jesus teaches us about waiting on God.
- God’s timing regarding the promise of a Savior is essential to Christian hope.

CONCLUSION: God’s delay is not God’s denial. All of His promise are **TRUSTWORTHY** even if it takes time to fulfill.

The Grace of God's Gift to Us in Christ Jesus

Jesus Christ: God's Greatest Gift Given to the World

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11 (KJV)

INTRODUCTION: Christmas is more than the celebration of a baby born in Bethlehem it was the beginning of God's promised redemptive gift to humanity through Jesus Christ—but it was not the end of the Christmas story.

THE GIFT ARRIVED—SO REDEMPTION HAS BEGUN

"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son... To redeem them under the law." Galatians 4:4–5 (KJV)

Jesus was born human with mission of redemptive work to transform believers lives.

THE MOTIVATION BEHIND GOD'S GIFT OF JESUS IS LOVE! – THE GIFT ARRIVED

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..." — John 3:16

God's love is revealed in Bethlehem, but Bethlehem was only the beginning of His great redemptive work through Jesus Christ.

THE GIFT CAME TO SAVE

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." — Luke 2:11 (KJV)

God gave His Son as Savior which tells us Jesus came to save humanity not just as another teacher or prophet.

JESUS HUMAN & DIVINE

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." — John 1:14 (NASB)

JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD FOR ALL PEOPLE

"I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Luke 2:10 (KJV)

Jesus came into the world with a divine mission—to redeem humanity with the gift of salvation to reach all humans to accomplish the work of redemption.

THE SEVEN REDEMPTIVE BENEFITS OF GOD’S GIFT

1. SALVATION — CHRIST CAME TO SAVE

“Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”
— Matthew 1:21

God provided a Savior to address humanity’s deepest need—separation from God because of sin.

2. FORGIVENESS — CHRIST GIVES A NEW BEGINNING

“In whom we is redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins...” Ephesians 1:7 (ESV)

The child of Bethlehem gave His life for sinners. In Christ, guilt was replaced by grace, sin met by forgiveness and believers by new beginnings

3. RECONCILIATION - CHRIST RESTORES OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

“God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ...” — 2 Corinthians 5:19 (KJV)

Sin created separation between humanity and God, God sent Jesus to reconcile and restore us to Him.

4. PEACE — CHRIST GIVES US PEACE WITH GOD

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” — Romans 5:1

The peace Christ gives is deeper than temporary relief from life’s problems. The presence of a problem does not mean absence of God.

5. HOPE — CHRIST PROVES GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

Jesus coming reminds that God keeps His promises. His timing may differ from ours, but His faithfulness never changes. Our hope stays anchored in Christ

6. ETERNAL LIFE CHRIST GIVES LIFE TO NEVER END

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.” — John 10:28

Jesus came not simply to improve present lives, but to bring eternal life with Him.

The Grace of God's Gift to Us in Christ Jesus ***All We Receive In The Gift Blessings In Christ***

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” Ephesians 1:3 (NIV)

INTRODUCTION: Meaning of Gift Blessings in Christ

The Foundation of the Gift Blessings in Christ is so every believer can receive the indispensable spiritual blessings that flow from God’s grace and mercy in heavenly places in Christ”.

These spiritual blessings are not earned or deserved—they come only through the finished work of Jesus. Know that everything you need for grace, strength, forgiveness, transformation daily victory is already provided in Jesus.

Confidence We Have in Receiving These Blessings

Hebrews 4:16 reminds us that we can “*come boldly to the throne of grace*” because God’s mercy and help are always available when we need them. This confidence is faith in action. Through Christ, we have continuous access to God’s presence, His power, and His provision. This access is part of the gift blessings we receive in Him.

What Makes The Blessings So Indispensable

God’s blessings in Christ are indispensable because they meet needs human strength cannot satisfy.

- ✓ Grace gives us God’s unearned favor, strength, and sufficiency (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- ✓ Mercy gives us compassion, forgiveness, and help in weakness (Lamentations 3:22–23).
- ✓ Love gives us identity, belonging, and security (Romans 5:8).
- ✓ Peace gives calm in storms and clarity in confusion (Philippians 4:7).
- ✓ Joy gives endurance and hope (Nehemiah 8:10).

- ✓ Power gives victory over sin, fear, and spiritual battles (Acts 1:8).

These blessings endure through trials, troubles, and tribulations.

The Richness of What We Receive in Christ

The “Secrets” God Gives Through Grace and Mercy

When God blesses us with grace and mercy, He is giving secret access to Himself including:

- ✓ The secret of His sufficiency—“My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- ✓ The secret of His unconditional love—“Nothing... shall be able to separate us from the love of God” (Romans 8:38–39).
- ✓ The secret of His unlimited power—“Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (Ephesians 6:10).
- ✓ The secret of His promises—“All the promises of God are Yes and Amen in Christ” (2 Corinthians 1:20)

These secret truths empower believers to live victoriously and confidently.

Receiving blessings of Jesus is not passive. Believers must guard their hearts against spiritual harm by allowing the Word of God to transform their thinking, attitudes, and decisions.

• Guarding your Heart to Fully Receive His Blessings

- ✓ Guard your faith through prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- ✓ Guard your mind through Scripture (Romans 12:2).
- ✓ Guard your walk through obedience (James 1:22).
- ✓ Guard your heart through worship and fellowship (Hebrews 10:25).

