

Limitless Opportunities



Thoughts for Thanksgiving (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as I continue to share with you "Thoughts for Thanksgiving." I want to begin by reminding you how important it is to be thankful and to give thanks. The Bible has a great deal to say about this.

For an example of this principle, today I want to turn to the story of Jonah. Do you remember the story of the disobedient prophet, how he turned his back on God and refused God's call to go to Nineveh? And he went west when God told him to go east. And every step he took from then on was a step down from the mountains to the plain, from the plain to the city, from the city to the harbor, from the harbor to the ship and then from the ship, in the midst of the storm, down into the sea. But there God had prepared a great fish which swallowed up Jonah.

And when Jonah was in the belly of the fish, he prayed. And in Jonah chapter 2, we have a record of his prayer. For several verses Jonah prays out of agony and then a change comes in his prayer, and I just want to read to you the last few verses of this prayer, beginning in Jonah 2:7:

> "While I was fainting away, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came to Thee, into Thy holy temple. Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness, But I will sacrifice to Thee with the voice of thanksgiving that which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the Lord. Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land."

You see, Jonah's mere praying didn't get the result but when he added giving thanks to praying, there was a dramatic change. That's a very important principle. It's not enough to pray, it's very, very important that we cultivate the practice of giving thanks. So many times if we don't get an answer just by praying, we'll find like Jonah that a tremendous change will come if we'll also give thanks.

Now, because this is Thanksgiving week I want to make a special, practical application of this principle, the importance of giving thanks. I feel that this is one of the great defects in

American society today, there's so little real thankfulness, so much complaining, so much bitterness. Much of it simply because we fail to give thanks. So let's adjust that a little this week. Each day this week I'm focusing on some particular aspect of life for which we in America need to thank God.

In my previous two talks this week the particular aspects of American life that I focused on were our religious liberty and our gospel outreach.

Today I want to thank God for the limitless opportunities that we enjoy in this country, opportunities which are not available to most people in most other countries. Again, I probably need to mention my own personal background.

I was born in India, brought up in Britain. I was well over 40 years old before I first came to the United States. I've lived for considerable periods of time in three other continents: in Asia, in Africa and in Europe. So, when I came to the United States, I had an objectivity which perhaps most Americans lack. Let me also say that in 1970 I took American citizenship, so I am an American by choice. And I want to mention some of the opportunities which I see in this country which are not found in most other countries. For instance, the opportunities for education. We take it for granted that education is compulsory up to a certain age but in most countries, most parts of the world, that is not true. I served in education in East Africa for five years and I remember young Africans that would walk 20 or 30 miles both ways, in bare feet, simply to apply for an opening in my college and, in most cases, I couldn't give them an opening because the places were already filled.

Think about the opportunities for employment. I'm aware there's a certain measure of unemployment but you should compare that with other countries. A little while back, I was visiting in one of the islands in the Caribbean. When I came off the ship, a young man came up to me and offered his services as my guide. I told him I didn't need a guide but he stuck with me, he just wouldn't leave me. As we got into conversation, I learned his background. He was fairly well educated, he was a presentable young man with a good personality, but there was just no opportunity for employment. Because he couldn't get a job, he couldn't get married. He didn't have any way to support a wife. He wanted to leave the country and immigrate to the United States but a passport in his country cost something like $20 and he couldn't even raise the money for a passport. Now, that's not a unique situation, that's a situation that prevails perhaps in the majority of the nations of this world today.

Then think about the communication we enjoy. Have you ever thanked God for the telephone system in America? If you haven't, you need to try making a telephone call in some of the nations of the world. Believe me, you'd come back with a new sense of gratitude for the amazingly efficient and available telephone system. I don't want to mention by name the countries in which I have tried because it could be offensive to the citizens of those countries but believe me, there is no other country in the world where you have the same facilities to make phone conversations as you do in the United States, except perhaps in Canada.

And what about transportation? Think of the different choices we have of how to travel: by car, by train, by airplane.

