

November 24, 2024, Pastor Jason Smotherman

SERMON NOTES:

Romans 1:7-12 (NKJV)

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

But First I Thank God.

A common theme found in Paul's writing was his attitude of gratitude.

Theologians believe Paul wrote 13 or 14 books of the New Testament (Hebrews being the one in question). In 9 of them (by my count) he explicitly and deliberately gives thanks to God for some specific trait or tangible working of God in their midst. Interestingly enough, the one letter that is absence of thanksgiving is the Galatians, who was seriously admonishing (he was ticked off) because they had turned to a different gospel. The other 3 (2 Corinthians, 1 Timothy, and Titus), Paul does note positive traits about those who was writing too.

Aaron White, Pastor in South Charleston, OH noted the following: Isn't it interesting that Paul even gave thanks for the Corinthians with all their problems: division, sexual immorality, pride, rich-poor issues, Lord's Supper issues, chaos in worship—but he doesn't give thanks for the Galatians. There is nothing as deadly and damning as turning to a different gospel.

Paul remained constant in His attitude of gratitude.

His concern never turned into frustration. His concern fueled his mission. There is a huge difference from allowing your concern to stifle or propel your perspective in life.

It's what makes entrepreneur's and business owners so unique. They have an ability to turn setbacks into comebacks. They have the ability to understand that overcoming challenges in the price for independence and freedom. That Spirit should be unleashed in the church. **We need this view:**

The perspective that challenges are opportunities for dependence on God and freedom from bondage.

Challenges are for our growth.

It's interesting to note what He was thankful for:

- He was thankful for their faith
- He was thankful for their love
- He was thankful for their steadfastness
- He was thankful for their spiritual gifts
- He was thankful for their partnership in the gospel.
- He was thankful for their history and mutual affection

Living at the Table of Thanksgiving

2 Samuel 4:4 (The Origin Story) (KJV)

And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. **And his name was Mephibosheth.**

The story of Mephibosheth in the Bible is about a disabled man who is brought to the table of King David and shown kindness:

Childhood Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan and grandson of King Saul. At age five, he was left in the care of his nurse when she fled in panic after his father and grandfather died in battle. In her haste, she dropped him, causing him to become lame.

Shame Mephibosheth faced shame due to his disability and was forced into hiding.

Encounter with King David Years later, after becoming king, David sought to show kindness to someone from the house of Saul. Ziba, a former servant in King Saul's household, told David about Jonathan's son.

2 Samuel 9:7 (KJV)

And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

Restoration David brought Mephibosheth to his table, restored his inheritance, and permitted him to live in the palace.

Meaning The story of Mephibosheth is seen as a parable of the gospel, demonstrating how Christ offers blessings to those who are undeserving.

Living at the Table of Thanksgiving:

1. Fixes your focus on what's above the table not below it.



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2. Fastens your identity to whose you are not who you are. Forces you to run from shame and take your rightful place.