



5 DAY DEVOTIONAL

Sermon: Give Thanks In All Things

SPEAKER: REV. CHRIS SMITH | 11/23/2025 | PAGE 1 OF 5

Day 1: The Command That Changes Everything

Devotional: Have you ever received instructions that seemed impossible to follow? When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about giving thanks in everything, he wasn't suggesting a feel-good philosophy or positive thinking technique. He was delivering a divine command that comes with a promise: this is God's will for you. Think about your current circumstances. Maybe you're facing financial stress, relationship struggles, health concerns, or career uncertainty. The natural response is to complain, worry, or question why these things are happening. But God calls us to something radically different - thanksgiving in the midst of it all. This isn't about pretending everything is fine or denying real pain. It's about recognizing that our sovereign God has allowed these circumstances for a purpose we may not yet understand. When we choose gratitude over grumbling, we align ourselves with God's will and position ourselves to see His hand at work. Consider how different your day might look if you started with thanksgiving instead of complaints. What if you thanked God for the difficult coworker who's teaching you patience? What if you expressed gratitude for the financial challenge that's drawing you closer to Him? This shift in perspective doesn't minimize your struggles - it maximizes God's ability to work through them. Gratitude is a choice that requires faith. It's believing that God is good even when circumstances aren't. It's trusting that He sees the bigger picture when all we can see is today's trouble. When we give thanks in everything, we're not just following a command - we're stepping into God's perfect will for our lives.

Bible Verse: 'Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.' - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Reflection Question: What current circumstance in your life feels impossible to be thankful for, and how might God be using it to accomplish His purposes in ways you haven't yet considered?

Quote: In everything, give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Prayer: Father, help me to see my circumstances through Your eyes. Give me the faith to trust that You are working even in the difficult situations I'm facing. Transform my heart from complaint to gratitude, knowing that this aligns with Your perfect will for my life. Amen.

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Day 2: Finding Purpose in the Fleas

Devotional: Sometimes God's purposes are hidden in the most unlikely places. Corrie ten Boom discovered this truth in one of history's darkest chapters. In the horrific conditions of a Nazi concentration camp, surrounded by disease and death, she found something to be grateful for - even the fleas that infested their barracks. Those fleas, which seemed like just another layer of misery, actually served God's purpose. They kept the guards away, allowing Corrie and her sister to hold Bible studies and share hope with fellow prisoners without interference. What appeared to be meaningless suffering became a tool in God's hands for ministry and encouragement. Your 'fleas' might look different. Maybe it's the job you lost that you thought was perfect, the relationship that ended when you thought it was 'the one,' or the health issue that disrupted all your plans. These circumstances feel overwhelming and purposeless, but God sees what you cannot. When we give thanks in difficult places, we're not celebrating the pain itself - we're acknowledging that God can use anything for His glory and our good. We're declaring that our current view is limited, but His perspective is eternal. This kind of faith-filled gratitude creates space for God to move in ways we never imagined. The key is learning to look beyond the immediate discomfort to see God's hand at work. Just as Corrie couldn't initially see the purpose in those fleas, we may not understand our circumstances right away. But when we choose thanksgiving over bitterness, we position ourselves to eventually see how God was working all along.

Bible Verse: 'Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.' - 1 Peter 4:12-13

Reflection Question: What 'fleas' in your life - those seemingly purposeless irritations or hardships - might God be using for a greater purpose that you haven't yet discovered?

Quote: God had a purpose, even for those horrible fleas. They gave thanks in a difficult place. And something positive came out of it.

Prayer: Lord, help me to trust that You have a purpose even in the most difficult and confusing circumstances of my life. Give me eyes to see beyond my immediate discomfort to Your eternal plan. Thank You that nothing is wasted in Your hands. Amen.

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Day 3: When Hearts Change Before Circumstances Do

Devotional: Paul and Silas sat in a Roman prison, their backs bloody from beatings, their feet locked in stocks. By any measure, their circumstances were unjust and painful. Yet at midnight, instead of cursing their fate, they chose to pray and sing hymns to God. Their fellow prisoners listened in amazement as worship echoed through the darkness. Their circumstances hadn't changed - they were still imprisoned, still in pain, still facing an uncertain future. But their hearts had chosen a different response. They understood a profound truth: sometimes the greatest victory isn't in changing our situation, but in changing our perspective within that situation. You might be in your own prison today - trapped by circumstances beyond your control, facing injustice, or dealing with pain that seems endless. The temptation is to wait for things to get better before you can have peace or joy. But Paul and Silas show us another way. When we choose gratitude and worship in our darkest moments, something powerful happens. Our fretting and worry begin to be replaced by joy and confidence. We're not denying the reality of our situation, but we're refusing to let it define our relationship with God or our hope for the future. The beautiful truth is that when our hearts change, it often creates the conditions for our circumstances to change too. Paul and Silas's midnight worship service led to an earthquake, opened prison doors, and resulted in their jailer's salvation. But even if the doors hadn't opened, their choice to worship was still the right one because it aligned their hearts with God's purposes.

