

## Giving Thanks in all Circumstances

**In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18)**

Why is it God's will for us to give thanks in all circumstances? Jesus gives us solid reasons why this is so crucial for our survival.

He teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount, **Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock.** (Matthew 7:24,25)

There are two morals to this story. One, build your house solidly on rock. Two, Listen and act on the words of Jesus. We build our life solidly on rock when we listen and more importantly act on the words of Jesus. This is great advice but sometimes we are overwhelmed by the many words of Jesus and don't know which ones we should focus on.

After multiplying the loaves and fishes, Jesus went away to the other side of the sea, and the people came looking for Him. **And when they found him across the sea they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" Jesus answered them and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life,\* which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal." So they said to him, "What can we do to accomplish the works of God?" (John 6:25-28)** Jesus said to act on His words, the people are asking how they should act or "accomplish the works of God." Imagine all the things Jesus could have given as "works of God." But Jesus gives a stunning answer. **Jesus answered and said to them. "This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent." (John 6:29)** Jesus said to accomplish the works of God you must believe in the one He sent. We must believe in Jesus. Amongst all the great and good works you can think of doing in the world, Jesus says believing in Him is primary.

So to build our house on rock, to be safe in the storms and buffeting winds of life we must act on Jesus' words. What is the primary act we can make? To believe in Jesus. And how are we to believe in Jesus? How can we express our belief in Jesus?

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So *this* is why we give thanks to God. When we thank God we are basically telling Him, we trust you. Thank you for this day. Thank you for all the goodness you have given me. Thank you for my family and friends and job and food and sunshine and all you have given me.

Then there are those tricky first three words, "in all circumstances." When things aren't going so well and I don't know why things are so difficult, This is when belief becomes real belief and not just an

instinctual, “Thank God!” This is when we *choose* to give thanks and we believe when it doesn’t look like there is a reason for belief. This is when the “rains fall and floods come and winds buffet our house.” Each thanks that we give is another board build on the solid rock of Jesus that will stand into eternity. Each thank you God is a statement to God that, “Yes I believe in you and I choose you and I want your will and your way. Thank you for what you are doing God and how you are doing it.”

The Church believes this so strongly it places it at the beginning of **Eucharistic Prayer II**.

**∕. The Lord be with you.± And with your spirit.**

**∕. Lift up your hearts.± We lift them up to the Lord.**

**∕. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.± It is right and just.**

**It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks, Father most holy.**

Giving thanks is right and just. God as our creator deserves our thanks. All good creations from artists should give praise to their creators. But the Church goes further. It is our duty. The Church is saying that it is our duty or job to give thanks to our Father. Thanks is not just a throw away option for us it is actually to be an integral part of our life! It is our duty because it is our salvation. This gets back to that solid rock that Jesus was telling us about. Our thanksgiving is our salvation because it brings us into Jesus’ presence. We enter into the presence where we will in incredible joy and fulfillment spend our eternity. The more we enter into that presence now, the less the rain and floods and winds of this life will distract us and the more we will discover the way that is as high as the heavens are above the earth.

So thank God, in all circumstances, as best you can, and you will enter into an amazing world that we can believe in now but we will see soon.