

Ephesians 14-11-23b

We pick up our study now in Ephesians chapter 5. We're looking at verses 20 and 21. As a result of being filled with the Spirit, there is melody, there is music. And, of course, at a lot of drinking parties, there is also music, usually at a loud volume.

Because it has to do with stimulation of the senses. If you think about the kind of music that is associated with the beer garden and the excesses. Nothing wrong with the beer garden, actually.

The Germans make some great beer. But the kind of revelries and drunken debauches that take place. Think about the direction of the music.

Even when you go to a concert and the music is too excess, what do they do? The last few times I've gone or been anywhere near a secular music concert, I took earplugs with me to protect my hearing. To protect the delicate anvil and stirrup and those little hairs that sense the vibrations in the fluid that's in your inner ear, your cochlea and all of that. Because it actually does physical damage.

They turn stuff up so loud. Well, here's my point. What is the direction of the music? What is the direction? The music is out here and it is assaulting me.

It is designed to stimulate me. It is input to me. The music is designed to have an effect on me.

If it's the thump, thump, thump. If it's the wail of the guitars. If it's the sweat of the guy up there flailing away on his Stratocaster or whatever it might be.

It is to do something to me. The music is designed to do something to me. By way of contrast, notice that here with the filling of the spirit, what is the source of the music? The source of the music is in me flowing out.

It is an expression of something in me coming out. The light of Christ is shining. I am awake and I am walking circumspectly.

I am filled with the spirit and music springs up in us and moves out in the direction of appreciation for one another and appreciation for God. The music becomes a positive, embracing, uniting, and gratitude displaying thing. Not I have it turned up to 11 and I am physically smaller because I'm being compressed by the sound waves that are giving me a nosebleed.

Now, one thing to think about in this regard, if our worship as believers ever came to the point where I was dependent upon the music to define my worship, I'm going to go there and the praise and worship band is going to waft me on waves of melody and song. We have a shift in direction. I can join with, and two people could be at the same service and one of them is waiting for input and the other is joining in expression.

But it is up to us to ensure that where there is music that is associated with worship, that we are using it as an expression. We are joining in an outward flow of appreciation and of worship, not waiting for it to do something to us. That's no different than a secular concert.

Come on, guns and roses, make me feel better. Come on, mega death, chant me to some sort of happy numbness to my situation. People will go to music, give me the beat boys and free my soul.

I want to get lost in your rock and roll and drift away. That's an old song, but it's a bad idea. I don't want to listen to rock and roll and drift away.

I want to have the Spirit of God active in my soul so that I am wise and I am appreciative and I see the tremendous gifts and blessings and opportunities and potentials of God and I am a source of light. I am reflecting the glory of God in songs and hymns and spiritual songs. And when I sing along with someone, even mentally in my heart, notice it says singing and making melody in your heart.

Not all of us are vocally gifted. But listen, there's nothing wrong with the melody coming out of your heart. Singing and making melody in your heart, it isn't something being launched as an assault on your senses.

It's a soul expression. Then in verse 20, giving thanks always for all things. It's difficult sometimes to be thankful for adversity unless we step back and realize that, like the two-year-old at the doctor's office for a vaccination, if my understanding is limited, then I'm just going to look at the pain.

And I may be incapable of appreciating the benefit of that shot. I can look around at other crying and screaming two-year-olds and say, what kind of torture house is this? I can't believe my mother brought me down here to have strangers insult my person and cause me to physically bleed. And I see no benefit.

All I've got is a sore place on my arm or worse, my sitting place. And how is this good? And I could convince myself rationally for weeks afterward that my mother had some sort of weird torture fetish and took me down there to strangers and had me physically assaulted for no good reason. Why? Because I'm a two-year-old and I am incapable of understanding things that are beyond my scope of apprehension or comprehension.

I have to trust my mother when she says, look, you can't understand this now, but this is a good thing. You've got to trust me. Trust me, this is good.

I am never going to understand how this is good as long as I live. A stranger poked big, long needles into my flesh and I bled and it hurts. You keep telling me this is good, but you can't explain to me how it's good.

Well, guess what? When you get a little further along, you will have the structure and the frame of reference and the capacity to understand things that you aren't in a position to understand now. That's exactly where we are with the Lord God. If we trust him, wouldn't it be great if as a toddler you had such faith and confidence in your parents and in your mother when she took you to the doctor and she says, look, this is going to hurt, but it'll be over soon and it really is something you need.

