



BRIDGES

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“Why Be Thankful?”

Have you noticed how much people complain? It's the background noise of modern life—constant grumbling about weather, traffic, politics, technology, health, work. We live in a culture where complaint has become our default language. And yet, most of us would say we value gratitude. We know thankfulness is important. But why? What makes it matter?

As I've been reflecting on this question, I've realized that Christian thanksgiving is radically different from the vague "thankfulness" our culture celebrates. Secular gratitude tends to be circumstantial—we're thankful when things go well. It's often aimed at no one in particular, just a general sense of "I'm grateful to the universe." And it's usually tied to comparison: "At least I'm better off than others."

But biblical thanksgiving? That's something else entirely. It's directed personally to the Triune God. It's rooted not in comparison but in grace—"I don't deserve this; God has been merciful." It persists even in suffering because it rests on God's character, not on our circumstances. And it flows from a covenant relationship with the Father through Christ. So why does this kind of thanksgiving matter? Let me offer six reasons:

- **First, thankfulness transforms everyday life into worship.** Colossians 3:17 calls us to "do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks." When you thank God for that mundane meal, that frustrating commute, that pile of laundry, you consecrate the ordinary. What was drudgery becomes worship. What was complaint becomes praise.
- **Second, thankfulness marks a healthy soul.** Paul says we should be "overflowing with thankfulness" (Colossians 2:7). That's the picture of spiritual health—a heart so captured by grace that gratitude becomes your native language. When God saves you, you realize you've received everything as a gift, and thanksgiving flows naturally.



- **Third, thankfulness trains us to see the Lord.**

Remember the disciples on the road to Emmaus? They didn't recognize Jesus until He gave thanks and broke bread. Thanksgiving is spiritual sight. It's how we train our souls to recognize God's presence in the everyday moments we usually overlook.

- **Fourth, thankfulness keeps us aware of God's daily mercies.** Lamentations 3:23 says His mercies "are new every morning." But we stop noticing. We take it all for granted. Thankfulness breaks that blindness and helps us see the ocean of God's kindness we're swimming in every day.

- **Fifth, thankfulness is a powerful witness.** In a world drowning in complaint, a genuinely grateful person stands out. When people see you giving thanks even in difficulty, they start asking questions. Your thankfulness becomes a signpost pointing to the gospel, making grace visible to those around you.

- **Sixth, and most importantly, thankfulness is what we owe to God.** Psalm 92:1 says, "It is good to give thanks to the LORD." This is the ultimate reason—not because it makes us feel better, but because God deserves it. Romans 1:21 traces humanity's spiritual collapse back to one simple failure: "although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him." Ingratitude isn't just impolite—it's the root of spiritual darkness.

So what does this mean for us practically? Start small. This week, instead of complaining about your commute, thank God you have a job to drive to and a car that runs. When you sit down to eat, don't rush past the prayer—pause and genuinely thank God for providing. When you catch yourself grumbling about the weather or your workload or politics, stop mid-sentence and find one thing to thank God for instead. Train your eyes to see His mercies that are new every morning. Let thanksgiving become your default language rather than complaint. Because when we learn to give thanks in all circumstances, we're not just improving our attitudes—we're giving God the honor He deserves and training ourselves to see Him more clearly.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Trent Eastman