

Midyear Thanksgiving Service

30th June, 2024

Topic: A Grateful Heart

Text: Psalm 9:1-2 - *I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.*
(NKJV)

INTRODUCTION

My inference from my little study from the scripture about the heart made it necessary for me to pay serious attention to what flows in and out of my heart. I have made my heart a commodity that must be guarded so that I can become what God wants me to be.

Unfortunately, many people do not pay much attention to their hearts. Thus, making their hearts a marketplace where all manner of things flow in and out till they become people who is unable to achieve anything tangible. I have realized over time that the heart of every man has capacity, ability, and the capability of the entry of all sort of things. No wonder the Bible says in the Book of Genesis that the heart of man is desperately wicked—who can search it? In Proverbs, the Bible gives us a serious advice to guard our

hearts with all diligence, for out of it flow the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23). Therefore, it is important for you to pay serious attention to your heart.

Many things can happen in the heart, for example, joy. When joy resides in the heart, it will be in full expression—you can't hide joy. The same manner applies to sorrow; when sorrow is in the heart, it shows. No matter how well you act or put on makeup, it will never hide the sorrow.

- *"Whatever happens, you must work on your heart to guard it against whatever will either pull you down, make God angry, or prevent you from achieving what God wants you to achieve."*

One important thing I have found out that emanates from the heart is Gratitude. A sincere gratitude flows from the heart. You can tell when people are genuinely grateful from their hearts, especially when they come to say thank you for something you've done; and when it's not genuine, you can also tell that it's just a formality.

If you are not going to be grateful, you are not qualified for greatness. It is gratefulness that ushers you into greatness. When you thank someone for what they did yesterday, you become qualified for another blessing. This is why each time you experience the goodness of God, set time apart to say thank you.

These are not the big things. Every little acts of kindness also deserve gratitude. No matter how little. Now, that scripture we read shows us four important things that must be present if you are truly a person with a grateful heart.

Characteristics of a Grateful Heart

1. A Grateful Heart is Personal

Psalms 9:1

I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works.

(NKJV)

Thanksgiving from a grateful heart is personal not collective; and for it to be personal, it must be intentional, deliberate, determined, and a decision. Those who receive great things from the Lord are those who take God's works personally which will in no doubt make you intoxicated with praise.

There are three things that are capable of intoxicating: Alcohol, Praise and Holy Spirit. The first makes you misbehave, the second increases you and the third gives you order. Intoxicating praise is a Davidic-kind-of-praise. A praise that makes you totally undignified. Let's check 2 Samuel 6 to see how it was described.

2 Samuel 6:20-22

Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" [21] So David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore, I will play music before the LORD. [22] And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor." (NKJV)

I so much love David's response to Micah with every word depicting how personal he is in his thanksgiving to God. Don't let your circumstances withhold you from praising God. Paul and Silas were in the prison yet their mouth never ceased in praising God.

When your thanksgiving becomes personal, it will be easy for you to recount the goodness of God in your life. The devil has a pattern where he will remind you of what God has not done but you be very intentional and make it an obligation to remind yourself.

2. A Grateful Heart has a Source

Psalms 9:1

I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; *I will tell of all Your marvelous works.*
(NKJV)

You must first of all identify your source if you want to be grateful. I have found out over time that different sources make people grateful. For some it is because of the deeds of men and the kindness they have gotten from them so they make men their all in all. For some it is because of their achievements, thus their gratitude becomes tailored themselves. But here is what is written in the book of Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; [24] But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD,

exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD. (NKJV)

Your praises must find its roots from God always. Even when you have received kindness from people, know that it is because God has given them the grace to do so

Jeremiah 17:5

Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD." (NKJV)

Each time you shift your gaze from the Lord, the source of all things you become a monetary

Psalm 118:8

It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man.(NKJV)

Determine your source today. Why are you praising God? If your success is your source then you are in the wrong. The dimensions of a grateful heart is from a perspective - "God has blessed me and I am grateful.' Don't substitute God for men in gratitude.

Psalms 20:7

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God. (NKJV)

3. A Grateful Heart must be Holistic

Psalms 9:1

I will praise You, O LORD, **with my whole heart**; I will tell of all Your marvelous works.
(NKJV)

If your praise will yield results, it must be holistic. In other words, you praise with your strength, soul, mind, heart and everything you've got. You can't be praising God you reserved. Pull all have together and praise Him. Every part of us should be engaged in praising God. We can't praise Him with part of our being while our mind is elsewhere. True praise involves our entire being. Our lungs, blood, everything within us, should bless the Lord without reservation.

Psalm 103:1

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name." (NKJV)

4. A Grateful Heart is with expression

Psalm 9:1-2

I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will **tell of all Your marvelous works**. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High. (NKJV)

Everybody should know what God has done for you. It's not enough to feel gratitude internally; it must be expressed outwardly. Our gratitude should be visible to others.

Ways to Express Gratitude

1. **Dancing:** David danced before the Lord, and God fought for him. As we dance in gratitude, we invite God's intervention in our lives.
2. **Clapping:** Psalm 47:1 says, "Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!" Clapping is a form of praise and expression of victory. You can celebrate God's goodness by clapping.
3. **Shouting:** Shouting is another powerful expression of praise. It signifies a proclamation of triumph and victory.
4. **Using Instruments:** Psalm 150 verse 3 encourages us to praise God with various instruments like trumpets, lutes, tambourines, and cymbals. Even if you don't have a musical instrument, your voice and hands can be instruments of praise.
5. Use testimony: Testimony seals the permanency of the miracle you have received.

In Luke 17, 10 lepers were healed by Jesus but it was only one who was made whole simply because he went back after the healing to give thanks.

- *"Make your gratitude personal and make God your source. Praise Him from your heart and in different expressions. When your heart is full of gratitude, it leads you to greatness and continuous blessings from God."*