Bible Verse: 'About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.' - Acts 16:25

Reflection Question: In what area of your life do you need to stop waiting for circumstances to change and instead focus on allowing God to change your heart's response to those circumstances?

Quote: Sometimes our circumstances don't change immediately, but our heart can change and our outlook can change. And sometimes that is the greatest battle.

Prayer: God, help me to worship You even in my darkest moments. Change my heart when I cannot change my circumstances. Fill me with Your peace and joy that transcends my current situation. Let my response to difficulty be a testimony of Your goodness. Amen.

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Day 4: Breaking Free from the Negative Rut

Devotional: Have you ever noticed how easy it is to get stuck in a pattern of complaining? It starts small - a comment about the weather, frustration with traffic, annoyance at a coworker. But like a small root in moist soil, negativity has a way of taking over until it colors everything we see. The Israelites fell into this trap. Despite witnessing incredible miracles - the parting of the Red Sea, manna from heaven, water from rocks - they developed a habit of complaining that ultimately cost them the Promised Land. An entire generation missed God's best because they couldn't break free from the negative rut they had created. Complaining becomes a spiritual habit that blinds us to God's goodness. When we're constantly focused on what's wrong, we miss what's right. When we're always pointing out problems, we overlook God's provisions. This negative groove becomes so familiar that we don't even realize how it's affecting our faith and relationships. But there's hope. Just as bitterness can take root and grow, so can gratitude. When we make a conscious choice to give thanks, we prevent that root of bitterness from establishing itself. We begin to see God's hand in places we previously missed. Our doubts start to shrivel because our focus shifts from problems to the Problem-Solver. Breaking free from negativity requires intentional effort. It means catching ourselves when we start to complain and choosing instead to find something - anything - to be grateful for. It might be as simple as being thankful that 'this too shall pass,' but even that small shift can begin to transform our perspective and our experience.

Bible Verse: 'Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.' - Colossians 4:2

Reflection Question: What negative patterns of thinking or speaking have become so routine in your life that you barely notice them, and how might replacing them with gratitude change your daily experience?

Quote: Of all the habits in the world, we talk about habits that are difficult to kick. Getting in that negative groove, getting that, what I call a rut, that negative rut where we see bad in everything, we complain about everything.

Prayer: Father, forgive me for the times I've chosen complaining over gratitude. Help me to recognize when I'm falling into negative patterns and give me the strength to choose thanksgiving instead. Renew my mind and help me to see Your goodness in every situation. Amen.

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Day 5: Your Story Isn't Over

Devotional: Every difficulty you've faced, every setback you've endured, every moment when you wondered if God had forgotten you - none of it has been wasted. Your past isn't the end of your story; it's the foundation for a testimony that could encourage someone who desperately needs hope today. God's greatness is so vast that even in a million years in His presence, we still won't have explored the depths of His goodness. This means that whatever you're facing right now, however overwhelming it seems, is just a small chapter in an eternal story of His faithfulness. He knows your voice, He hears your cries, and He's working even when you can't see it. Perhaps you don't like the situations you've had to go through to get where you are. Maybe you wish people hadn't been hurt along the way. But here's the beautiful truth: God can use even the most painful experiences to create a testimony that will touch lives you may never know about. When you choose gratitude in the midst of ongoing struggles, you're not just changing your own perspective - you're becoming a living example of God's sustaining grace. Your decision to give thanks when it doesn't make sense becomes a beacon of hope for others who are walking through their own dark valleys. God is calling you to a closer walk, a deeper faith that can only be developed through the very circumstances you wish you could avoid. He's not finished with your story yet. In fact, some of your greatest chapters may still be unwritten. Today is a gift - that's why we call it the present. What will you do with this gift of today?

Bible Verse: 'Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!' - Psalm 100:1-2

Reflection Question: How might the difficult experiences you've walked through be preparing you to offer hope and encouragement to someone else who needs to hear that their story isn't over either?

Quote: Your past isn't the end of your story. There's a closer walk that God is trying to get you to friend. There's a deeper faith that he is trying to put inside of you.

Prayer: Lord, thank You that my story isn't finished yet. Help me to see how You can use even my most painful experiences for Your glory and others' good. Give me faith to believe that You're writing something beautiful with my life, even in the chapters that are hard to understand. Amen.

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