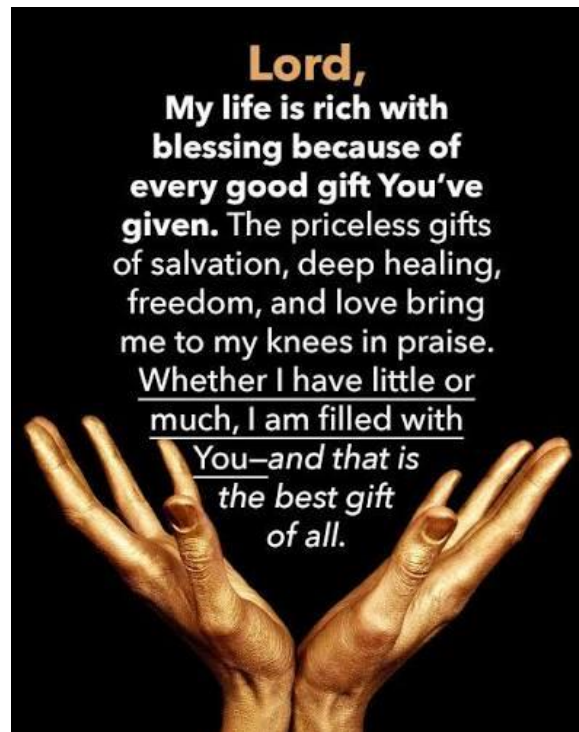
Transformation opens the guard for God’s blessings to operate freely in our lives.

CONCLUSION: What We Receive in Christ

Everything God gives through Christ is essential, abundant, and available daily for Believers to receive:

- ✓ Salvation -Indispensable Grace — favor, strength, sufficiency (Ephesians 2:8).
- ✓ Redemption - Enduring Mercy — forgiveness, compassion, restoration (Titus 3:5).
- ✓ Peace with God - that give joy, love, hope, power (Galatians 5:22–23).
- ✓ Victory and hope — ability to overcome and do God’s will (1 John 5:4).
- ✓ New Identity — become sons and daughters of God (John 1:12).
- ✓ Eternal Life — access to approach God’s throne anytime (Hebrews 4:16).

Finally, we receive promise of Christ’s presence always (Matthew 28:20).



The Grace of God's Gift to Us in Christ Jesus ***The Gift for All the World to Receive and Share***

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but save the world through Him.”

John 3:16-17 (NIV)

INTRODUCTION — The Gift for the World God’s of Jesus Christ is universal in its invitation. The Gospel is not limited to one people, one culture, or one generation but for all believers to share it. Scripture consistently declares that Jesus is “the Savior of the world”—a message meant for every nation, every tribe, and every person.

Key Scriptures describing worldwide reach of the gift:

John 4:42 — “This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

Luke 2:10 — “Good tidings of great joy... to all people.”

John 1:29 — “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Matthew 28:18–20 — The Great Commission.

Mark 16:15 — “Go ye into all the world...”

Acts 1:8 — The Gospel moves from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the earth.

Revelation 7:9–10 — People from every nation worship before God’s throne.

These passages reveal the mission of Christ is universal the Gospel is for everyone.

The Christmas Message Doesn’t End at Bethlehem. Bethlehem is the beginning of a divine journey that leads to the salvation of the world. After Bethlehem, the story of Jesus unfolds in a sequence that reveals God’s love and purpose from **Bethlehem → Calvary → Empty Tomb → Great Commission → Eternal Kingdom.**

The Gospel is not merely a holiday story—it is God’s global rescue mission. This journey teaches us: Jesus was born for us. Jesus lived for us. Jesus died for us. Jesus rose for us. Jesus intercedes for us. And Jesus will return for us.

THE GIFT THAT MUST BE RECEIVED PERSONALLY

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God...” John 1:11–12 ESV)

A gift can be offered without being received. God has given the world the greatest gift—Jesus Christ—but each person must respond personally.

The Gift of Christ Must Be Received With Distinction

Receiving Christ is not the same as:

- ✓ Celebrating Christmas
- ✓ Attending Church
- ✓ Knowing Christmas story
- ✓ Believing Jesus was born

These are all good things, but they are **not** salvation.

Salvation comes when a person receives Jesus the Christ by faith as Lord and Savior.

Why the Gospel Gift of Jesus Is for All the World

The universal invitation of the Gospel reveals God’s heart that No One is beyond the reach of God’s gift, that:

- ✓ God loves all the world (John 3:16).
- ✓ God desires all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4).
- ✓ God sent Jesus to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).
- ✓ God calls the Church to preach to all nations (Matthew 28:19).
- ✓ God will gather believers from every tribe and tongue (Revelation 7:9).

The worldwide mission of the Gospel reminds us that: If Jesus came for the world, then He came for you and:

- ✓ The broken
- ✓ The discouraged
- ✓ The sinner

- ✓ The weary
- ✓ The forgotten
- ✓ The religious
- ✓ The irreligious
- ✓ The entire world

REFLECTION: The gift of Jesus Christ is offered to the world—but it must be received personally.

CONCLUSION: A Personal Testimony. Can you testify that you have truly received and personally accepted God's gift of Jesus Christ by faith as your Lord and Savior.

For us

Jesus was born for us.

Jesus lived for us.

Jesus died for us.

Jesus rose for us.

Jesus intercedes for us.

And Jesus will return for us.

Commentary references and excerpts were derived from the following resources:

The Holy Bible

Logos Bible Software

The Preacher's Sermon Outline Bible

Life Application Bible Notes

Word Search Bible Study Software

Internet Resources