There are so many other privileges I could mention, too. What about the choice of vacations that you have, the length of vacations? Most people in this country expect two or three weeks vacation a year. There are a whole lot of countries in the world where people don't even know the meaning of the word "vacation." And yet, we so often take it for granted.

So, one of the ways that we're celebrating Thanksgiving week in this radio ministry is by starting to thank God for the privileges and the blessings we enjoy in this country. I've mentioned three: the religious liberty we enjoy, the gospel outreach from this nation, and the limitless opportunities that we have in fields such as education, employment, communication, transportation and vacation.

Also, I want to thank God today just for this radio broadcast. I want to thank God for you listeners and for all the people who serve me so faithfully to make this radio broadcast possible. Will you pause and pray with me just for a moment?

"God, we want to thank you again today for all the blessings we enjoy in this nation. We want to thank you collectively as a nation, we want to thank you individually as people. We want to declare to you that we're grateful. We want to express that gratitude today by prayer and by thanksgiving in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

So, thank you for praying with me.

Now let me share with you a topic of thanksgiving on a rather more personal basis. Each week I receive letters from listeners thanking me for the help and the blessing they receive from this radio ministry. Each day this week I'm going to read from one or more of these letters to share them with you, to share the blessing. For instance, a young woman writes:

> "First of all, I want to say a big 'Thank you.' After listening to one of your messages about surrendering to Jesus, I gave my heart and life to Jesus as my Savior

> and Lord, all alone, except for the Holy Spirit and angels in my bedroom. Eight days later I received the gift of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. The Lord truly made a new creature out of me and I love Him more and more, and He grows more precious to me all the time, both through the mountains and the valleys. Praise His Name!"

And then from Houston, Texas:

> "I listen to your program whenever possible. Your teaching has always had a special anointing in my life. Recently your book, The Marriage Covenant, has blessed me. It opened a new understanding of covenant, the whole basis of our relationship with God. Thank you for your clear and faithfully accurate teaching."

And then from Columbia University in New York:

> "God bless you bounteously! I have just arrived at work but I just have to sit down and write to you. I heard your broadcast on marriage this morning and I have been on cloud nine ever since. I feel so much joy and expectancy."

Radio Program

Transcript: TS-R035-103-ENG
Last Updated: 13 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

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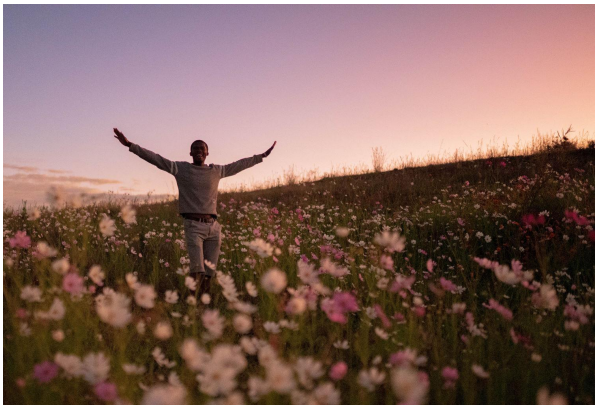

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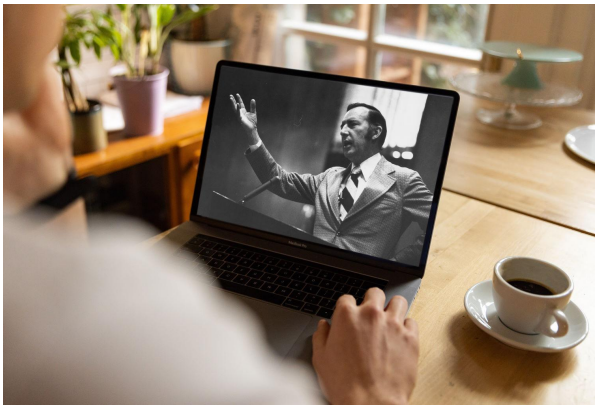

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