Rev. Janet R. Doyle

Elmer Presbyterian Church

26th Sunday after Pentecost

Christ the King Sunday

Sunday, November 22, 2026

Scripture: Luke 17: 11-19

Sermon: Feeling Thankful and Blessed

It is impossible to be thankful and at the same time grumpy. That's a lesson Johnson Oatman wanted to teach young people in his song, "Count Your Blessings."

Johnson was born near Medford, New Jersey just before the Civil War. His father had a powerful voice which some people claimed was the best singing voice in the East.

When Johnson was a young man he became a partner in Johnson Oatman and Son, his dad's mercantile business. At age 19, Johnson joined the Methodist Episcopal Church and was ordained into the ministry. He often preached, but Johnson never entered into fulltime pastorate, for he enjoyed the business world.

In 1892 he began writing hymns. He averaged 200 hymns and gospel songs a year–5,000 during the course of his lifetime. Count Your Blessings was published in a song book for young people in 1897. It reflected Johnson's optimistic faith and has been a lesson to many ever since. Once he began writing hymns within 3 years churches all over the world were singing his hymns.

Listen to the words of "Count Your Blessings".

When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,

When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,

Count your many blessings, name them one by one,

And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Refrain: Count your blessings, name them one by one,

Count your blessings, see what God has done!

Count your blessings, name them one by one,

Count your many blessings, see what God has done.

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?

Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?

Count your blessings, every doubt will fly,

And you will keep singing as the days go by.

When you look at others with their lands and gold,

Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold,

Count your many blessings- money cannot buy

Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high.

So, amid the conflict whether great or small,

Do not be discouraged, God is over all;

Count your many blessings, angels will attend,

Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.

It is a beautiful song and wonderful words of comfort and encouragement to see the GOD things in our life and not focus on what we don't have.

There is a sign that reads: BE GRATEFUL FOR SMALL THINGS, BIG THINGS, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN. COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS, NOT YOUR PROBLEMS.

Do you spend more time counting your problems, than counting your blessings?

If you look at your problems you will get discouraged and not be filled with the Fruit of the Spirit.

There is not a day that goes by that God does not bless you in more ways than you can possibly imagine, and sadly, many of us forget that. God needs to give us eyes to see all the blessings around us.

The first five verses of Psalm 103 David reminds himself of the goodness of God.

Psalm 103

1 Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

2 Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

With everything we have, all that is within us we are to bless His Holy Name. There are more than 36 Bible verses about "Bless the Lord" in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

1 Peter 1: 3 says "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.."

In verse 2 of Psalm 103 it says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not all his benefits." We need to remember the blessings of God every day of the year, not just at Thanksgiving time.

When we remember that God has blessed us we in turn can be a blessing to those we meet. Don't forget to be a blessing.

In Psalm 103 David reminds us of the five wonderful blessings we should be thankful for because from these five blessings flows thousands of other blessings into our lives and those we meet.

1. Be thankful for the blessing of God's forgiveness
2. Be thankful for the blessing of God's healing
3. Be thankful for the blessing of God's redemption
4. Be thankful for the blessing of God's loving-kindness and tender mercies
5. Be thankful for the blessing of God's goodness

There is absolutely nothing we could do to save ourselves. God chose to pay the penalty for our sins by offering this only begotten Son on the cross, so that by his death we might have forgiveness of sins. God's forgiveness means you have been set free to enjoy the abundant life one can only have through Jesus Christ.

Do we truly understand and appreciate just how blessed we are that God has forgiven us? We don't need to live under the tremendous burden of guilt or shame.

Let us be thankful for the blessing of God's forgiveness through our Lord Jesus Christ. Count your many blessings.

The psalm is most likely referring to Spiritual diseases rather than physical. Some people are healed of their physical disease so give thanks to God, but many aren't and must learn to thank God anyway through the pain and suffering, walking with God and holding on to Him.

Sin affects every human being on earth, and this is why SIN is the worst disease of all. God, the great physician, has brought healing to our brokenness.

We are "in remission" and will no longer face separation from God. Let us be thankful–count your blessings.

Be thankful for the blessings of God's redemption power who redeems our life from destruction.

No one likes to be slaves to sin or to Satan, but He can get hold of us and hold us hostage and destroy any hope of ever being set free to enjoy eternal life. But Jesus "Redeemed Us" and bought us back with his own blood in order to set us free from eternal destruction so that we might have eternal life with him.

Be thankful for the blessings of God's loving-kindness and tender mercies that are new every morning. God never gives up on us.

Let us be thankful for the blessings of God's Goodness who satisfies you with good things, so that you are renewed in mind, body and soul.

There is nothing on earth that can satisfy us like God, not money, not housing, not material things. The things of this earth are only temporary, but the things of God are eternal.

God's love, His joy, His peace, His grace and mercies are beyond this world.

Do we remember to say "Thank you" to others for doing things for us? Do we remember to say "Thank you" to God for all the blessings God has given us?

Which of the ten lepers are you? Do you see the miracle and return to thank God, or do you keep going, moving on to the next thing in life? Do we stop the busyness of life to see God at work moving in our lives, around us and through us?

On September 8, 1860 a passenger steamer ran aground on the shore of Lake Michigan, and rescue teams were sent to help. One of the young men sent was Edward Spencer, a student at Northwestern University. Edward Spencer waded again and again into the waters to rescue 17 passengers.

Years later, at a class reunion, one of the speakers recalled this act of heroism and invited Edward Spencer to come forward and share what he remembered about that day. “Only this,” he replied, “Of the seventeen people I saved, not one of them thanked me.”

Giving thanks to God and others is often an afterthought or not even thought of.

Do you have a thankful heart? We are challenged to be thankful in all circumstances. Thankful in prosperity and adversity, health and sickness, highs and lows of life.

This week of Thanksgiving take time to reflect on how God has worked in your life this past year.

Thank God for all the many blessings–count your blessings.

You might lose count but try anyway. Write them down, name them one by one, see what God has done!

Acknowledge and thank Jesus every day.