
First Baptist Dyersburg • Sermon Notes

Be Thankful in all Circumstances!

Sunday, November 9, 2025
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¹⁶ Always be joyful. ¹⁷ Never stop praying. ¹⁸ Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NLT)

In the first message in this series – Always be Joyful – the closing point was this:

- ***True joy does not come from our circumstances, but from our relationship with Jesus Christ.***

We looked at these two passages as we wrapped up:

⁶ So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. ⁷ These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. (1 Peter 1:6-7, NLT)

¹⁷ Even though the fig trees have no blossoms,
and there are no grapes on the vines;
even though the olive crop fails,
and the fields lie empty and barren;
even though the flocks die in the fields,
and the cattle barns are empty,

¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD!
I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!

¹⁹ The Sovereign LORD is my strength!
He makes me as surefooted as a deer,
able to tread upon the heights. (Habakkuk 3:17-19, NLT)

It is easy to be thankful to God when everything seems to be going our way. However, it is much more challenging to express our thankfulness to Him when we are in the middle of very difficult times.

In the book of Lamentations, the author writes of the suffering Israel and Judah experienced as God brought the Babylonians against them to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple, and to carry the people away into captivity because of their sinfulness against God. Even the prophet Jeremiah (the likely author) experienced distress because the judgment of God affected both the righteous and the unrighteous people throughout the nation. In Lamentations 3, the author is at his lowest point:

- ¹ I am the one who has seen the afflictions
that come from the rod of the LORD's anger.
- ² He has led me into darkness,
shutting out all light.
- ³ He has turned his hand against me
again and again, all day long.
- ⁴ He has made my skin and flesh grow old.
He has broken my bones.
- ⁵ He has besieged and surrounded me
with anguish and distress.
- ⁶ He has buried me in a dark place,
like those long dead.
- ⁷ He has walled me in, and I cannot escape.
He has bound me in heavy chains.
- ⁸ And though I cry and shout,
he has shut out my prayers.
- ⁹ He has blocked my way with a high stone wall;
he has made my road crooked.
- ¹⁰ He has hidden like a bear or a lion,
waiting to attack me.
- ¹¹ He has dragged me off the path and torn me in pieces,
leaving me helpless and devastated.
- ¹² He has drawn his bow
and made me the target for his arrows.
- ¹³ He shot his arrows
deep into my heart.
- ¹⁴ My own people laugh at me.
All day long they sing their mocking songs.
- ¹⁵ He has filled me with bitterness
and given me a bitter cup of sorrow to drink.
- ¹⁶ He has made me chew on gravel.
He has rolled me in the dust.

- ¹⁷ Peace has been stripped away,
and I have forgotten what prosperity is.
¹⁸ I cry out, "My splendor is gone!
Everything I had hoped for from the LORD is lost!"
¹⁹ The thought of my suffering and homelessness
is bitter beyond words.
²⁰ I will never forget this awful time,
as I grieve over my loss.

**But in the midst of his despair, his hope was renewed
as he remembered the faithfulness of the Lord:**

- ²¹ Yet I still dare to hope
when I remember this:
²² The faithful love of the LORD never ends!
His mercies never cease.
²³ Great is his faithfulness;
his mercies begin afresh each morning.
²⁴ I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance;
therefore, I will hope in him!"
²⁵ The LORD is good to those who depend on him,
to those who search for him.
²⁶ So it is good to wait quietly
for salvation from the LORD.

Contrary to the way neighboring peoples viewed their gods, the Jews now understood their God to be faithful to them, and there is no greater hope than knowing that God is totally reliable. God had always been faithful (Exodus 34:6-7), but the point here is that the people finally realized it. Often in life people do not realize the faithfulness of God until the "bottom has fallen out" of their lives. (F.B. Huey, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, page 472)

John 9:1, As Jesus is walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. "Rabbi", his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?

Jesus speaks to the disciples' assumption about sin and punishment in a way that they never could have anticipated. He says that the man was born blind so that "the works of God might be displayed in him." You may be

thinking, “Paul, are you saying that there are situations in which God ordains suffering so that His power and glory will be put on display? That is exactly what Jesus teaches His disciples. You and I will suffer not just because we live in a fallen world or because we have an enemy who devours and destroys. We also will suffer because of God’s zeal for the display of His own glory. He works so that things will be visible in us that are explainable only by His presence and power. He ordains hard things that we do not want to go through so that in us His power will be revealed. We were not created for our own comfort, pleasure, or glory. We were created to display the presence, power, and glory of the One who made us. God will not leave us alone in our suffering; He will meet us with His power and, through us, publicly display His glory. (Paul David Tripp, *Everyday Gospel: A Daily Devotional Connecting Scripture to All of Life*, November 2.)

²⁸ And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (Romans 8:28, NLT)

³⁷ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. (Romans 8:27, NLT)

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