It'll be good for you. And you say, I so appreciate that you love me enough to nurture me in and through this experience so that I will get this long-term benefit. I don't understand how it works, but I know you would never do this unless it was a good thing.

I know you love me. I love you. So I'm certainly not holding this against you.

And if anything, I just want to say thank you for being such a good mother and such a good parent and looking out for my best interests in the long term. As a parent, how would you feel about a child that was that trusting and that confident in your relationship? How do you think God feels about us when we thank him for the adversities that come into our life knowing that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose? But it takes faith because we are not going to understand it in this life. It doesn't make sense.

Now people say, well, you know, down the road I'll look back. And once in a while we do. Sometimes we see, you know, Joseph standing next to the throne of Egypt entertaining his brothers and able to provide for them and give them a land during a time of famine and saying, you meant it for evil, God meant it for good.

Here it is vindicated. That's wonderful, and we get that sometimes in life. But most of the time we are not going to understand in this life why bad things happen.

We're just not because so much of it is woven into the fabric of God's ways which are higher than our ways. And they're a part of his thoughts which are higher than our thoughts. Trust him.

Appreciate his love and love him in return. Be thankful unto him and bless his name, Psalm 100 says, for the Lord is good. His mercy is everlasting.

We're going to see the outworking of his mercy in the everlasting that is to come. And his truth endureth unto all generations. This will be our Bible in the future that we don't have now.

This is just an excerpt of the word of God. This is the Reader's Digest condensed and even less than that. This is just a chapter in the living and abiding word of God.

This is just the little bit. You know how sometimes for new believers you just hand them the Gospel of John or New Testament with Psalms. If you're really ambitious, okay, New Testament

with Psalms.

Don't want to give them all that heavy stuff in Ezekiel and Isaiah and 2 Kings. Don't want to give them the genealogies and chronicles and that. Look, New Testament and Psalms or just the Gospel of John.

Just start with this. Well, that's what this is. This is just a taste.

It's just a promise of what is to come in the time that is to come. Be thankful unto Him and bless His name. Psalm 100, for the Lord is good.

His mercy is everlasting and His truth endures to all generations. It takes faith. That's the definition of this life.

Faith, substance of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen. If we could see why God was allowing us to suffer or to have to work through dismal circumstances, it wouldn't be faith. Well, this is reasonable.

I can see, you know, now that God has explained to me exactly what's going on, why, of course, I'm with the program. It's not what He's looking for. God requires faith.

Without knowledge, understanding, and a logical grasp, it is impossible to please God. Is that what Hebrews 11, 6 says? Without a full comprehension and able to solve every part of the puzzle, it is impossible to please God. Without enough doctrine in your soul, it is impossible to please God.

It's not what it says. What does Hebrews 11, 6 say? Without faith, it is impossible to please God. He that comes to God must believe some things.

Believe it. If there's enough evidence to convince you, it's not faith. Well, wouldn't that just be silly to not operate on evidence? Well, if you choose rationalism as your yardstick and say, I only operate on rationalism.

Rationalism is my guidepost. That's my north star. Everything must be rational.

Because look how well rationalism works. Without rationalism, we wouldn't have airplanes and iPhones. Great.

In the realm of the material, where things are observable, repeatable, testable, it's a wonderful thing. It works great. I love airplanes and I love phones.

I didn't say iPhones. I love phones. I love what technology can do.

But I use the tools of rationalism where rationalism is rational to use. I don't use rationalism in the immaterial realm. That's just silly.

That would be like trying to use a hammer and saw for music. It's a different realm. It operates on different principles.

And God in heaven demands faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please him. Well, this is the basis for thanksgiving when there's no rational reason to be thankful.

Look at Acts and Paul and his companions in prison in Acts chapter 16. He's in Philippi and he has been arrested and thrown into a dark, dank dungeon. They've been beaten.

They've been abused. They're sitting there in the dark stank where lots of other hapless prisoners have been incarcerated. And what are they doing? They are singing songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord in prison.

What is the rational basis for giving thanks in that situation? There isn't any. What is the spiritual basis? God works all things according to the counsel of his own will, all things together for good. As a result of their presence, as a result of their testimony, the Philippian jailer and his whole family come to Christ.

Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Well, let me give you a primer on theological truth and let me explain reconciliation and redemption and propitiation and let me explain the efficacy of the blood of Christ and the whole forensic problem of sin and righteousness and judgment. What does Paul say in Acts 16.31? Philippian jailer, sirs, what must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. You're saved.

