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Never Forget

The Sacrifice of Thanks

NOV 22, 2026

The Sacrifice of Thanks

Series: NEVER FORGET: Growing a Grateful Heart

Text: **Psalm 116:12-14 (ESV)**

All month long we have been learning how to never forget what God has done for us. Our theme verse has been

Psalm 103:2 (NLT) *Let all that I am praise the LORD; may I never forget the good things he does for me.*

Psalm 116. The man who wrote this psalm had been through something. Listen to how he describes it.

Psalm 116:3 (ESV) *The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.*

He cried out to the Lord, and God brought him through. Now he looks back at everything God did, and he asks a question.

Psalm 116:12-14 (ESV) *What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me? [13] I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD, [14] I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.*

What do you give back to a God who already gave you everything? That's a good question for Thanksgiving week.

Next Sunday is Ebenezer Sunday. We are going to stand up together and tell what the Lord has done. So today I want to help you get ready for two things: to share your testimony, and to bring the Lord an offering of thanks. And I want us to do it knowing exactly where we stand with God.

4 Points you will walk away with today.

- You Were Bought by the Blood
- You Are Free Under Grace
- Your Story Tells What the Blood Did
- Give From the Overflow

1: You Were Bought by the Blood

Look at verse 13 again. He asks, "What shall I render to the Lord?" And the first thing out of his mouth is, "I will lift up the cup of salvation."

He asks what he can give, and his first answer is to receive. The first thing we bring to God is an open hand. Have you ever given somebody a gift and they tried to pay you for it? It kind of hurts your feelings. A gift is something you receive, say thank you for, and enjoy. That is how God wants us to take what Jesus did for us.

1 Peter 1:18-19 (NLT) *For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. [19] It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.*

Go back to that first Passover night in Egypt. Israel didn't work their way out of slavery. God told every family to take a lamb and put its blood on the doorposts of their house.

Exodus 12:13 (ESV) *The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.*

God wasn't checking how good the people inside were that night. He was looking for the blood. And the people walked out free the next morning.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (ESV) *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, [20] for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

That price tells you what you are worth to God. And look at what the blood bought for you.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV) *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Jesus took our sin, and we got His righteousness. That was the trade at the cross.

Romans 3:22-24 (ESV) *the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: [23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

As a gift. You did not earn it, and you cannot pay it off in installments. Some of us are still trying to make payments on something Jesus already paid in full.

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Heaven is still singing about it.

Revelation 5:9 (NLT) *And they sang a new song with these words: "You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

Say this with me: "I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. I receive it today."

This week: Every day, out loud: "Thank You, Lord, for _____."

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21 every morning and say it about yourself.

2: You Are Free Under Grace

Now some people hear "you were bought" and think, "So now I owe God. Now I have a list of rules to keep up with." That is not what the blood bought you.

Galatians 5:1 (NLT) *So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.*

Romans 6:14 (ESV) *For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

Think about the son in Luke 15. He wasted everything his father gave him. When he finally headed home, he had a speech ready. He was going to ask to be one of the hired servants.

Luke 15:20 (NLT) *"So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. [21] His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.'*

He never got to finish that speech.

[22] "But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. [23] And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, [24] for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.

The son came home ready to work off his debt. The father put a robe on him and threw a party. That's grace. And God did the same thing for you.

Isaiah 61:10 (ESV) *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV) *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Romans 8:1 (ESV) *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Some of us still come to God like hired servants, trying to earn our place. You are a son. You are a daughter. You have a robe on. You are home.

This week: When an old guilty thought shows up, answer it out loud with Romans 8:1. Thank God for one thing He has forgiven that you used to carry.

COMMUNION

3: Your Story Tells What the Blood Did

Psalm 116:14 (ESV) *I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.*

He didn't keep his thank-you private. He said it in front of everybody. Remember the ten men with leprosy. Jesus healed all ten of them on the road.

Luke 17:15-17 (NLT) *One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, "Praise God!" [16] He fell to the ground at Jesus' feet, thanking him for what he had done. This man was a Samaritan. [17] Jesus asked, "Didn't I heal ten men? Where are the other nine?*

All ten got the miracle. One came back to say thank you, and Jesus noticed.

