

## Jonah 2:9

**But I will sacrifice to Thee with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD."**

For nonbelievers, one can certainly understand why it is so important to have something you want, before you ever give thanks. But should that be true for a Christian? No, it shouldn't. We are exhorted if not commanded to give thanks in all things! How difficult is that, often very difficult? What we fail to realize, is that if Jesus Christ is our personal Lord and Savior; then everything else is nothing more than details. I understand that many people are facing incredible hardships in this life, and my heart goes out to them. Some may not be able to care for their families the way that they need, or perhaps they have a dying family member or friend. With suicide as the number one cause of death among teens, how can a family give thanks under such distress? Beloved, if Jesus Christ is Lord of your life, then He is working in your behalf, even when you may feel all alone. Just as the writer Jonah points out here, giving thanks can often be nothing more than a sacrifice on our part. Our God deserves our praise and thanks in all things, even the ones that are ripping out our hearts; that's why it is called a sacrifice. A sacrifice is something you give that is of a cost to you. So often we have been taught to let the other person say thanks, as if saying those words makes you less. I am always amazed when I make a purchase at a convenience store or retail outlet, and the cashier waits for me to say Thank You, before they even acknowledge the sale. Time and time again, many of our upcoming generation prove that they have had "zero" training at home. But is this lack of etiquette limited only to our youth, or perhaps only to those who are unbelievers? Unfortunately, No! So if that is a legitimate scale to reflect the hardness of our hearts, are we to be surprised to find that unless the Lord meets our every whim and demand, then the words "Thank You" will not flow from our lips to Him.

I exhort you this Thanksgiving season to give God the thanks and praise that is worthy of His name. Our Heavenly Father sent His Son to pay for the sins that belong to you and me. Jesus suffered immeasurably for each of us, and the fact that we have been given the opportunity to never enter hell is more than enough of a reason to praise His holy name. So why is it so hard to walk out each day with a thankful heart? Why do we choose to live under an umbrella of self pity with a victim mentality, because of one inconvenient or painful aspect of our lives; and yet have so many other wonderful blessings surrounding us? Church I encourage each of you to start thanking the Lord for the many blessings that He has given you! In fact, I challenge you to find something new each day to thank Him for, that you have never given Him thanks for before. If you do this, I promise that things will start to change. What I have found out from practicing these very steps is that more times than not, the real changes were not in my surroundings; but in me. If you are waiting for everything in your life to be perfect before you give the Lord the praise and thanks that He is so worthy of, then you'll never do it. God never promised us a life of luxury or ease, but He did promise to never leave us or abandon us. Our feelings may feel like we have been abandoned, but then feelings lie. You have an opportunity today to live above your circumstances; but it will only take place if you can learn to give thanks in all things.