

Heart of Gratitude  
By: Bobby Sullivan

I heard a story...A priest, a minister, and a rabbi want to see who's best at his job. So, they each go into the woods, find a bear, and attempt to convert it. Later they get together.

The priest begins: "When I found the bear, I read to him from the Catechism sprinkled him with holy water. and next week is his first communion."

The minister says "I found a bear by the stream, and preached God's holy word. The bear was so convicted that he let me baptize him."

They both look down at the rabbi, who is lying on a hospital bed in a body cast.

"Looking back," the rabbi says, "maybe I shouldn't have started with the circumcision."

A wealthy Texan who was in the habit of giving his father unique gifts every Father's Day. One year it was hang-gliding lessons. The year before it was the entire record collection of Slim Whitman's Hits, autographed by the singer himself. But this past year he had outdone himself. He purchased a rare kind of South American bird, called the translator. This bird could speak five languages and sing "Yellow Rose of Texas" in any key while standing on one foot. The talented bird cost \$10,000, but the felt it was worth every penny. This would be the Father's Day gift his dad would never forget.

A week after Father's Day he called his father. "Dad, how did you like the bird?" His father responded, "It was delicious."

## THE HEART OF GRATITUDE

Deuteronomy 8:7-13 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>7</sup> For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; <sup>8</sup> a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; <sup>9</sup> a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.

<sup>10</sup> When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God **for the** good land he has given you. <sup>11</sup> Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. <sup>12</sup> Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds

and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup> then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. <sup>15</sup> He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. <sup>16</sup> He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. <sup>17</sup> You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." <sup>18</sup> But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

1.) YOU CAN BE THANKFUL **FOR THE.....**

YOUR NEXT LEVEL COULD BE 1 PRAISE AWAY~

Remember, Don't ever forget the provider while your embracing the promise.

Gods gifts alone don't give you joy. They only give you joy when they are joined with gratitude.

If you cant turn blessing into praise it will turn into pride!

If you grow in gifts but not gratitude you get grumpy.

"Happy people are not those who make the most but make the most out of what they have" Steven Furtick

Renea Brown wrote in Gratitude; the gifts of imperfection, "When it comes to gratitude, the word that jumped out in my research was, practice. Practicing gratitude (which is not natural unless its supernatural) is a call to action. For years I subscribed to the notion of your altitude for gratitude philosophy. I have since learned that attitude is an orientation or a way of thinking. Having an attitude does not always translate into behaviour.

For example, it would be reasonable to say that I have a yoga attitude. The ideals and beliefs that guide my life are very inclined with the ideas and beliefs I associate with yoga. But let me assure my yoga attitude and my yoga pants don't mean jack if you put me on a yoga mat. As Im sitting here writing, I have never practiced yoga. I have never put the attitude into action. It seems that gratitude without practice may be a little like faith without works. Its not alive."

You might have a grateful heart, but do we have grateful habits?

Francis Schaeffer once said, "The beginning of man's rebellion against God was, and is, the lack of a thankful heart."

Let the redeemed of the Lord say SO or say nothing at all. Throw me a bone every once in a while! Its OK! I work hard trying to put a mess into a message. Trying to turn chaos into order, trying to put thoughts into a process. Go ahead and shout me down! I'm good with it. I will not be offended.

You like someones perfume? SAY SO

You like someones outfit? SAY SO

You like someones cookin? SAY SO Someones car, boat, house, dog, cat

I don't know how some churches can be so dead when they have been fed!

Vs 10 When you have eaten, and are satisfied, PRAISE THE LORD YOUR GOD **FOR THE** Good land he has given you.

I thank you Lord FOR THE.....Provision

Cant we just thank the Lord for what we already have? Why do we always need more?

Moses is saying, " you don't need more accumulation. You need more appreciation

Our perpetual praise is past due! Maybe that's why some people have no POWER! Because there is little to no PRAISE. What you fail to recognize, you stop celebrating! What you stop celebrating, you stop rewarding. Anything unrewarded will eventually exit your life.

**A.. He is worthy of praise**

"Shout triumphantly to the Lord, all the earth (v. 1, HCSB)"

The KJV says, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands."

Kaufmann Kohler states in the Jewish Encyclopaedia that no language has as many words for joy and rejoicing as does Hebrew. In the Old Testament 13 Hebrew roots, found in 27 different words, are used primarily for some aspect of joy or joyful participation in religious worship.

"You reveal the path of life to me; in Your presence is abundant joy; in Your right hand are eternal pleasures" (Ps 16:11).

We are to express our gratitude to the Lord in an audible and public manner.  
Make a joyful noise

The word "noise" means to break forth with, or to burst. It sends the imagery of someone who is so full of an emotion that they are unable of containing themselves.

I've been to professional sporting events and I've seen the emotion people express when someone makes a good play. They get excited.  
They get enthused.

Do you know the history of the word "enthused?" It comes to us from a Greek word that means to be possessed by God. If that's the case, there are very few people in Churches today possessed by God because they show such little enthusiasm.

Psalm 100:2 "Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs

### **B. He is worthy of service**

"Serve the Lord with gladness come before Him (His face) with joyful songs."