Psalm 107:2 (NLT) *Has the LORD redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others he has redeemed you from your enemies.*

If He redeemed you, you have something to say. In Mark 5, Jesus set a man free who had been tormented for years. The man wanted to get in the boat and follow Jesus. Jesus sent him home instead.

Mark 5:19 (ESV) *And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."*

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Jesus didn't send him to Bible school first. He said, go tell your friends what I did.
In Mark 14, a woman came to Jesus with an alabaster flask.
Mark 14:3 (ESV) *And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head.*
Some people in the room criticized her. Jesus defended her.
Mark 14:6, 9 (ESV) *But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ... [9] And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."*
Her thank-you became a story that is still being told today. Yours can encourage somebody too.
Revelation 12:11 (ESV) *And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.*
Some of you are already thinking, "Pastor, my story isn't big enough." Or, "If people knew where I came from..." Hear me. No condemnation. Next Sunday you are standing up as someone God has already made right. Your past is part of your story, and Jesus wrote the ending.
Romans 5:17 (ESV) *For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.*
Your testimony is proof that grace is working in your life. When you tell it, somebody in the room gets faith for their own situation. And keep God the hero of your story. Next Sunday is about how good He has been.

The Ebenezer Stone: Let me show you where Ebenezer Sunday comes from. Turn to 1 Samuel 7.
For about twenty years Israel had drifted from God. They had other gods in their homes. Samuel told them that if they were coming back to the Lord with all their heart, they should put those idols away. And they did.
1 Samuel 7:6 (ESV) *So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.*
While they were still at Mizpah confessing, the Philistines heard they were all gathered in one place, and they came to attack. The people were afraid. They begged Samuel to keep crying out to God for them. Samuel took a young lamb and offered it to the Lord, and he cried out for Israel.
1 Samuel 7:10, 12 (ESV) *As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel…[12] Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Till now the LORD has helped us."*
Ebenezer means "stone of help." Look at who God helped. These were people who had just admitted they failed. They didn't have twenty good years behind them. They had twenty years of drifting. And God met them right there at the altar, over the offering of a lamb, and fought for them. That's grace. God helps people who don't deserve it. And we have a better Lamb. Jesus' blood speaks for us every single day. Samuel set up that stone so nobody would forget. Every time somebody walked by it, they would ask what it meant, and somebody would tell the story.
Next Sunday, November 29, you are bringing your Ebenezer stone. It's your story of how the Lord has helped you this year. You get to stand up and say what Samuel said: "Till now the LORD has helped us."
This week: Pick one thing God did for you this year that you want to share. Practice by telling it to one person this week.

4: Give From the Overflow
Psalm 116:17 (ESV) *I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD.*
In the Old Testament, the thank offering was a freewill offering. People brought it because their hearts were full. Today our first offering is praise.
Hebrews 13:15 (ESV) *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*
And everything we give starts with what He gave first.

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2 Corinthians 8:9 (ESV) *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*

When David and the people gave to build the house of God, look at what happened.

1 Chronicles 29:9 (ESV) *Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.*

1 Chronicles 29:14 (ESV) *"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.*

The people were happy. David was happy. Nobody had to twist anybody's arm. They were giving back out of what God had already put in their hands.

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NLT) *You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."*

That's the Bible, so I'm not going to pressure you. You decide in your own heart. God loves it when we give with joy.

This week: Ask the Lord, "What would You like me to bring as my thank offering?" Then bring it with joy.

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<u>Getting Ready for Ebenezer Sunday</u>

- Where was I this time last year, and where has God brought me?
- When did God come through for me when I had nothing to give Him?
- What did God do this year that I can't take any credit for?
- What scripture carried me?
- How has knowing I am righteous in Christ changed the way I see myself?

Then write it out simply:
"Before, I was _____. Then God _____. Till now, the Lord has helped me. Thank You, Lord!"

A few things to remember:

- Keep God at the center. It is His story.
- Keep it short, a minute or two. One sentence is enough.
- Share what God has already done. If you are still waiting on something, you can thank Him for how He is helping you while you wait.

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