Believe. How much Bible class did the Philippian jailer have? Whatever he gleaned out of the lyrics of those songs that those guys were singing in the night, the earthquake comes, he's afraid all of the prisoners have fled, those guys stayed. Well, it's about time this circumstance resolved itself.

It's so unfair for me to be in prison. Obviously, God has supernaturally opened the jail so that we can flee. Let's go.

Looking out not only for our own interests, but also for the interests of others. Do you think Paul as a Roman citizen knew what would happen to that jailer if they left? Paul knew the guy would be executed. It doesn't matter.

It's like the captain of a ship. It doesn't matter how it happened. If you run aground or hit something, the captain is responsible.

That jailer would have lost his life. His family would have been orphaned if not slain along with him. Paul and the other prisoners stayed right where they were.

Does it make reasonable sense? Would any rational person stay there when the doors are open? It's not a matter of reason. It is a matter of faith. God knows what he's doing, and that's one of

those light of the Holy Spirit.

Would there be a time when you walk out, the angel kicks Peter and says, hey, I've opened the bars and doors, we're leaving. Okay. Peter didn't stay and say, well, what about the Roman guard? Won't they be executed? The angel says, come, and I'm coming.

God gives us light in these situations. There's no formula. It's not like a rational deductive process.

Awake, and Christ will give you light. Well, how can I operate if it's not reasonable? Use reason where reason is appropriate. Use faith where faith is appropriate.

Be thankful unto him and bless his name. God says, if you come to me, I am not going to hand you a rock, which is useless for eating, or a snake, or a scorpion, which is dangerous and life-threatening. Come to me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

What did Jesus not say in that particular passage? Come to me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you a different job that doesn't tire you out, and I will give you a burden that isn't heavy. Come to me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I'll just fix that. Oh, this job is too hard for you.

This burden is too heavy for you. Come to me when you labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you what? Rest. Sufficiency for the situation.

If I rest, I can resume my labor, and I can pick up my burden and keep going. Well, reasonably speaking, if the work is too hard and the burden is too heavy, I think the work should leave, and we can think anything we want. It is a matter of faith.

Because of that, giving thanks always. Job 1, verse 21. Mrs. Job says, Husband, you fool, curse God and die.

Look at what has happened. We've lost our kids. We've lost our living.

We've lost our wealth. Job says, Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. Which is kind of an interesting statement.

Did Job return to his mother's womb? Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. Keep in mind the Bible so often uses metaphor or simile or symbolic language. I came forth naked.

I will return to a state of not being here, thinking thoughts and doing things. That's all he's saying. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Did not shake Job's appreciation for God. Things are good, they came from God.

Things are bad, they came from God. I will bless the name of the Lord regardless, because I love Him. I appreciate Him.

My faith is in Him. My confidence is in Him. This is the same Job who says, I know that my Redeemer lives.

What proof has he got that his Redeemer lives? How much empirical evidence has Job got? He says, I know my Redeemer lives. Just like Paul says, I know whom I have believed. People say, well, you can't know that.

Well, don't tell that to somebody who knows. I know what I know, and what you think you know isn't what you know. I know what I know.

Job says, I know that my Redeemer lives. Paul says, I know whom I have believed. And though worms should eat my flesh, the physical evidence of my existence, I know that I will stand and I will see Him with my own eyes on the last day.

That was Job's confidence. That was Job's knowledge. And he gave thanks.

Psalm 34. I will bless the Lord at all times. Not, I will bless the Lord in the good times.

I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. Not just in my heart, in my mouth.

Singing songs and hymns and spiritual songs. Making melody in your hearts to the Lord. But this is a one another thing.

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The praise is in our mouths. We are known by the way we constantly connect our circumstances to the plan and purpose of God.

Just like a drunk is inescapably connected to his excessive drinking. I know that right away. Have you ever been around, as I have, people who thought they were hiding successfully the fact that they were drinking or that they had drunk too much? They were trying to act like they hadn't? Have you ever watched some of these shows where the cops have the camera in the dashboard and somebody's trying to convince the guy that stopped him from weaving all over the road that he hasn't been drinking and he's not drunk? You can persuade yourself, well, I can pull this off.

I can fool everyone. You can't. And in the same way, when Christ is in our lives, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, you can't fool anyone.

It is going to come out. It will be on your lips and in your heart at all times. Psalm 34.

There is a noticeable effect in this case. In Isaiah chapter 63, verse 7, I will mention the loving-

kindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord according to all that the Lord has bestowed on us and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies, according to the multitude of His loving-kindnesses. You know, the old Count Your Blessings.

