

A Deadly Disease Part 2

Non-Series Luke

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If you would please turn to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 6, verse 35. Our Lord said this,

35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

Again, as a starting place this evening, we take note of this powerful description of lost humanity when Jesus describes lost humanity this way that the unbelieving world of humanity in saying that God is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. The ungrateful and the evil.

Let's go together to our God in prayer and ask his blessing on our study tonight.

Father in heaven, we thank you for this day you have given us in joyful worship and fellowship. It has been good to sing your praises. It has been good to instruct one another through song. It has been good to be able to give out of that which you have supplied for us materially. It has been good to encourage each other and to receive encouragement from the body. It has been good to gather around the table and remember our Savior. And it has been good, Lord, to be fed from your word this morning as we gave our minds and hearts to consider this subject of ungratefulness. I pray that tonight, Lord, you would bless us as we attend to that again, as we give our minds and hearts to that subject again from your word. Lord, help us. We are doing something different tonight as we are moving around your word, help us to handle each passage in a way that pleases you and is right and accurate and open our minds and hearts, Lord, to be able to receive the things we need to receive tonight and change our lives by the means of your word and the hand of your Spirit. We pray for those in our midst tonight who are yet unconverted. We pray, Lord, for their conversion. We pray for their salvation. Perhaps even some who think they are saved, Lord, awaken them tonight to their need for your Son. Transform them. Lord, show yourself mighty in this next hour, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

As I told you this morning, we're doing something out of the ordinary. We are taking two topical sermons to deal with the subject of ungratefulness. We often illustrate a passage that we are studying with verses in the Old and New Testaments, that's not something different but we normally confine ourselves to a particular text and we work through that text. Today we are just moving around the word of God and we are looking at this subject. If you take out a topical Bible or if you take out a concordance, you will see that this is no small subject. I mean, if you look at the words "thanks, thanksgiving." If you look at the words "ungrateful, unthankful." You're going to see the word of God is just saturated with this subject. So there's no way we're going to exhaust in two sermons what the Bible says about this subject but I did today want us to think about it and to give you some feel for what the Bible teaches about this, some sense of what we should know and then hopefully it will spur you on to do more study on your own, to take out that topical Bible or take out that concordance and begin to think in terms of, "Lord, what kind of a heart do you want me to live with as one of your children? What does thanksgiving look like in a life? What is the sin of ungratefulness and how must I be alert to it?"

So this morning we began by examining ungratefulness and the fallen human race. It's interesting as we saw here in verse 35 that a single article is used to refer to these two words, "ungrateful" and "evil." The ungrateful are the evil. The evil are the ungrateful. This is a signature sin among fallen human beings, the sin of ungratefulness. This sort of summarizes it; in an overarching sense it characterizes what mankind is since the fall. Ungrateful. We talked about the connection between ungratefulness and idolatry. We noted that where there is true worship there are grateful hearts. A life has been changed that now we recognize who God is and what he has done, acknowledge his goodness and we adore him for it. We understand his worth. As we said this morning that if we are not grateful to the true God, what does man do? He ends up making up his own god and so this connection between ungratefulness and idolatry, you see it throughout the Scriptures. You will see it again tonight in this study we engage in tonight.

So we talked about fallen man and this signature sin of ungratefulness. Now we wish we could say that after salvation ungratefulness is no longer a sin that we have to battle against. Having been taught, having been granted grateful hearts through conversion and we have been, we would love to be able to say that we no longer battle with the sin of ungratefulness. We are always a thankful people. We are always taking note of God's benefits to us. But we know better than that, don't we? We know better than that. We sing about it sometimes, you know, even our best works are stained with sin. That is true of us. We battle with sin every day and this is one of the sins that we battle against. Tonight, we begin our study to recognize that God's word makes very plain that this is a sin that we as God's people must be alert to, must be vigilant against.

