



## CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Give Thanks

SPEAKER

SP Chua Seng Lee

THEME Culture of Honour

DATE

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# MESSAGE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

In his first message as Senior Pastor of BBTC, SP Chua Seng Lee reminds the church of the importance of returning to a key, but often overlooked, Christian discipline of **giving thanks to God**. He exhorts the church to be spiritually awakened – to be conscious of living the Christ-life versus living in carnality and worldliness. In order to do, we need to cultivate a heart of thankfulness. Gratitude to God cannot be left to the mercy of our emotions. The Bible is clear about the command to give God praise and thanks continually, and this theme is carried throughout the entire Bible.

## THE COMMAND TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD

### 1. Why the command to give thanks?

Psalms 92 gives us two reasons. Firstly, it is good to give thanks to God. The psalm begins with a simple yet profound statement: ***It is good to give thanks to Yahweh***, the covenant God of Israel and the Maker of heaven and earth. It is appropriate and fitting. Secondly, giving thanks to God reminds us of what He has done and this makes us glad. ***“For You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work, I will triumph in the works of Your hands”*** (v4). The focus is entirely on God, and not on self. The triumph is found not in what we do for God, but on what God has done with His own hands.

Romans 1:21 gives us a warning when we fail to give thanks to God. It states that “even though they knew God, they ***did not honour Him as God or give thanks***, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened”. The fault is not God’s, but men’s, because they suppressed His truth. Let us then heed this warning by ***giving thanks for the truth of God***, for His great deeds and works all around us.

### 2. What do we give thanks for?

Psalms 92 gives us four aspects of the truth of God that we ought to give thanks for.

For His deeds (v4)

We are called by God to “declare **His lovingkindness** in the morning and **His faithfulness** by night” (v2), whether with words or with musical instruments (v3). The psalmist sings for joy at **the works of (His) hands**” (v4). As God makes us glad through the works of His providence for us, of his grace in us, both made possible by His great redemption, let us be encouraged to give Him thanks. At times, our familiarity with the gospel can hinder us from a teachable, thankful heart. It is a conscious effort to never let our hearts grow cold over what the Lord has done. When Jesus healed the 10 lepers, only one returned to thank and worship Him.

#### For His thoughts (v5-6)

God’s thoughts are “very deep” (v5). He always thinks deeply for our good, even when we do not fully understand. The fool or the senseless man thinks that he knows better than God. He does not understand the greatness of God, as described in Psalm 92:5. Nor does he understand the coming judgment (despite present prosperity) described in Psalm 92:7. God is infinitely smarter and greater than we are, His ways higher than ours. We can grow to appreciate the deep thoughts of God from the Word of God. SP gives us an example in 1 Thessalonians 5:16, where we are not asked to give thanks **for all situations**, but **in all situations**. For example, we are asked not to give thanks for cancer, but to give thanks to God for the way that He will comfort us, sustain us, and remain with us in such a trying situation.

#### For His dealing with enemies (v7-9)

The psalmist witnessed many instances when it seemed like the wicked prospered and grew quickly like grass. Yet he also knew that their prosperity was only the prelude to their destruction (it is that they may be **destroyed forever**). God will judge His enemies. We see the push for lawlessness, and the redefinition of marriage and family values in Singapore. SP exhorts the church not to lose heart on account of this increasing wickedness. God **who is on high forever** will cause all His enemies to perish, and all who do iniquity **will be scattered** (v 8-9). We know that their end is coming, so we can give thanks to God by faith that He will judge the wicked.

#### For His blessings and deliverance (v10-15)

The good news is that we will be delivered and God will strengthen us. The **horn** (v.10) is a symbol of strength and might. The wicked are destroyed (Psalm 92 :7), but the righteous have their strength **exalted**. The **anointing with fresh oil** bring refreshment and honour: the blessing and power and enabling of God will be poured out upon the one anointed. **Those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God**. It is being in God’s presence, by His word and Spirit, that believers receive all grace to make them fruitful.

## CONCLUSION

When we cultivate a thankful heart, God can start working His will and miracles in our lives. Conversely, when we blame God for bad situations, we are shutting Him out from our lives. Let us instead give thanks in all situations and allow God to unfold His grace towards us.

# QUESTIONS

1. Recall a time when you were in a difficult or challenging situation. Think of something you can give thanks to God for in that circumstance. Does that help change your perspective on the situation, and how?

2. SP encouraged us to cultivate a lifestyle of giving thanks to God. Reflect on the four areas in which a believer can give thanks to God. Which area stands out to you most, and why?

3. Psalm 92 ends with a picture of trees bearing fruit in old age. Natural trees wither with age. In God's trees, the strength of grace does not fail with the strength of nature. The last days of the saints are sometimes their best days, and their last work their best work. Share a picture or a few sentences of how you see yourself in your last days and what you will hold fast to now, to get there at the end.