



Releasing the Power of Thanksgiving: From Backlash to Breakthrough – Message 3

Warm-up

Describe a time that you were in a situation that ended better than you expected.

Overview

This holiday season, we must choose to remember God for all He has done for us. Today we learn how releasing gratitude to God can help us transition from “backlash to breakthrough.”

Word & Application

There are times when we will be persecuted, ridiculed, and even punished for our faith in Christ. When this happens, we can remain faithful to God and know that He will work things out so that those around us see His glory. When Paul and Silas were thrown into jail, they could have become angry with God. Instead, they kept preaching God’s Word and praising His name. Here are some scriptures to encourage you to remain grateful, no matter what you are going through.

Read Romans 8:28. According to this verse, what do you think of when you read that “all things work together for good?” Think of a difficult situation you or someone you know are facing, is it hard to imagine that God can use it for good? While sometimes challenging to envision, what are some ways that the Lord can bring “good” to that situation?

As Christians, we are not still fighting for victory. Christ has already won that for us. We live and walk in faith because all of our experiences work together for good. Our job is to make sure that we continually worship God, walk in His purpose for our lives, and remain grateful to Him.

Read Genesis 50:20. Others can take actions against us that are meant for evil or ill outcome, but God works even those situations out for our good.

Read Psalm 54:5. We do not have to repay or try to punish our enemies for their wrongdoings. Revenge belongs to God alone. What are the benefits of applying Psalm 54:5 to your life? How does forgiveness tie to this Scripture?

Let's take a detailed look at the steps Paul and Silas took to ensure that their backlash turned into a breakthrough. **Read Acts 16:16-34.**

- **Creative Praise and Prayer. Read Psalm 145:1.** It's natural to get upset about bad experiences or negative outcomes. Let's commit to continually praise God and keep our posture of gratitude, no matter what's going on. We accomplish this by inviting the Holy Spirit to help us. When was the last time you stopped and gave God praise amidst a trial? What changed after you did this?
- **Connective Praise and Prayer. Read Psalm 46:1-3 and Proverbs 18:10.** God will give us the strength we need to look up and connect to Him in prayer. Praise Him through hard times because He will carry you through. What happens when your prayer elevates Almighty God above your most difficult circumstances?
- **Constructive Praise and Prayer. Read Jude 1:20.** We can build ourselves through our faith by praying in the Holy Spirit. What are some things that can tear down our faith? How does contending for our faith help us grow in Christ?
- **Corrective Praise and Prayer. Read Jeremiah 17:14.** God will heal and strengthen us, and it is through Him that we can stay in the correct posture of prayer, praise, and gratitude. What do you think Jeremiah meant by declaring that the Lord *is* praise? What does this Scripture mean to you?
- **Platform and Power.**
Many times, your pit is your platform. As we respond with gratitude and praise to even negative situations, others are watching. When Paul and Silas were going through persecution in prison, other prisoners and the jailers were saved as they witnessed God's hand in these men's lives. Our power comes from God, so others can be drawn to Him and accept salvation as a result of seeing our walk of faith, praise, and gratitude. Share a time when others were drawn to Jesus because of your godly response in a negative situation.

Life Challenge

How have you been responding to setbacks and negative experiences?

1. **Reflect on a situation that you are going through.**
2. **Write down scriptures that will remind you that God is with you.**
(Hint: if you need help finding Scriptures that apply, search online for Bible promises related to a specific issue. OpenBible.info/topics can be a starting place.)
3. **Turn to Him for the strength you need; continually praise Him and remain grateful.**

Prayer

Dear Lord, Thank You for all that You have done for us. Show me how to look to You for strength and healing. Remind me that through Your Holy Spirit I am equipped to experience a breakthrough in the midst of backlash. Pray for the specific needs of the group.