I have a Christmas record which will come out in a couple of weeks. And Tammy Wynette is on there. And she says, you know, when I fall asleep counting my blessings, I count my blessings just like sheep.

Once you hear that song, nobody else can do it the way Tammy does it. When I worry, you know, I count my blessings. Well, that is a biblical principle.

I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord, the multitude of His loving-kindnesses. I will enumerate them. I will go through them one by one.

It is virtually impossible. I don't think it is possible to be arrogant and selfish and at the same time be grateful. When you are actively in a mode of gratitude and thanksgiving, try, see if you can pull it off.

Be grateful and thankful and try to be arrogant and selfish at the same time. They're just mutually exclusive. If I'm sort of an inherently self-centered person, that may be very difficult for me to turn off.

I can't necessarily choose to not be selfish. I can choose to enumerate my blessings. And when I do that, that attitude of humility and gratitude purges out and drives away my selfishness in a way that I can't do directly.

I can't get rid of it, but I can replace it. And as you fill a glass with water, the air is pushed out. That's the idea.

When you can't directly remove a thing, replace it with something that you can actively choose to put in your heart and in your life. Be not drunk with wine, for in is excess. Be filled with the Spirit.

And when I choose that filling, it pushes out from me thanksgiving, songs and hymns and spiritual songs. It is a benefit to those who are around me, even in times of difficulty. Isaiah 63 gives us the situation where you're counting all of the blessings and manifold providences of God.

If you look at Acts chapter 5, you find Peter and the other apostles preaching. And they're brought before the captain and the officers. Did we not strictly command you? This is Acts 5, 28.

Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and you intend to bring this man's blood on us. And people in verse 33 are furious and are plotting to kill them. But as you work your way down to verse 41, after they have been abused by the council, they are rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for

his name.

They suffered shame. Shame we consider to be a bad thing. Shame and blame, you've got to get rid of that.

No shame, no blame. Well, they suffered shame. So how did they choose to look at it? I am getting real sick and tired of this whole Christianity deal because every time I turn around, somebody is throwing me in prison, somebody is saying bad words about me, I'm getting arrested.

This seems to be a downward trend in my life ever since I started actively claiming Christ. No, how do they look at it? Rejoicing, being thankful that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name, to be representatives of his name. And you have countless examples of this.

Look in a topical Bible at the examples of gratitude and thankfulness. In the prayers of Paul, 1 Corinthians 1.4, Paul says, I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God given to you by Christ Jesus. You think, well, you know, everything is down and dark.

I can't think of anything to be thankful for. Well, think about fellow believers. Paul says, I thank God for the grace that was given you.

You're saved. I know where you're going. I'm not worried about your eternal destination.

I'm so grateful for that. I'm grateful that when I think of you, whatever you're going through and whatever may happen, I know where you're going to end up. I know where we are all going to be reunited.

I know what God is doing in you through Christ. Philippians 1.3, I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Need something to be thankful for? Think about fellow believers and thank God for them.

Thank you for putting me here with believers of like mind. We're on a shared road. We're going in the same place.

Philippians 4.6, one of our memory verses, be anxious for nothing. Be careful for nothing. This doesn't mean don't be anxious.

You're driving on slick roads. You need an appropriate level of caution. What is the contrast here? Be anxious about nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

We can get real self-centered even in praying to God and saying, Lord, I don't know if you're paying attention up there or not, but things are in a really bad way. I'm going through a tough patch down here. I just hope you remember that I am still down here and I could really use some

relief.

This person next to me, they're similarly suffering, and I'm suffering because they're suffering, they're suffering. Lord, in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, you cannot stay self-centered if you are thankful. And sometimes we have to work and figure out, well, what can I be thankful for? Well, it could be worse.

I'm thankful that there is some provision. I'm thankful that I have the opportunity to even bring this before God. I am my own priest.

The Lord Jesus Christ made it possible for me to enter boldly into the throne of grace, to find help in time of need. Hebrews 10, His flesh was torn, the veil was rent, so that I could have access into the Holy of Holies and even bring this up before the Lord God. What a privilege.

Why don't I be thankful for that? In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving. Never go to God making a request without finding something for which to be thankful. That's a command of Scripture.

Be thankful. Philippians 4, 6. Colossians 1, 11, and 12. Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power.

Light of Jesus Christ. Presence and power of the Holy Spirit. We are strengthened with all might according to the standard of.