Many people think that service to God is confined to those in pulpit ministry, but scripture tells us that all who know Him as Lord and Savior are ministers or servants of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What are we teaching our youth and kids? To be ministers. A believer is a minister who administers

Remember, God is more concerned with what we are than what we do because what we are will determine what we do.

When God was giving the Law to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 28:47, He told them they would be cursed if they did not serve the Lord with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things.

So many people who claim to know Jesus as Lord and Savior live lives devoid of joy or gladness. That's because they have focused on the wrong things. Some serve Him out of greed, recognition and placement. This person does what they do for the Lord or His church only for what they can get in return.

John Maxwell puts it: "The instant we are born, we already owe someone for nine months of room and board . . . and we never really pay that back."

We can never do enough to say thanks to our Lord.

**Favor celebrated becomes favour perpetuated.** ( belief continuing indefinitely)

Ask yourself these questions:

1.) Who are the top 10 who have made a significant deposit into your life. 2.)

How have you shown gratitude for those who have shown you favour?

True gratitude for favour received will guarantee success!

Philippians 1:17-18 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>17</sup> The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. <sup>18</sup> But what does it matter?

The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,”

Are you walking in blessings that used to be your praise request and we have not circled back to give him thanks? Let me try for the last 5 months

A second chance, a new home, a good job, beautiful landscape, forget the word congregation about family?, a new roof, comfortable chairs, awesome children, air conditioning upstairs, growth with new families!

Now let me thank him and praise him in advance: 3 more heat pumps (PAID FOR), new sound system, drummer, more youth, more kids, more adults, new parking lot, favour in the community, more freedom in worship, breakthrough in our finances, unexpected checks in the mail, raises and promotions. When you have an attitude of gratitude you can expect to expected the unexpected. You become a blessing magnet.

However, we can get complacent and if we are not careful our gratitude can easily slip into entitlement.

## 2.) YOU CAN BE THANKFUL **EVEN THOUGH**

Psalm 23:4 “**Even though** I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil for you are with me; Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

Even though there's no joy in my job, even when my grades are great, my marriage is a mess, when I'm left and alone, when the doctor gives you a dingy diagnosis, bruised and bullied, mistreated and miserable- GOD IS STILL GOOD

### Psalm 55:18

He rescues me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me.

Moses teaches us how to thank God for the. David teaches us in the EVEN THOUGH. David teaches us about another level of gratitude. David was a little dysfunctional at times and was a king caught in a cave who knew how to praise God even though things we not always lined up in his favour.

REVELATION: it is not gratitude to thank God for what he has done. It is just good manners! LOL

“Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,”  
1 Peter 1:8

Even though all heck is breaking loose.

Even though is where you trust God for what you can't see.

Are we only going to thank him when I see the evidence of his presence or when I don't?

EVEN THOUGH recognizes his presence in the midst of my enemies.

Moses taught us how to thank God for his presence.

Psalm 23:5 You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows.

Its one thing to praise GOD when.....

Its another thing to praise God in a prison.

3.) YOU CAN BE THANKFUL BECAUSE OF

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18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And **because of** this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,”

The great German Reformer, Martin Luther, in the 16th century was the leader of the Reformation. Great responsibility laid upon his shoulder to lead a nation and a continent in this Reformation movement. And with all of this responsibility upon him, Luther often became overwhelmed with bouts of despair and gloom. It was at such low points that joy evaded him. One day when he was especially low and discouraged, his wife Katie dressed up in all black as though she were going to a funeral and walked into his study. And Luther looked up at her and said, "Who died?" She said very curtly, "God." He said, "My soul, woman, don't talk that way!" She said, "Then don't live that way."

If you know anything about the book of Philippians, you know that this book is all about joy. It is the dominant theme that runs through this book. It is the golden thread that binds this book together. Paul is bound in chains in a prison yet he says, "Because of this I rejoice"

What is it that was so strong in the heart of Paul that he could live victoriously over his circumstances and not be pulled down in despair? What was it that Paul found that equipped him to so rightly live a life full of joy?

What is it in your life that is stirring up trouble that you have not praised your way out of yet?

I never praise him for pain, nor just for his provisions but for what the pain of the process is producing.

Have you stopped to count the blessings in your life lately? Many of us have a tendency to focus on what's wrong, which gives us a distorted picture of life.

Barry Siegel pointed this out in one of his columns in the Los Angeles Times.

Siegel says Consider what some scientists predict. If everyone keeps stacking National Geographic's in garages and attics instead of throwing them away, the magazines' weight will sink the continent 100 feet sometime soon and we will all be inundated by the oceans.

- 1.) If the number of microscope specimen slides submitted to one St. Louis hospital lab continues to increase at its current rate, that metropolis will be buried under three feet of glass by the year 2224.
- 2.) If beachgoers keep returning home with as much sand clinging to them as they do now, 80 percent of the country's coastline will disappear in 10 years.

If we focus on the wrong things, we will never see the good things. Take inventory of the blessings and stop focusing on the things that could go wrong.

On April 30, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln read his Proclamation for a National Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer. This is part of what he said.

“We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, the many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to God that made us! It behoves us, then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.”

THE HEART OF THE FATHER AS SPOKEN through Abraham Lincoln