So we talked about ungratefulness and the fallen human race and tonight we begin with ungratefulness and the community of God's people. Ungratefulness seen in the word of God is a danger to beware in the community of God's people. We see the danger of this sin, first of all, just by the emphasis that the word of God places on thanksgiving. The fact that we have so many examples of the atmosphere of worship being that of thanksgiving, so many examples of godly people being characterized by thanksgiving, so

many reminders that you and I must walk in thanksgiving and then commandments that tell us that we must give thanks, all this emphasis on thanksgiving says that there is a danger of not being thankful. There is a danger of being ungrateful. Notice with me the importance of thanksgiving. First of all, as we look into the heavenly places. As we think about the atmosphere of heaven. Do you think heaven is a thankful place? Revelation 4:8 says, "And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within," these are holy angels, "and day and night they never cease to say, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!' And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.'" There you see everyone in heaven giving praise and glory and honor to the living God and the holy angels give him thanks. Revelation 7:11, "And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.'" What is going on in heaven tonight? Thanksgiving is going on in heaven tonight. Praise is going on in heaven tonight. The acknowledgment of God's greatness and his goodness. God as Creator and Sustainer. God is sovereign. By his will these things exist. This is going on in heaven tonight. Worship is going on in heaven tonight and where there is worship, there is the giving of thanks.

When you see worship here on earth, when you see worship among godly people, you see thanksgiving. For each of these points and by the way, let me just insert quickly this thought. I could give you reference after reference but what I'm trying to do tonight is just give you a few to get a sense of it. Like I say, you can look at it for yourselves but Psalm 138:1, a Psalm of David says this, "I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word." In heaven, thanksgiving is taking place. On earth, where you find godly people, where you find worship being experienced and manifested in the lives of godly people, you find hearts that are full of thanksgiving and mouths that give expression to that heart of thanksgiving. "I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart. I sing your praise. I bow down and give thanks to your name for your faithfulness for you have exalted above all things your name and your word." There is the atmosphere of worship.

So we see examples of thanksgiving and then we have the imperatives of thanksgiving. I mean, this is commanded. Because it is right, because it is fitting, because it is worship, it is commanded. Colossians 3:15 says, "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body," and then he says, "And be thankful." That's an imperative. You are commanded to be thankful. Psalm 50, an Old Testament example of this, Psalm 50:14 says, "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your

vows to the Most High." Again, that's an imperative. Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

So why do you find these examples and why do you find these exhortations, commandments? Well, because we need these things. We need to hear these things. We need to be reminded of these things. We need to be reminded to be a thankful people. Reminded to be aware of the sin of ungratefulness. We can say it this way: thankful hearts are hearts that are watched over. Thankful hearts are hearts that are allowing Scripture to richly dwell within them and where the word of God dwells richly, thanksgiving is the fruit. Colossians 3:16, remember right after we have been commanded to be thankful, we read 3:15 a moment ago, 3:15 ends with a commandment, an imperative, "And be thankful," 3:16 says this, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God." We're going to come back to verse 16 of Colossians 3 in a moment so I want you to remember what you've just heard. If you ask Paul, "How am I to obey this commandment to be thankful?" He immediately in the next verse puts it in the context of corporate worship and he says that the word of God must dwell richly in our lives. We are to be teaching and admonishing each other in all wisdom. We are to be singing Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs together and the atmosphere of worship in the church just like the atmosphere of worship in the heavens is an atmosphere of thanksgiving, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. That is the atmosphere of worship. That is the acknowledgment of God. You can't acknowledge the greatness of God without gratefulness.

So we find examples of thanksgiving. We find commandments about thanksgiving. The third thing that we see in the Scriptures is that we see warnings about the opposite. We see warnings about ungratefulness, being unthankful. When we see these warnings, we recognize this is a dangerous condition. We were talking about on the way home today, my son Chris said to me, "It's interesting that you used the illustration of Ebola because you have one case, one confirmed case, and everybody is afraid and when you talk about the danger of ungratefulness, this is a condition that we all deal with." If you wanted to compare it to a virus, we all have it and it is deadly. Where is our concern about this potential danger? Well, the Lord tells us it's dangerous. In fact, when you look at Old Testament Israel, you find the living God warning his people over and over again about this sin.

So I want you to do something, turn over to Deuteronomy 6 and we're going to spend a little time in the book of Deuteronomy. That way you can see it and not just listen to these verses quoted, read, but look at Deuteronomy 6. As the Lord prepares his people to enter the Promised Land and as they think in terms of the covenant God has made with them, Deuteronomy 6, look at verse 4, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart." Three things I want you to take note of as we read these passages: I want you to notice that when he talks about forgetfulness what it consists of, how it is connected with being sort of satiated with the blessings of God and then losing sight of who gave these things;

who is to be thanked for these things; who is to be worshiped in light of these things. You're going to see that throughout these verses. Notice also an emphasis on watchfulness. Beware of this kind of forgetfulness. Then also notice throughout these sections and I mention it here because we've just read it, notice this connection with, if you ask, "How can we protect ourselves against it?" notice this connection to the word of God, paying attention to the word of God.

Verse 5, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you - with great and good cities that you did not build, and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant - and when you eat and are full, then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." What kind of forgetfulness is this? This is the forgetfulness that takes what God has done, the good things that God has given and when satiated with those things, you then walk away from him. You don't love him for it. You don't acknowledge him as the giver of these things. You don't worship him in light of these things. You are not appreciative for these things. You go your own way forgetting that you didn't build this, you didn't fill those things up, you didn't dig the cisterns. These are things that God gave you. Notice the vigilance that it is called for. Fe says in verse 12, "Take care lest you forget." Take care. Be careful of this. And then notice it is preceded by this instruction about a diligent approach to the word of God. This is the way to guard against forgetting. This diligent taking into your life and passing on to others of the word of God.

Now, it doesn't stop in Deuteronomy 6. "Okay, Lord, you have warned us," you might say. Well, go over to Deuteronomy 8 and look at verse 11. By the way, I moved past one that I guess we could also include in here. In Deuteronomy 4, verse 9 it says, "Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children." Watch over your soul with all diligence so that you don't forget these things. Then he repeats it in Deuteronomy 6.

Now in Deuteronomy 8, look at verse 11, "Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today." Again, this connection between forgetting and our relationship to the word of God. Verse 12, "Lest - when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up." What's that? It's pride. What connection does this multiplication have with pride? Well, you forget who did it, who gave it. Verse 14, "When your heart is lifted

up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."

Look at Deuteronomy 31 and look at verse 20. Now the Lord tells them in advance that what he has warned about will actually come upon them one day if they are guilty of breaking the covenant and, of course, God knew they would be and they were. Verse 20, "When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant." You notice something that we talked about this morning, do you see the connection between forgetting God, not being grateful to God and going after other gods? When they have grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them. When you are not grateful for the true God, you make gods of your own. Gods that will affirm you as you live a life of disobedience to God. Gods that will affirm you as you fatten yourself in your own eyes.

Then look at Deuteronomy 32:15, "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; You grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese! Then he forsook God who made him, And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation." I mean, this is a subject that saturates the word of God; it's all over the word of God. God gives us examples of thankfulness. God gives us commandments concerning thankfulness. Examples both in heaven and on earth. Commandments concerning thankfulness. And then he warns his people about unthankfulness. He shows us the connections with our attitude and our remembrance of his word, with material things and our mistaking where they come from and what they are meant for, all of these sorts of things. God points out these connections that we might be alert to it and beware of this great sin.

It leads to the third thing that I want us to think about today and that is ungratefulness and its manifestations. This characterizes the fallen human race but even among believers, this is something to beware; we are warned about it. What does it look like when someone is walking in ungratefulness? What are the manifestations we see on the pages of Scripture? Well, just thumb back to Deuteronomy 8 again for just a moment. We've noted this but I want to underscore it. One of the manifestations is that we become blind. Again, where there is ungratefulness there is a blindness. We become blind to the source of our benefit. Where have these blessings come from? Let's back up to verse 7 again in Deuteronomy 8, "For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, 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. And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through the great

and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end." Here it is, "Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.'" You see, this is a blindness where what God has done you no longer remember that God did this. God did this. Next verse, "You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God."

"Lest you say in your heart, 'My power in the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.'" I wonder what is there in your life that you have begun to take credit for and you have forgotten that it is the Lord who gave you these things? Dear ones, this extends to everything in our lives including giftedness; including opportunities for ministry; including fruit from ministry. Do you remember the Corinthians were glorying in themselves and Paul asked them that penetrating question, "Who considers you to be different from another? And what you have if you have received it from God, why do you boast as if you didn't receive it? Why do you boast in yourself as if this is something explained by you? Instead of something the Lord has done?" So blindness, this manifests ungratefulness, this blindness to the source of our benefit. But we can describe it in another way and that is just in ungratefulness for the benefits. In other words, someone can actually begin to take credit for what God has done, that's one manifestation. But here's another one: I can say that I know God did it. I can actually somehow intellectually understand that this is the Lord's work and still not be grateful for it. I mean, take what God has done and it is amazing and no longer be amazed by it. Be unmoved by it. Not really be thankful for it. That's why we need to preach to ourselves, remind ourselves, to remember God's benefits. Psalm 103:1, a Psalm of David, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." And you read the rest of that Psalm and it's just an outpouring of praise and thanksgiving. "Bless the Lord, O my soul," as David preaches to himself. Don't forget the Lord's benefits. Be grateful for what the Lord has done.

Look at Psalm 106 with me for just a moment. Here you have a Psalm that's just an outpouring of confession of sin. The Psalmist is walking through the history of the people of God and he is confessing sin on behalf of the people. It begins with a word of praise, "Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good." So it begins with a word of praise and then as you go through the Psalm there is this confession of sin. I want you to notice this theme that runs through the confession of Israel's sins. Verse 6, "Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedness. Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works; they did

not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea." What an amazing thing that was. The Lord through plagues delivers them from Egypt. They plundered the Egyptians and then they stand at the next great test and the people of God forget it all and they rebel. Verse 8, "Yet he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make known his mighty power." Go down to verse 13, "But they soon forgot his works; they did not wait for his counsel." Go down to verse 21, "They forgot God, their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt, wondrous works in the land of Ham, and awesome deeds by the Red Sea." Look at verse 24, "Then they despised the pleasant land, having no faith in his promise. They murmured in their tents, and did not obey the voice of the LORD." Verse 6, they didn't consider. Verse 6, they didn't remember. Verse 13, they soon forgot. Verse 21, they forgot their God. Verse 24, they despised the land; they weren't grateful for it; they didn't believe his promises concerning it; they murmured in their tents. This is Israel's history, a history of forgetfulness with respect to God's goodness and not giving thanks but despising him and rebelling against him and murmuring against him.

At the end of this Psalm of confession of sin, notice what the Psalmist longs for. What does he long for? Look at verse 47, "Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise." What does salvation look like? It looks like thanksgiving and praise and recognition of God's goodness. That's the atmosphere of worship wherever you find it, be it in the heavens or be it here on earth. It's a place where God is appreciated; where what he has done is appreciated. Thomas Watson had this to say about fretting and fainting. He said, "There are no sins God's people are more subject to than unbelief and impatience. They are ready either to faint through unbelief or to fret through impatience. When men fly out against God by discontent and impatience, it is a sign they do not believe that all things work together for good to them that love God." And then he says this, "Discontent is an ungrateful sin because we have more mercies than afflictions and it is an irrational sin because afflictions work for good." Did you get that? When we are full of discontent, unbelief, impatience, what is going on? We are ungrateful because at any moment in our lives, the mercies of God always outweigh our afflictions. We tend to focus on our afflictions but do we see his mercies? Do we realize we meet with the mercy of God every morning when we get out and Mercy says, "Hello." Every day. So it's a sin of ungratefulness. How many of us are discontent in this room? It's a sin of ungratefulness because God's mercies are great but it's also an irrational sin because even the afflictions God uses for good. That's the reason for giving thanks too, isn't it? And then he ends the statement by saying this, "The devil blows the coals of passion and discontent and then warms himself at the fire." Oh, how he loves to make us feel discontent. Oh, how he loves to blow the coals of impatience and unbelief and then he warms himself by the fire, that is, he takes advantage of it.

So what does it look like when it is being manifested in our lives, the sin of ungratefulness? It means we don't remember God's benefits. We are discontent. We don't believe his promises. We don't see his afflictions working for good in our lives. We don't understand the goodness of our God. Then as we have already seen, there is a one other manifestation that we can mention and that is that we just become disobedient.

Ungratefulness and disobedience go hand-in-hand. If you are living a disobedient life, you are living an ungrateful life. Deuteronomy 8:11, we saw it earlier, "Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today." Forgetting God and disobedience, there they are in the same place. In the same place, disobedience and ungratefulness.

Fourth, and we think about ungratefulness and its underlying causes. So we have seen ungratefulness in the fall of the human race. Ungratefulness in the community of God's people. Then we talked about ungratefulness and its manifestations. Now we think about its underlying causes and we take what we have seen so far and begin to think about the common denominators, the things that keep showing up. We can say that ungratefulness exists when we forget God's word. We're not allowing the word of God to dwell richly in our lives. Ungratefulness shows up where we are presuming upon God's good gifts. Either we don't recognize their uniqueness or we don't recognize that we don't deserve them. Somehow we think we deserve these blessings, therefore they don't amaze us. We think we deserve these blessings, therefore we're not grateful for them. You are usually not grateful for things that you think you deserve. So we presume on God's good gifts and we sort of banter about with the old saying, "How are you doing today? Better than I deserve." Do you really believe that? Or is that just a nice little cliché? Are we doing better than we deserve? Do you agree, church, that we are? We're doing better than we deserve? So God's goodness to us, should we not be so grateful for his kindness? And ungratefulness shows up where we take God's glory to ourselves. We take credit for ourselves. We think it's by the power of our hand. It's by our doing that these things have come to pass whatever those things are, blessings from God, instead of recognizing he's the source of those benefits. He's the source. And then ungratefulness shows up where people don't understand its dangers. Not urgently watching for it in our lives. Again, Deuteronomy 8:11 says, "Take care." Are you doing that? Are you taking care lest you forget the Lord? Are you watching for the sin of ungratefulness in your life? Are you alert to it when it shows up? Do you understand it is dangerous? To be unthankful is dangerous. We are commanded to be thankful.

So let's finish the day with this, the fifth thing, ungratefulness in God's gracious remedies. How can this sin be overcome in our lives? Not perfectly on this side of heaven but as a pattern and progressively, how can we learn to live grateful lives? Well, it all begins with conversion, doesn't it? God's work in conversion. Men are ungrateful by nature. Only God's grace can produce a grateful heart. So I know something about you: if you don't know Jesus tonight, your life is characterized by ungratefulness. You are an unthankful, ungrateful, rebellious person. But if the Lord has saved you, he has granted to you a new heart and that new heart is a heart that gives God praise; sees the worth of God; makes much of God; desires to make much of God.

I'm going to show you something and I think it's a powerful statement about this. Go to Ephesians 5 for just a moment. Maybe you've noticed this before, maybe you haven't but have you ever noticed where thanksgiving is set forth as the alternative to our pagan ways? Ephesians 5:1, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to

God." Walk in love, children of God. "But," here's what we have to put away, "sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be," what? "Thanksgiving." Isn't that amazing? You would think given what we have just read that he would've said, "Let there be purity," but he says, "Let there be thanksgiving," because you see that's where purity abounds in the life of one who recognizes the worth of God. He goes on to say, "For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." Man, what characterizes lost people? All kinds of impurity. What characterizes the new life? Thanksgiving. God's work of conversion, the new birth, results in the worshiping life and the worshiping life is a thankful life.

So how is this overcome? God's word. You have to be saved. The Lord has to save you but now as saved people, how do we battle against this sin? Second thing, God's word in the soul. God's word in the life. We've seen it throughout and I'm not going to belabor it. We have seen this connection between forgetting the Lord and a wrong relationship to his word. We've seen in Colossians 3 that we are to let the word of God dwell in us richly and where that is going on, then thanksgiving can be going on. So we've got to put the word of God into our minds and hearts. Let the word of God dwell richly in our lives. This is how you overcome ungratefulness. This is how you put away the blindness where you don't see what you should see in terms of God's goodness and his kindness to you.

But here's the third thing that I think is often overlooked. How do you overcome this sin? God's work in and through the congregation. God's work in and through the congregation. Listen: one of God's sovereignly ordained means for us to live grateful lives is to be together. To be together. To worship together. To remind each other. To remind each other of God's grandness. To remind each other of God's goodness. To remind each other of the source of our benefit. To remind each other about the forgiveness of our sins. To remind each other about reconciliation with God. To remind each other about freedom from the slavery to sin and freedom from the domain of darkness. All these things. We gather together to exhort each other all the more as we see the day approaching. So God's plan for gratefulness is his people. Life on life with the word of God. We saw it earlier but I want to stress it now. Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." He's not talking about sitting at home listening to a sermon online and just memorizing a verse every day. Next statement, "teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Is music important? Is our singing together important? Josh describes it this way sometimes and I think it's wonderful: we're putting words in people's mouths. Now what words do we put in people's mouth as we sing together? The word of God. Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs. Next statement, "with thankfulness in your hearts to God." You come and gather together with a thankful people and you sing truth to one another with thankful hearts and it is a God ordained means to put ungratefulness out of your life. Has anyone ever come to this place, this corporate gathering before, having a bad week or a bad day and you are sort of blinded to God's goodness to you and you gather together with the church and you are exposed to

the word of God in singing and in preaching and you walk out of this place with a thankful heart? Does it ever happen? You see, this is God's plan.

Ephesians 5:18 puts it the same way, "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ." Do you see how we connect to the Lord and to each other? We see that everything is because of Jesus, God's goodness to us in Jesus. We give thanks to God through, through, in the name of, our Lord Jesus Christ and we relate to each other out of reverence for Christ.

Even in the Psalms, this is the atmosphere for coming together. Psalm 100:1, "Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!" That's the Christian life. That's the life of corporate worship. How do you live a grateful life? First, the Lord must save you and then after being saved, his word must dwell richly in our lives. God's plan is that his word would dwell richly in us not only by virtue of our individual exposure to the Scriptures but our corporate exposure to each other with the Scriptures. That's why corporate worship is so important and that's why when you neglect the corporate gathering of the church, you do it to the peril of your own spiritual condition.

The final thing that I would say, how do we overcome this sin? We saw it earlier in Psalm 103: we have got to preach to ourselves. We have to take the truth that we learn individually and corporately and we've got to keep preaching it to ourselves. Remember his benefits. Give thanks for his benefits. And give voice to his benefits. Give thanks for who he is and what he has done.

So let me close tonight by asking you: is there anybody in this place tonight who recognizes in your ungrateful heart the absence of conversion? You may name the name of Jesus, you may say you are a Christian, maybe everybody here has accepted you as a Christian, but if you took an honest look at your life, it is an unbroken pattern of ungratefulness and rebellion toward God. What's missing? Religion isn't missing. Being at the church house isn't missing. Being around Christian people isn't missing. What's missing? What's missing is regeneration. What's missing is the new birth. What's missing is a transformed person. What's missing is a new creation that now can see the wonder and the worth of God. Is that anybody in this room? If so, would you thank God for his mercy tonight by receiving his Son as the Lord who saves and giving your life to Christ? Would you be saved tonight? Would you turn from your ungrateful ways? Would you repent from your ungrateful life and give your life to the one who loved you enough to die on a cross in your stead if indeed you trust in him. Would you trust in Jesus?

Then I would ask believers here tonight: do you recognize, is there anybody here tonight who needs to recognize that you have been in an ungrateful season of your life? We

would love to say, wouldn't we, we get saved and we're never ungrateful again. Always full of thanksgiving but it's just not true, is it? We will battle with sin all along this sojourn until we meet our Savior face-to-face. Is there someone here tonight that you have been in a season of you just haven't been thankful? If that's so, would you thank God that Jesus died for that? And would you tonight turn in a fresh way away from your self-centered, sinful perspective and recognize how good the Lord is to you and has been to you? And would you tonight repent of that ungratefulness and give him praise?

Let's close tonight by making a prayer of this Psalm. Go to Psalm 103. We'll read it together and as we read it together, make this your prayer. Make this your own experience. May the Lord make this personal to your own heart. May we read these words and believe them and mean them. Psalm 103,

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, 3 who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, 5 who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. 7 He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. 8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. 9 He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. 10 He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. 13 As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. 14 For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. 15 As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; 16 for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. 17 But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, 18 to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments. 19 The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. 20 Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word! 21 Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will! 22 Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. [And Lord don't leave me out.] Bless the LORD, O my soul!

Let's pray.

Father in heaven, you are good and you are good to us. Forgive us, Lord, for the many times that we are not grateful as we should be. Forgive us for the times that we don't allow our minds and hearts to be guided by your word but to be informed by our own selfishness and sin. Forgive us for the times that we think that our afflictions outweigh

your mercies and we don't recognize that even the afflictions have a good purpose in your hand. Forgive us, Lord, when we act more like who we were as pagans instead of living lives that are full of thanksgiving, so much so that they could just be described as thanksgiving lives. Lord, fill us with the knowledge of your word, of the power of your Spirit in such a way that our minds and hearts would truly see your greatness, your goodness in our blessings. Protect us against the ungratefulness that would lead us down the road of idolatry. Let us worship you and you alone for you and you alone are worthy to be worshiped. I pray, Lord, I pray for anyone in this room who has not that capacity because they have not yet met your Son. O Lord, show them their need for Jesus. Lead them to the place of true humility and brokenness and forsake an ungrateful life and with gratefulness receive your indescribable gift, the gift of eternal life in your Son. We ask for these things in Jesus' name. Amen.