

THERE IS POWER IN THANKSGIVING

PRECEPT

JONAH 2:9-10

⁹ I will sacrifice to you with songs of thanksgiving. I will keep my vow. Victory belongs to the Lord!" ¹⁰ Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it spits Jonah out onto the shore.

PROMISE

Too often, our thanksgiving is based on our circumstances and our feelings about those circumstances. And so, if things are good we are thankful; but if things are bad, we are quiet, or worse – we complain. Life ain't easy, and sometimes it's so hard to celebrate Thanksgiving. On a broader scale, people are struggling to celebrate Thanksgiving due to inflation, price hikes, and chaos that's happening around the world today. On a personal level, some are struggling to celebrate Thanksgiving for some personal reasons. We have many scriptural examples of giving thanks in hard times, these show us there is truly power in thanksgiving.

PAUL. While Paul and Silas were in prison, this is what happened in Acts 16:25-26, "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God while the other prisoners listened. Suddenly, a strong earthquake shook the jail to its foundations. The doors opened, and the chains fell from all the prisoners." There might be things in our life that makes us feel imprisoned; debts, conflicts, sickness, anxiety, etc. Like Paul, let us give praises and thanks to God and He will break the chains to set us free!

JONAH. God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh to tell them to believe in God. But Jonah was afraid and went the other way. In other words, he disobeyed God. God sent the storm and Jonah was thrown out of the boat and swallowed by a huge fish. While inside the fish Jonah prayed and uttered these words. "I will sacrifice to you with songs of thanksgiving. I will keep my vow. Victory belongs to the Lord!" (Jonah 2:9). Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it spit Jonah out onto the shore. We might be afraid of certain things in our life today that we feel weak and incapable to do the will of God, but when we give thanks and commit to obey Him, He will make a way for us.

DANIEL. While in Babylon, a decree was given to Worship King Darius: those who disobeyed this law would be thrown into the lion's den. Daniel 6:10 tells us, "When Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to His God." Daniel thanked God despite the threat of being fed to the Lion's den. God shut the mouth of the lions, and even King Darius declared to worship the only true God of Israel. Whatever threats we are facing today, let us keep thanking God, for like Daniel, He will save us from the threats we are going through.

JEHOSHAPHAT. The Moabites and Ammonites, with some of the Meunites, came together to wage war against Jehoshaphat. They were far outnumbered, so he prayed and encouraged the people of Israel to pray. 2 Chronicles 20:21-23 says, "After consulting the people, the king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the Lord and praising him for his holy splendor. This is what they sang: "Give thanks to the Lord; his faithful love endures forever!" At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the Lord caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves. The armies of Moab and Ammon turned against their allies from Mount Seir and killed every one of them. After they had destroyed the army of Seir, they began attacking each other."

JESUS. Jesus knew the time had come for Him to be persecuted and become a sacrifice on the cross for our sins. Jesus knew everything that would happen to Him; the excruciating pain He had to go through, the cross, and the kind of death He would experience, the rejection, the persecution, the crucifixion. Yet, He gave thanks! After three days, He conquered death!

PRACTICE

1. Thanking God. What are the things you are grateful for? How can you foster a thankful heart and an appreciation for God's work in your life today?

2. Being Grateful. What is a specific step you could take in the next week to increase gratitude in your life?

PRAYER

I. Faith

- Pray that God may strengthen our faith in all the challenges we may face in life.

II. Peace

- Pray for God's peace to fill our hearts, our homes, our communities, and our world.

III. Hope

- Let us turn to God times of uncertainties. May His peace reign our troubled hearts.

IV. Love

- May His love and joy shine through us in all we do and in every person we meet.

V. Joy

- Let us find delight in His presence and share the joy we have in Him to others.

VI. Healing

- Pray for God to bring comfort and strength to those who are suffering and sick.

VII. Courage

- Pray that God may grant us the courage to face the challenges before us.