How much might are we strengthened with? Well, how much might was the Lord Jesus strengthened with? How much power has He got? That's the measure. When it says according to, that is proportional to. For all patience and longsuffering with joy.

Think about that phrase. We are enabled and empowered with the same strength that enabled and empowered the Lord Jesus, who stilled the winds and the waves, who's infinitely powerful. We are strengthened for patience and longsuffering with joy.

Not just patience and longsuffering. On Jordan's stormy banks I stand and cast a wistful eye. Canaan's fair and happy land is way over there.

And I'm here in the storm. I'm wet. I have no umbrella.

No boat. Don't have a coin to pay the boatman to go across. Boo hoo, here I am.

On Jordan's stormy bank I stand. I have a wistful eye. Canaan's fair and happy land is so far away.

Patience and longsuffering with joy. A lot of people can be patient. Can you be patient and longsuffering? Patience is what I need for myself.

Longsuffering is what I need to put up with you and what you need to put up with me. I'm bearing up under the weight of your insensitivity to me, and you're having to bear up under the weight of my insensitivity to you. Patience and longsuffering with joy.

We are strengthened with all might for that. Next verse, Colossians 112, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. Giving thanks to the Father.

Giving thanks. He has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. How real is the light? It's as real to us as our faith makes it.

Faith is the reality of things that are not seen. Same book, Colossians 2, verse 7. Rooted and built up in him and established in the faith as you have been taught. Abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Abounding in the fact that we are rooted and built up and established. Colossians 3, verse 17. Remember, these two letters traveled in the same pouch.

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. We don't just pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Whatever we do, whatever we say, is in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Whatever we do, well, I'm working through a big problem here. But I'm doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus, and I am giving thanks to God the Father through him. Same book, same letter, Colossians 4, verse 2. Continue earnestly in prayer.

Keep on praying earnestly. It's a command. It's not a choice, not a nice to have, not something to toss up when the chips are down.

Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving. Being vigilant in earnest prayer with thanksgiving. It's a good exercise in identifying, remembering, and lifting up before God the things for which we can be thankful.

1 Thessalonians, Paul says once again at the beginning of the letter, we give thanks to God always for you all. Do you find it at all, is this just something apostles did? That he tells the Corinthians, we're thankful for you. He tells the Philippians, we are thankful for you.

He tells the Colossians, we are thankful for you. He tells the Thessalonians, I give God thanks for you. Everybody Paul writes a letter to, he says, I am thankful to God for you.

This is an easy thing. We all know at least one other person we're thankful for. We give thanks to God always for you, making mention of you in our prayers.

Intercessory prayer. I hope and pray and have confidence that the Lord Jesus Christ mentions

me by name as he sits at the right hand of the Father interceding on my behalf. He says, Father, Samuel Curtis Hall down there has a lot of blessing and there's a danger of distraction.

There's a danger of him becoming complacent, of coasting, of losing his inner fire. Father, there's Samuel Curtis Hall. He's going through a rough patch.

He's kind of taxing his faith. He's testing his endurance. The Lord Jesus Christ mentions us by name.

We are told, we are encouraged to mention each other by name, making mention of you in prayer. Same letter, 1 Thessalonians 3:9. For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before God? I go before God and on account of you, I rejoice in his presence. God and Father, those people in Thessalonica, you remember so-and-so in his household and this guy in his household? You remember the response there is? You remember their constancy and consistency? I went to try to comfort them and ended up being comforted and encouraged by contact with them.

Lord, I just am thankful to you for the privilege of knowing these people in Thessalonica and in Philippi and in Corinth and in Colossae and in Laodicea. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Thankfulness.

It's one thing to have Thanksgiving. You say, well, let's be thankful. God, thank you.

Thank you for the food. Thank you for the day. Thank you for the nation.

Amen. This is an attitude. This is an environment.

This is a position of soul where we are constantly coming before God grateful. The quickest, best, and surest way of preserving humility so that God can give us grace, God gives grace to the humble, is gratitude, conscious gratitude, being vigilant and diligent in gratitude, not just one day a year, not just before we eat our food. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.

Somebody comes to your mind, you just get off the phone with them, they send you a text, you get an email, you see something posted on their Facebook wall, whatever it might be, somebody comes to your mind, pop up a thanks. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Paul says. What a great example.

Occasion for prayer. How close will we be to God the Father if every time we think of a person, we're going to him and giving him thanks for that person? Ephesians 5:18, In everything give thanks. This is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

What was the whole first chapter of this letter about? What's the first chapter of Ephesians all about? In him, in him, in him, in him. Remember the sevenfold candelabra we saw? In him, in everything give thanks. This is the will of God in Christ Jesus.

