

THE



*"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)*

---

June 2026

No. 486

---

## BEING THANKFUL

Not long ago, I went through something simple but unexpectedly challenging: having my wisdom teeth removed. It wasn't life-threatening or particularly serious, but it forced me to slow down. I couldn't eat what I wanted, couldn't stay active, and spent more time sitting around than I'm accustomed to. For someone who enjoys staying busy and productive, that kind of pause felt frustrating. But in that discomfort, I was reminded of something deeper: how much I have to be thankful for.

---

THE HARVESTER

141 County Road 474

Woodland, AL 36280

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



It's easy to overlook gratitude when life is going smoothly. Comfort can make us forget just how blessed we are. But even small inconveniences can serve as reminders, if we allow them to, that gratitude isn't based on perfect circumstances. It's a mindset, a discipline, and ultimately, a choice.

Thankfulness can be defined as being consciously aware of the good we've received and expressing appreciation for it. In a Christian context, it goes even further: it is recognizing God as the source of all blessings and responding with praise, humility, and trust.

In Luke 17:11–19, we read about ten lepers who called out to Jesus for mercy. Leprosy at that time was devastating. It didn't just affect a person physically; it isolated them socially and spiritually. Those afflicted were cast out from their communities, forced to live apart to avoid spreading the disease. When Jesus healed all ten of a group of lepers, it was nothing short of life-changing. They could return to their families, their work, and their normal lives. Yet, out of those ten, only one came back to thank Him. That detail is striking. Ten received a miracle, but only one responded with gratitude.

This account highlights something important: blessings don't automatically produce thankfulness. Even life-altering blessings. Gratitude must be intentional. The one who returned recognized not just the gift, but the giver. Jesus even pointed out the absence of the others, asking, "*Where are the nine?*" It's a question worth asking ourselves. How often do we receive good things, big or small, and fail to acknowledge them? How often do we move on quickly instead of pausing to give thanks?

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

The Harvester

141 County Road 474 \* Woodland, AL 36280

Phone: (256) 449-9221 \* Email: [theharvesteronline@gmail.com](mailto:theharvesteronline@gmail.com)

Web Page: [www.churches-of-christ.org](http://www.churches-of-christ.org)

In Luke 7:40–50, Jesus tells a parable about two debtors, one who owed much and one who owed little. Both were forgiven, but Jesus explains that the one forgiven more will love more. He then contrasts a Pharisee named Simon with a woman who was known for her sinful life. Simon treated Jesus with indifference, offering none of the customary acts of hospitality. The woman, however, washed His feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and anointed them with ointment. The difference between them wasn't opportunity, it was awareness. The woman understood her need for forgiveness. She recognized the magnitude of what she had received, and her gratitude overflowed into action. Simon, on the other hand, didn't see himself as needing much forgiveness. As a result, his response was minimal.

This speaks directly to us. When we lose sight of how much we've been given, especially spiritually, we risk becoming indifferent. Gratitude grows when we remain aware of our dependence on God's grace. Gratitude isn't just something we're told to practice; it's something Jesus Himself demonstrated. In John 6:10–11, before feeding the five thousand, Jesus gave thanks for the food. This is especially meaningful considering the situation: a massive crowd and very limited resources. Yet before the miracle even happened, He expressed gratitude.

We see similar examples throughout Scripture. Before the Last Supper, He gave thanks again. These moments show that thankfulness isn't dependent on abundance, it's present even in uncertainty. If Jesus, knowing what lay ahead of Him, consistently gave thanks, then it's something we should take seriously in our own lives.

Scripture repeatedly reminds us to give thanks in all aspects of life, even the ordinary ones. In 1 Timothy 4:3–5, we are instructed to receive food with thanksgiving, recognizing it as something provided by God. This turns even routine acts like eating into opportunities for gratitude.

Similarly, 1 Corinthians 10:31 tells us that whatever we do,

whether eating, drinking, or anything else, we should do it all to the glory of God. This broadens the scope of thankfulness. It's not limited to big moments or answered prayers. It applies to daily routines, responsibilities, and even challenges. A tough day at work, for example, can be reframed. Instead of focusing only on the stress, we can be thankful for the ability to work, the tools we have, the skills we've developed, and the support around us. Gratitude shifts perspective. It doesn't ignore difficulties, but it prevents them from overshadowing everything else.

Philippians 4:6–8 encourages us to bring everything to God in prayer with thanksgiving. That's an important detail. It doesn't say to wait until after prayers are answered to be thankful. It tells us to include gratitude as we present our requests. This kind of thankfulness requires trust. It means believing that God hears us and cares for us, even before we see the outcome. The result, according to the passage, is peace, a peace that goes beyond human understanding.

