# GRACEPOINT CHURCH

# Weekly Devotional

**The 30-day Shift:**
**The Transforming Power of Gratitude**

**Give Thanks in *All* Circumstances? – Ian France – 8.11.2026**

**Scripture**
Habakkuk 3:1-2; 16-19; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

**Observation**
Not a great deal is known about the prophet Habakkuk, other than that he prophesied to Judah probably sometime between 612 BC and 587 BC when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and devastated the land. He proclaimed God's message of the judgment that would come upon Judah as they turned away from God. It is thought he might have been a professional prophet as he is given this title in the first verse of the book.

*Habakkuk 3:1-2*
In the first two chapters, Habakkuk had asked his question and been given an answer by God. Now he prays for revival. He had seen, in the past, how God worked and how His people had responded earlier (possibly during Josiah's reign) and he wanted that to happen again. He asked God to revive His work amongst the people, and in him personally. He prayed that God's work would be recognised for what it was, and that God would be merciful with Judah, even though they did not deserve His mercy.

*Habakkuk 3:16-19*
Habakkuk understood his own weakness and his lack of importance before God, and he remembered the Babylonian army was coming. He realised the land would be made desolate so there would be no flowers or fruit on the trees. Yet he would praise the Lord. Nothing could diminish God's power or majesty, no matter what mankind did, so he proclaimed God's greatness. God would not change. Whatever happened to humanity, He would be the same as He has always been. God was the prophet's strength no matter

the circumstances he was dealing with, so Habakkuk knew God would not allow him to slip or fall as he joyfully lived his life.

*Philippians 4:6-7*
Centuries later, Paul picks up on the prophet's prayer of praise when he encourages the Philippians in this passage. He tells them not to worry but to pray about everything for God is involved in every area of life. So, they are to tell God about all their requests, even though God knows about them already. Sometimes, God wants His people to verbalise their needs to Him and to express their gratitude to Him, even before they receive the answer to their requests. When they do this, they would experience the serene peace of God which is beyond all understanding.

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*
Paul picks up this theme again in his first letter to the Thessalonians when he urges them to rejoice in all circumstances – the good and the bad. He tells them always to communicate with God and have an on-going conversation with Him whatever is happening. Such instruction does not involve speaking aloud, kneeling in prayer, using a certain place to pray, or praying at a certain time. The prayer Paul recommends is a two-way conversation with God at any time, anywhere, in any way and for anything. Spurgeon said that when joy and prayer are married, their first-born child is gratitude. This is God's will for His people.

*Icebreaker*:
How is your Gratitude Journal going?
Who did you thank last week whom you may not have ordinarily thanked?
How did it feel?
What was their response?

**Application**

- Has keeping your Gratitude Journal resulted in a deeper awareness of the blessings in your life? What blessing did you receive this last week that touched your heart? What did you say/do because of this blessing? If you are not keeping a Gratitude Journal yet, how do the group's responses about blessings inspire you to do so for the rest of the month?

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- Two objections to being grateful to God:
    - *If we thank God for good, shouldn't we blame Him for evil?* What is your response to this question? What makes you respond in this way?

    - Do the concepts of free choice and the fact that we live in a broken world, infected with sin change any objections you may have about giving thanks to God in all circumstances? Why/why not?

    - What circumstances are you dealing with now which make it hard for you to give God any thanks – not *for* them but *in* them? How do you feel about thanking Him anyway, for His presence in your life and the strength He gives you as you journey through these circumstances?

    - *Doesn't giving thanks in every situation negate the value of legitimate lament and energising rage?* What is your response to this objection? Can you live in gratitude yet still lament the evil and sadness in the world around you? How could praising God in a time of adversity help you to cope with a difficult situation?

    - How do you define the difference between thanking God ***for*** a certain difficult circumstance and thanking Him ***in*** such circumstances? Does this definition help you to praise God in all circumstances?

- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

**Prayer**

Pray for one another regarding the issues raised during your discussion time and any other needs of the group. Pray also for all those who lit candles in remembrance on Sunday that they may know God's peace and love.

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**Service**

Continue to keep your Gratitude Journal. Make a point of thanking people you may not usually thank and acknowledging them as people you see and hear, rather than just encountering them as you pass one another.

**Bibliography**

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