If you're in Christ Jesus, the will of God for you is being thankful. That's the will of God. 1 Thessalonians 5.18. 2 Thessalonians 1.3, he tells them again, We're bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting.

It is fitting to always give thanks for the brethren. Why? Because your faith grows exceedingly. He doesn't say because your knowledge grows exceedingly, because your experience grows exceedingly, because your giving grows exceedingly, because your building grows exceedingly, because the number of pews in your church grows exceedingly, because your faith grows exceedingly.

And the love of every one of you abounds toward each other. You look at the effect of the filling of the Spirit in people's lives. That filling of the Spirit results in positives.

It builds, it unites, it lifts up. And Paul says, I am so thankful for that. Every time I think of you guys, I'm bound to give thanks to God.

Your faith grows exceedingly. The love of every one of you all abounds toward each other. 2 Thessalonians 2.13, he says it again, We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for deliverance through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

That's the summation of the Christian life. People try to make that a sovereignty election verse. He says, God from the beginning chose you for, it says salvation.

Salvation is deliverance. Deliverance through sanctification, Spirit and truth. By the Spirit, belief in the truth.

What does it mean? Daily deliverance, daily sustenance, daily grace, daily provision, daily strength. Burdened and heavy laden? I will give you rest. I am bound to give thanks to God for you because you were chosen to live in this age.

You weren't chosen to be an antediluvian. You weren't chosen to be in the patriarchal age. You weren't chosen to be in the age of Israel.

You weren't chosen to be a millennial believer. You were chosen to be in Christ. He selected you to live in this day and this time where it is the presence of the Spirit and it is the power of the Word that delivers.

And I thank God that we live in this age and this time where these are our provisions. 1 Timothy 2, verse 1. Paul's instruction to Timothy. How do you teach a church? How do you lead your flock? I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men.

This is the pastor's responsibility to his assigned group. Supplications, prayers, intercessions and

giving of thanks be made for all men. So, in this season of Thanksgiving, wouldn't it be wonderful if we think about what the Word of God has to say about gratitude, about the power of it, about the reflection of the light of Christ that is in it.

This makes a difference. This isn't an aphorism. It's not a bumper sticker or a refrigerator magnet or something you read on somebody's coffee cup.

This is a soul-changing choice. If you and I choose to be diligent in the giving of thanks in these areas that Scripture has illuminated for us this morning, if we choose to do that on a daily basis, it is transformational. It will change and improve all of our relationships, both in the horizontal with each other and with God Himself.

Be thankful unto Him and bless His name. The Lord is good. His mercy endureth forever.

His truth has lasted down to this age and it is going to last unto all generations. It's something to truly be thankful for. I'm thankful for the nation.

I'm thankful I was born when and where I was born. I am thankful for the family God assigned me to. I'm thankful for the family in Christ that I am related to, each one of you.

Each one of you, I am deeply grateful. It is such a tremendous blessing that God has related us in this place and at this time. It goes well beyond turkey and Indians and maize and two fish in the hole and squanto and the myth which never happened if you actually look into it.

Like Christmas and so many other things, Thanksgiving has become something it was never intended to be. Go back and look at the proclamation made by Abraham Lincoln. The reason that we pick a day in November to be thankful, it's worth reviewing.

But we have so many things to be thankful for in Christ and we've seen some of them this morning. But we'll resume two weeks from this morning in Ephesians and get into this rather tricky section, wives, submit to your own husbands. I didn't want to try to tackle that on the day before Thanksgiving.

It might have spoiled the whole holiday. We'll do that afterward when I've sufficiently suited up and am protected from flames or vegetables or whatever might come my way. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, we do thank you for the manifold blessings that we enjoy at this place, at this time in the Lord Jesus. We thank you for what we have received in the past. We thank you for what we enjoy in the present.

We thank you for what we confidently look forward to in the future. All of it due to the person and work of our Savior, the Lord Jesus. We are in him.

We are defined by him. We bear his name, what we think and do. We dedicate in his name as an offering that is our reasonable service to you.

We pray that as we enter into this time of fellowship and rest and celebration that God the Holy Spirit will keep us mindful of the truth we've seen in your word, that the light of Christ will shine on us and that we will be awake and alert for those opportunities you bring to us to reflect your glory and the glory of the Lord Jesus now and in the times to come. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.