



[Rev. Steven S. Billings](#)

Sermon for Thanksgiving Eve
November 26, 2025

Thanks and Praise Our Hearts Cannot Contain

Deuteronomy 8:1–10

¹ “Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. ² And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. ⁵ You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.

⁶ “Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. ⁷ For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; ⁹ a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰ When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.”

We should be thankful for indoor plumbing, hot water, and microwave ovens. But we're not. Not really. We don't really notice such things until something goes wrong. We should be thankful for the spice aisle and a wide variety of fresh produce all through the winter. We should be thankful for antibiotics and band-aids. Are you? How about asphalt, Bluetooth, and wireless Internet? Or how about soap, toilet paper, and non-stick pans?

You see, that's the problem with lists of things we're thankful for. If we made an honest list, it'd be empty. To fill it up we'd have to rename it to things we should be thankful for but mostly aren't. And even then we'd only hit a few highlights. We might say: family, friends, food, America, and good health. But would we remember things like plastic wrap and motor oil?

A man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. Yet how many hours have you spent daydreaming about what you'd do if you won the lottery? Money really doesn't buy happiness. But it can buy a lot of opportunities, security, beauty,



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and peace of mind. That's why the love of it is the root of all evil. The love of money is love of self and the desire to make one's own way in this world. It's the opposite of thankfulness.

In the Christian heart thankfulness is not expressed in saying "thank you" so much as in saying "I, a poor, miserable sinner . . ." For any thought of all the good things in our lives immediately brings to mind our daily ingratitude and our unworthiness. As many and as innumerable as our sins are, so also are the good things in our lives that we take for granted. We cannot possibly list them all. We've not even noticed them all.

Thus the Lord warns Israel: Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God. It's God who gives you the power to get wealth. He laid the copper in the hills and the iron in the ground. He caused the wheat and barley, vines, figs, and pomegranates to grow and the sweet water to flow down the valleys. He brought His people out of slavery and made them free men in a land of prosperity where bread was not scarce, where they lacked nothing. But this prosperity brought danger. Don't forget. Don't grow complacent. Look out for the serpent.

Woe unto us. We have forgotten! Why else would we not include Kleenex and underwear on our lists? How could we forget to thank God for Alexander Graham Bell, the Wright brothers, and Thomas Edison? Some teenagers seem to think that if they throw their dirty clothes on the floor, fairies come and clean them and put them back in their dressers. Or that the refrigerator fills itself. Is that how we think? Silly question, I suppose, but serious as well. For our view of creation has been no less self-centered and vain. Repent.

But don't be afraid. For if earthly mothers keep doing laundry and keep grocery shopping, even buying the junk food that some teens think is the only substance that qualifies as "real food," then God is more faithful, more loving, more devoted to your well-being. He doesn't love you because you say "thank you." He doesn't withdraw His love if you don't. He loves you because that's who He is. It's what He does. He is love. While you were still a sinner, while you hated Him, He sent His Son. He sent His Son because He loved you. And this is the way He loved you: He sent His Son. This is Love. Shouldn't we be thankful for it? Of course. But our thanks adds nothing to it. God doesn't need our thanks or praise. He doesn't need someone to love, but He loves to love, He loves to give, He loves to forgive.

We pray then that God would fill us with thanks and praise, that we would bless His name, that we would be served by Him. We pray that He would make us thankful, not only for the mundane things of this world, like oxygen and electricity, but that we would look in awe at the Bible; that God Himself would cause us to realize that we hold His holy and infallible Word! Thank God for doctrine, for the revelation of the Son, for Martin Luther. That God Himself would speak with us, comfort and encourage us, guide and protect us. May we remember at the Altar that we are surrounded not only there but at all times with



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armies of holy angels who protect us from the demons and join their worship to ours. May we tremble with joy at the thought that God would enter into our flesh and join Himself to us through simple bread and wine.

Of the things for which we should be thankful there's almost no end, least of which is certainly not the freedoms we enjoy as Americans. Thank God for them. But what God has done for us our hearts cannot contain and our thanks and praise cannot express. Our cups are overflowing. God is good. His mercy endures forever. He loves us and forgives us. And soon He will bring us home, where we will live in the eternal promised land free of serpents and devoid of forbidden fruits. In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen