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Panning for Gold or Digging for Dirt?

Colossians 3:17

Prayer: *Father, I just want to come before you this morning and I just want to thank you for your word, genealogies and all, they're there for a reason and I thank you for it. And Lord, this morning again we're going to be opening up your word, we're going to be examining it. And so I want to pray for the presence of your Holy Spirit, I pray that you would guide us, that you would direct us and that again you would make this of permanent value. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, you know, each summer I take the opportunity to kind of look backward at messages that I've given in past years, sort of a best of. And I take a sermon and I kind of update it, I re-work it, and this sermon was number 23 in a series that I did on the book of Colossians, and it focused on this text in Colossians 3:17. It says: *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

You know, I'd just finished reading this scripture and again this is years ago and I was asking the Lord how he wanted me to go about presenting this. It was a Tuesday morning, it was snowy, it was grey, it was cold, and I looked out the window and I started watching a woodpecker on the maple tree in the front of my house. And I watched him as he kind of worked his way up and down the tree probing, and he was looking for a spot. And he's kind of pecking away and he's looking for some kind of insect or grub that had buried itself there months, months before. And I immediately thought, this creature in the middle of a desolate winter where there's absolutely no food, somehow he knows enough to size up a tree to find out where the creatures are hiding inside that tree and then figure a way to get them out. And I thought of *Matthew 6* where Jesus says: *"Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"* I mean right outside my window the Father was feeding his birds and I got to see it.

Now, this woodpecker had no idea but he was actually doing far more than just looking for a grub. What he was doing was glorifying God. You see creation itself unconsciously glorifies God in everything that it does. From a woodpecker searching out a grub to a star exploding into a supernova, all of creation exists to manifest the character and the attributes of its creator, and

that's the very definition of what glory is.

Our scripture this morning has Paul reiterating that command for all of us. This is what it says. It says: *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* Now to do something in the name of someone is to do that thing as if you were that very person. It means to represent. And Paul says because we have the spirit of the living Christ in us, that every single thing we say and every single thing we do, we do as if we were the Lord Jesus. And every single thing the Lord Jesus did was to glorify his Father. At the end of his ministry on earth Jesus summed it all up by saying in his high priestly prayer: *"I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do."* Just imagine having the privilege of speaking those same words at the end of your life. *"Father, I glorified you on earth having accomplished the work you gave me to do."*

You know, Christ could look backwards at the end of his life on earth and see that every single word he had spoken, every single deed he had done was done in the name of his Father. Well, we too have that privilege and we too have that possibility because if you're one of his, that means Christ is alive and living inside you.

So how do we do everything with Christ first and foremost in our minds? Well, first we think. We think how can I imitate Christ? He says: *Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. And then we thank, giving thanks to God the Father through him, through Christ.*

First I just want to talk about what is it that we mean when we use that phrase "through Christ"? Well Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross, it changed us, it changed us from being enemies of God to being his sons and daughters. By taking on the cost of my sin and by satisfying God's righteous wrath, Jesus became my way of salvation. When I placed my faith in his sacrifice, then his righteousness becomes my righteousness and I can stand perfected before a holy God. You see, I can have fellowship with the Father only by going through Christ. But what does that mean? It means that Christ has become a door, Christ has become a portal through which an entirely new relationship with God the Father is now possible.

If we go all the way back to the Old Testament book of Exodus we see God playing out the idea of going through Christ physically. We see God freeing the Israelites from slavery. There we find God, he's exacting the last of ten plagues that he's unleashed on Pharaoh to let his people go. We all know it was the death of the

firstborn of all the Egyptians. God told Israel that the angel of death was going to execute judgment on all of Egypt's firstborn and the only households would be saved would be those households whose doorposts had been smeared with the blood of a lamb.

Exodus 12 says: "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it, for I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. He's saying death would not come to those households that were protected by the blood of a lamb. The angel of death would not enter through -- through a door that symbolically pointed to blood as the only way to escape judgment. Death and judgment would not come through the symbol of Jesus' sacrifice. I mean, it would be stopped right there at the door by the blood and then the angel would move on to the next house.

So through the shed blood of an innocent lamb we would escape the angel of death, and Jesus Christ was that lamb. And it was only through him that death and judgment would be turned away. A holy

God and an unholy people had no hope of reconciliation except through someone paying the price of that reconciliation, and through Christ that price has been paid. Listen to how *Ephesians 2* puts it. It says: *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.*

I mean God's justice demanded the death penalty. God's mercy provided his own Son to bear that penalty and *John 3* tells us: *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.* And without going through Christ, there's no relationship with the Father other than condemnation. Again, Paul says in our text this morning: *Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* Because there's no other way to give thanks to the Father than by going through Jesus.

And Jesus makes it plain that there's only one door that leads to the Father. And this is how he puts it in *John 10*. He says: *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber."* Well, the sheepfold's the place where the sheep reside, it's where God's chosen live and the only way to get into that

sheepfold is going through the door, that's through Christ. And Jesus doesn't just point to the door, he is the door.

He points out that there's lots of folks who try to climb in some other way and those other ways are things like good works or vain philosophy or religion. He said those religious leaders who will offer you this other doorway to walk through to get into the sheepfold, again Jesus says they're thieves, they're robbers. Verse 7 says: *So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture."*

Some of the nicest people you ever want to meet are Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. They're very moral people, they'll often quote the Bible at length. In fact you really have to do some serious probing to learn what their theology insists and what it insists is that you can get to the Father without going through the door of the Son. Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses both deny that Jesus Christ was the very eternal God come in the flesh. And they'll tell you all kinds of lofty things about Jesus being their savior, their guide, their teacher, but they have a different understanding of what all of these terms mean. And what matters

most is they refuse to come to the Father through the Son. And it's only through the Son that we have any access to the Father. Paul says again in our text: *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

So Paul is saying that we think and we thank through Christ. Jesus is not only the portal or door through which we enter into a relationship with the Father, he's also the literal presence inside his children that maintains the relationship. *Colossians 2:9* says: *For in him -- that's Jesus -- the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily -- all that God is can be found bodily in Jesus, and then it says: And you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.* So through Jesus we become the place where Christ now lives. And Paul is saying in our text this morning, that should define your life. Jesus has not only become my sin debt paid, he's also his righteousness displayed in us in whatever we do.

What he's saying is we are the artist's canvas where Christ displays his wisdom and grace by means of our redeemed lives. And that defines whatever we do in word or deed as the driving force in our lives. And what he's saying is whether you realize it or not, we are living, breathing billboards that display the glory of God.

I mean the woodpecker did it unconsciously. What Paul is saying is we do it deliberately.

At one point during Paul's struggle with the rebellious Corinthian church he noted that they were demanding letters of recommendation from him. Paul's response to that demand was remarkable. Listen to the way he puts this. He says: *Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God.*

Paul said who needs a letter of recommendation? We got you. Your life, he's saying, that's our letter of recommendation. Your life should be a letter with God's fingerprints all over it. First of all it's not written on stone, it's written on hearts; and second of all, the handwriting we can obviously tell belongs to the Holy Spirit. What he's saying is we're just the delivery guys. God is the author of this letter. And all of it takes place through Christ.

So through Christ whatever you do in word or deed you do it as if you were Christ himself. That's where the think part comes. Whatever you do in word or deed comes first from what you think. And through Christ, we have been given the mind of Christ so that we can think like he thinks.

Listen to what he said in *Philippians 2*. He said: *Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.* So we have the mind of Christ. So we start thinking, okay, the mind of Christ, it never drew distinctions as to what was secular and what was sacred because everything was sacred. Paul basically throws the idea of two different standards right out the window when he says: *Whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord.* I mean that means precisely what it says. It says everything that you and I do, everything can be sacred.

And we know Jesus enraged the religious leaders of his day. He trampled all over those things that they deemed as sacred. The way the Pharisees treated the Sabbath, the temple, the poor, the marginalized, it was all an outright sham designed to impress people. All it did was create a double standard that was so obvious that Jesus said of them in *Matthew 23*: *So practice and observe whatever they tell you -- but not what they do. For they*

preach, but do not practice.

Just think about Jesus's life. Jesus spent hours in prayer and fasting. Sacred? Well, he also plied a trade as a carpenter. Secular? I mean, he did miracles, definitely sacred, except one was to make 3,000 pigs run off a cliff into the ocean and drown. Now was that sacred or secular? He grew hot and tired and sweaty, in fact he needed to sit down by a well where he met that woman at the well, it's definitely secular. On second thought, definitely sacred. Well, he healed the sick, he raised the dead, he went to parties, he grew so tired once that he fell asleep at the bottom of a boat in the midst of a terrible storm. Again, is that sacred or secular? So you tell me, where was the line in Jesus's life between the things that he did that was sacred or secular? Everything that he did was both. And it was just living life itself in thought, word and deed for the glory of God. And what does Paul tell us? *"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*

Let me give you an example. The great gospel preacher Harry Ironside tells a story of a shoemaker named Mackay that he once worked for when he was a boy. He said the man's shop was filled with Bible tracts and verses and he constantly shared the gospel

with his customers. And Harry as a young boy was given the job of softening up pieces of leather in water and then pounding the water out for hours by hammering that leather out on a piece of steel, and it was an incredibly tedious job and he said he hated it. Well, each day in going to work he had to pass by another cobbler's shop who was known for the racy tales that he used to tell his young employees. Harry's mother told him this is a wicked place, told him never go in there. One day though he was passing by and he saw the cobbler taking the wet leather out without pounding at all, nailing it directly to the shoe. He said water was splashing out of it as he was nailing it on. And so he approached the cobbler and he asked him, he said, "Why don't you pound out the leather?" "Well," the man said, "it brings the customers back that much quicker."

So he went back to Mr. Mackay and here's how he described their conversation. He said this. He said: "Feeling I had learned something, I related the instance to my boss and suggested that I was perhaps wasting time in drying out the leather so carefully. Mr. Mackay stopped his work and opened his Bible to the passage that reads, 'Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' 'Harry,' he said, 'I do not cobble shoes just for the four bits or six bits (50 cents or 75 cents) that I get from my customers. I am doing this for the glory of GOD. I expect to see every shoe I have

ever repaired in a big pile at the judgment seat of CHRIST, and I do not want the LORD to say to me in that day, "Dan, this was a poor job. You did not do your best here." I want Him to be able to say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Then he went on to explain that just as some men are called to preach, so he was called to fix shoes. And that only as he did this well would his testimony count for GOD. It was a lesson I have never been able to forget. Often when I have been tempted to carelessness or to slipshod effort, I have thought of dear, devoted Dan Mackay, and it has stirred me up to seek to do all as for Him who died to redeem me."

What he's saying is some men are called to preach, some men, some men and women are called to fix shoes or to build houses or to teach or to be lawyers or cops or software developers or factory workers or students. *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

You see, as believers we can do that because we have the privilege of having the mind of Christ literally dwelling inside us, and we think, so we speak, and so we do. We think through Christ, that is we see everything in this life as he saw it, as an opportunity to express the character and attributes of the God we serve. We see

everything as an opportunity to glorify God. We think through Christ and we also thank through Christ.

Now, one of the most important verses in all of scripture for a believer in Christ to take in the very marrow of their bones is *Romans 8:28*. You've heard me say this over and over again: *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* And we know God's own Son faced rejection and scorn and brutality and hatred along with extraordinary physical and spiritual torment and yet he knew every single moment of his life was being worked out for his good and God's glory. The question is as a believer in Christ, do you know that? Can you thank God no matter what your circumstance because you know from the top of your head to the very bottom of the soles of your feet that God has ordained even this circumstance, as difficult as it might be, for my good and his glory. Now for some of us who are at the crest of good fortune and health and blessing, that's no problem at all. But for others, those very words feel like a slap in the face.

Let me get at this by telling you a football story. I want to tell you about a wide receiver named Stevie Johnson who's also an outspoken Christian. Always tried to give God the glory for his athletic ability and his talent until God allowed the unthinkable.

This is from *CNN Belief Blog's* Co-Editor Eric Marrapodi. This is what he said, what he wrote. It says: "Buffalo Bills wide receiver Stevie Johnson dropped a game-winning touchdown in the end zone Sunday in overtime against the Pittsburgh Steelers. Anyone who has ever tossed the pigskin around in the back yard dreams of that scenario -- minus the drop, of course. Johnson did not even have to work for the ball. Quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick's pass was text-book perfect, landing squarely in Johnson's hands. After the game, Johnson's twitter account filed this faithy tweet: I PRAISE YOU 24/7!!!!!! AND THIS HOW YOU DO ME!!!!!! YOU EXPECT ME TO LEARN FROM THIS??? HOW???!!! ILL NEVER FORGET THIS!! EVER!!! THX THO."

What I love about Stevie Johnson's tweet, there's no pretense, there's no covering up. You see what he says in that tweet is what many of us have felt many, many times as believers disappointed in God. I praise you 24:7 and this is how you do me? I mean does God ordain dropped passes? Does God even care about a dropped pass? Well, Jesus says in *Matthew 10:29*: *Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*

And see I understand, I get it, the pain of Stevie Johnson's losing performance, it's in the right here and the right now. But God isn't always interested in the right here and right now alone. He's interested in the right now and eternity. Stevie Johnson, he dropped that pass over thirteen years ago. Do you think anybody even remembers that the Buffalo Bills lost to the Steelers in overtime in November of 2010? Do you think Stevie Johnson's dropped pass will mean anything to anyone other than Stevie Johnson? Mr. Johnson says, you expect me to learn from this? I would venture to say that if Mr. Johnson really is a child of God that by now he's probably shaking his head and acknowledged many, many times that that's exactly what God intended for him that day. Now was it painful? I'm sure it was. Did God allow it for his good and God's glory, I mean, it's not me who says yes, it's God. He says: *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

I mean Stevie Johnson's complaining about a dropped pass, and we know there's other complaints that are a lot more serious than that, complaints about poverty and injustice and sickness and disease and feeling abandoned by God. So how do I avoid Stevie Johnson's response, "I praise you 24:7 and this is how you do me?" And we all know that that's inside all of us. How do we -- quote -- *"Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks*

to God the Father through him?" Well, first you have to make a choice. You have to decide whether you're going to pan for gold or dig for dirt. I mean, panning for gold means looking very carefully through your life and circumstances to find the touch of God and his grace in the good and the bad things that are happening in your life.

Job and Joseph were two men who panned for gold no matter how terrible their circumstances were. These are two men that had committed themselves already to thinking and thanking God no matter what. They would trust God for the outcome. I mean we all know things didn't get much worse than they were for Job, I mean his own wife in the midst of the horror that he was enduring said, "Just curse God and die." Job couldn't control the deteriorating circumstances of his life but he could control his reaction, and that he was determined to do. I mean, he fixed his eyes on his hope in God. In *Job 13:15* he said: *Though he slay me, I will hope in him.* See, Job was committed to panning for gold and his wife was committed to digging for dirt. And wouldn't you know it, both of them found precisely what they were looking for.

Now Joseph, Joseph was a man who did everything right and yet he was sold by his brothers, enslaved and imprisoned falsely on a phony charge of rape. If anyone could have said, "I praise you

24:7 and this is how you do me," it would have been Joseph. I mean his imprisonment wound up thrusting him into the position of prime minister of Egypt after his dream interpretations took him from prison to the court of Pharaoh himself. And Joseph was determined to see the hand of God moving even through the betrayal and enslavement that plagued him through his youth. And we know Joseph uttered perhaps the most profound insight about God's ways in the evil he found himself in when he said to his wicked brothers who had sold him into slavery, he said: *"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."*

And again, it's almost a cliché to repeat that you oftentimes can't change your circumstances but you can change the way you react to your circumstance. Many times in fact it's the only thing that you can change. You see, Hebrews tells us there's always going to be a fork in the road when it comes to difficult decisions in life. One road will lead to grace, but the other road always leads to bitterness and if you don't take the grace that God extends, you'll find the attraction of bitterness irresistible. *Hebrews 12* says: *See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.*

You see, if the circumstances aren't going to change and the only thing that can change is my response, then why not opt for grace instead of for bitterness. I mean Stevie Johnson had already dropped the ball, he'd already lost the game, there's nothing going to change. The only thing still open to change is how he's going to respond to it. Would he pan for gold or dig for dirt?

Joseph had committed himself to see the darkness of the circumstance that he was surrounded by, these tiny flecks of gold that represented God's sovereign hand on him even in times when that seemed impossible. His father Jacob on the other hand was someone who was committed to digging for dirt, and you know what? He always managed to find it.

At the end of his life Jacob was a wealthy man who had found out that his long lost son Joseph had not only not been killed but that he was now the prime minister of Egypt. And Joseph's immense wealth and power, it enabled him to offer Jacob's entire family the ability to settle in the choicest land there was in Egypt. He said they were to bring their entire families from a place of starvation to a land that still had plenty and Jacob was to settle there with the very best of everything for the rest of his life. And yet this is how he answers Pharaoh's questions in *Genesis 47*. It says:
Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father and stood him before

Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many are the days of the years of your life?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my sojourning are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning."

What Jacob is doing, he's digging for dirt instead of panning for gold. And in spite the best possible circumstances a human being could possibly have had at that time, he still focused on the dirt. You see, when bad things happen in your life -- and make no mistake, bad things are going to happen in your life -- you're going to find yourself at a spiritual fork in the road. And on the one hand you're going to find the grace of God; on the other hand you're going to find a root of bitterness -- and make no mistake about it, that bitterness will seem absolutely delicious. And it's then that you're going to have to decide whether you're going to be panning for gold or digging for dirt. And the difference will be obvious. Digging for dirt requires no energy whatsoever, it requires no effort, and it will settle into your spirit as your default position if you don't grab ahold of the grace of God with both hands. The challenge is whether or not you will fully buy into what Romans 8:28 is saying, I mean, is God really, really causing all things to work together for good in my life?

And once again I'm drawn to that quote that Norma you uses in her emails from Charles Spurgeon. This is what he said. He said: "Unerring wisdom ordained your lot, and selected for you the safest and best condition. Remember this, had any other condition been better for you than the one in which you are, divine love would have put you there. You are placed by God in the most suitable circumstances. Be content with such things as you have, since the Lord has ordered all things for your good."

Has God really ordered all things for your good? Have you looked around and found those little flecks of gold in the black sand that your life may have become? Well, let me give you an example of how this works. We're going back in the past, I want to take advantage of some of those things in the past, and many times in the past you heard me speak of Christi Napier. I don't know if any of you remember. If you remember that name, raise your hand. There's a lot of you that remember that.

This is a woman, a dear friend of my sister Patty. That's how I found out about her. She lives in Arizona. She went in for a routine tracheotomy, she wound up having 34 subsequent surgeries to try to repair the damage to her throat, the damage to her ability to swallow. None of those surgeries were successful.

And we followed Christi's story back then for many, many months, and we followed it through repeated attempts to control this runaway growth of scar tissue in her throat that threatened at first to literally choke off her breath and choke her to death, that would choke her from within. We saw her response to being in pain constantly, choking on her own saliva and having at one point to take nourishment by sitting in a bathtub because most of what she drank would not only be agonizingly painful to swallow but would also come gushing out of her trach tube. She had only two choices: She could either pan for gold or dig for dirt. So you tell me what she found.

We prayerfully followed her plight for months and months as she went through all these different surgeries that took her from Phoenix to Philadelphia to meet through these top throat surgeons, and all the while she chose to think through Christ and she chose to thank God even for hard things. This is an excerpt from her final email. This is what she wrote.

She wrote: "Dear Ones, I have decided that the devil employs a host of demons to whisper to us at just the right moment, 'I just can't do this anymore.' 'I can't take this another day.' 'This is more than I can handle.' 'This is beyond my ability to cope.' 'That's it. I'm done. I've had it.' All these he flings

at us, along with other similar lies and discouragements, until we take up that same internal chant with conviction and certainty - feeling righteously indignant and justified in our mindset.

Our friends often unknowingly affirm these false feelings because they feel so bad for us and do not understand why God is permitting our suffering anymore than we do. But we're wrong. It's that simple - and we can either live in God's reality (which is true) - or our own perception of reality (which is terrifyingly NOT true.) This principle has been tested time and again inside my being in these past years and I have come to recognize the above thoughts as lies straight from the pit to weaken, discourage and undo me. They are powerful and they are ruthless. When I finally recognize them consciously - which can take awhile, as they often start off as simply feelings of weariness or sorrow - I have learned to combat them by speaking (or sometimes lip syncing) these thoughts:

'I can do WHATEVER the LORD calls me to do for as long as He calls me to do it.' 'I can do this until Jesus returns, if necessary - and I CAN DO IT WITH JOY!' 'I belong to God and I desire His will in my life. Therefore, I am NEVER desperate, need never panic and cannot be overcome. If God has permitted this, He has a laser-accurate plan and blessing in store.' THANK YOU, GOD, for this exact trial. Thank you for how long it's lasted. Thank you for what it's cost. I TRUST YOU - and I BELIEVE that you permit

NOTHING to touch me, my life, my loved one, that You will not work for GOOD if we wait and surrender. If we think and thank. This is an ugly package - but it is a GOOD gift - and I intend to receive it."

You know I read that email to our congregation twelve years ago. And since then Christi's throat has been healed although she can only speak in a raspy whisper now, she's grateful for that even though her undergraduate major was vocal performance. She went on to get her master's in counseling and her passion at this point, according to my sister, I just spoke about her, my sister meets with her regularly, her passion now is intercessory prayer. She just goes around and works with churches helping them with intercessory prayer.

So I asked the question how did Christi manage a life threatening intensely painful crisis? Well, she thought through Christ. She saw everything in this life as he saw it, as an opportunity to express the character and the attributes of the God we serve. She saw everything as an opportunity to glorify God. She decided she would think through Christ. She also decided she would thank through Christ. Christi's not some major league conference speaker who wows audiences with her testimony. She's much more like that humble cobbler Dan Mackay who wants nothing more than to hear his

master say, *"Well done, good and faithful servant."* She's just a wife and mother who loves Jesus and is determined to live her life the way Paul outlined living it in our text this morning.

God says first think, think. Do everything with Christ first and foremost in your mind, and then thank. Pan for gold instead of digging for dirt. *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* Let's pray.

Father, I just thank you for who you are, and I thank you for the gift of the living Christ inside every one of us who belong to him. I thank you that you've given us the power to think the ways we can glorify you through our life. And to thank you for even the difficult -- yes, terrible things that happened in our life because you have promised that every single thing will work to glorify God and shape and mold me into the image of his Son. I pray this, I want this in my life, I want this attitude, I pray you would give it and I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.