When I was recovering from my dental surgery, it didn't feel like there was much to be thankful for in the moment. But when I stepped back, I realized how many things I usually take for granted: health, mobility, comfort, and the ability to go about my daily routine. What seemed like a setback became a reminder. My situation was temporary and minor compared to what many people endure daily. Gratitude often requires that kind of perspective shift.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:14–18, we're given a simple but powerful framework: Rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in everything. These three instructions work together. Rejoicing keeps our focus on what is good. Prayer keeps us connected to God. Thankfulness keeps us grounded in appreciation. It's not always easy to apply, especially during difficult times. But the passage doesn't say to give thanks for everything, it says to give thanks in everything. That distinction matters. It acknowledges that not every situation is good, but

there is always something within it to be thankful for.

Jonah 4:6–11 offers a different perspective, one that’s uncomfortably relatable. God provided Jonah with a plant to give him shade, and Jonah was extremely glad for it. But when the plant withered the next day, Jonah became angry, so much so that he said he would rather die. The contrast is sharp. He went from great joy to deep frustration over a temporary inconvenience. It’s easy to see ourselves in that reaction. A single inconvenience can derail our entire mood, overshadowing everything that went right. Instead of being thankful for the time he had the plant, Jonah focused entirely on its loss. How often do we do the same? A minor setback at work, a change in plans, or an unexpected problem can dominate our thoughts, even when the rest of the day has been full of good things. Gratitude requires intentional focus. Without it, negativity tends to take over.

If Jonah shows us how easily we can lose perspective, Job shows us what it looks like to keep it, even in extreme circumstances. Job lost his possessions, his children, and his health. Yet his response was one of worship: “*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*” (Job 1:21b) That kind of response is difficult to comprehend. Job didn’t deny his grief, but he refused to let it turn into bitterness toward God. Later, when his wife questioned his faith, he responded by asking whether they should accept good from God but not trouble. Job’s attitude reflects a deep trust. His gratitude wasn’t based on circumstances, it was rooted in his relationship with God. Eventually, Job’s situation was restored, but the most powerful part of his story is how he responded before that restoration came.

After surviving the flood, Noah had many practical concerns he could have addressed. He needed to rebuild, find food, and establish a new life. But the first thing he did was build an altar and offer sacrifices to God. That act shows priority. Before focusing on his own needs, Noah chose to express gratitude.

It's a simple but powerful example. When we receive blessings or come through difficult situations, our first response should be thankfulness.

One of the biggest lessons in all of this is that thankfulness is often a matter of perspective. When I think back to something as minor as recovering from dental surgery, it's clear how easy it is to focus on discomfort instead of blessings. Yet even in that situation, there were countless things to be thankful for. The same is true in everyday life. A frustrating moment doesn't erase everything good around it, but it can feel that way if we let it. One helpful habit is to intentionally list things you're thankful for. It doesn't take long before the list grows. One thought leads to another, and before you know it, your perspective begins to shift. Gratitude builds momentum like a snowball rolling downhill.

Ultimately, thankfulness is not just a reaction, it's a decision. It's choosing to recognize blessings, even in small things, express gratitude regularly, not occasionally, maintain perspective during challenges, and trust God in both good times and difficult ones. There will always be reasons to complain. But there are also always reasons to be thankful. The difference lies in what we choose to focus on.

Psalm 61:8 says, *“So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.”* That verse captures the connection between gratitude and daily living. When we choose to praise God, when we remain thankful, it strengthens us to do what we need to do each day. Thankfulness isn't just about feeling good. It shapes how we think, how we respond, and how we live. So the next time frustration sets in, or things don't go as planned, take a moment to pause and reflect. There's almost always more to be thankful for than it seems at first. And often, that simple shift in perspective can make all the difference.

BRYCE WHIDDON  
(Wadley, AL)

## SOME VERSES ABOUT BEING THANKFUL

**Luke 17:11-1** — *And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.*

**Php. 4:6-8**—*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

**1 Thes. 5:14-18** —*Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

**1 Cor. 10:31**—*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

## GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	TIME	PLACE	SPEAKER
	10 am &		
June	6 pm Sun.	Taylor's Cross Rd.	Various
7-12	7 pm Mon.- Fri.	Roanoke, AL	Speakers
	11 am &		
June	7 pm Sun.	Ephesus	Allan Daniel
21-26	8 pm Mon.- Fri.	Ephesus, GA	(Woodland, AL)

### SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who carried the cross part of the way for Christ?
2. What was Jesus' first temptation in the wilderness?
3. What did John do to the little book in Revelation?
4. How long did it rain during the great flood?
5. Who was Adam and Eve's third named son?

...ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

And remember last month's questions?

1. Where did Absalom flee to after he killed Amnon?  
GESHUR (2 Sam. 13:28-38)
2. What happened to the swine that Jesus cast Legion's devils into? THEY RAN INTO THE LAKE AND WERE CHOKED (Luke 8:30-33)
3. Where was Paul from? TARSUS (Acts 21:39)
4. What numerical day of the week is the sabbath day? THE SEVENTH (Exo. 20:10)
5. What were Jesus' feet washed with? TEARS & HAIR (Luke 7:37-38 & John 12:3)