



Welcome to Unity's Interactive Worship Service

Today's Topic: Counting Blessings

Power Point notes available at:
www.unityofbakersfield.org

Counting Blessings

On Thursday, the fourth Thursday of November, Americans around the world celebrated Thanksgiving Day. My son, who is stationed on the USS Wasp in Japan right now, celebrated it a day ahead of us because of the international date line. So while we are preparing to celebrate it here, they already were.

So the question is: Does it matter what day we give thanks for our blessings?

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Thanksgiving isn't about just one day out of 365 days of the year. It's not about platitudes, or words, or eating turkey and pumpkin pie. It's about the feelings of the heart, the language of love that can't help but give thanks for all the blessings one has received and experienced.

It has been written that Jesus gave thanks first before blessing the many works he performed. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me." (John 11:41)

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Blessings can be found all around us, even in places we may not expect or see. They are, after all, the product of a very grateful heart. After all, the feeling of thanksgiving is not an idea, but an emotion that is linked to the heart.

Counting our blessings, making lists of those blessings, can take us just so far in developing an attitude and feeling of thankfulness. Action without feelings is dead. Emotion drives our desires.

Counting Blessings

What life-transforming event caused you to stop and feel something deep within your soul to give thanks and start counting your blessings? How did that change your life?

Here's a true story of one person's experience: Susan's life-transforming day began on a cold, rainy Sunday morning in November. At that time, she was consumed with worry, anxiety, and fear.

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Recently separated and living on her own with a one-year-old daughter, Susan could only find a part-time editorial job that paid \$500 per month. However, her monthly rent was \$368, and she had a car payment, utility bills, and other living expenses to cover. Her car was broken, the rent was due, the holidays were just around the corner, her wallet contained only \$3, and her savings were nil.

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Only twenty-four years old, she woke up that morning around 3 a.m. having a hard time breathing due to a great pain in her chest. Susan was convinced that she was experiencing a heart attack. Even though she had no health insurance, she walked to a nearby hospital. After waiting several hours in the emergency room, she was examined by a physician. He assured Susan her heart was fine and that he could detect no medical problems.

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Stress was the culprit, so he encouraged her to try to relax.

Upon leaving the hospital that Sunday morning, she walked by a Unity church and impulsively entered. Sitting in the back pew, Susan says she heard a simple but life-transforming lesson encouraging her to live by faith. “The minister said that our minds could change our world. That no matter what our

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...troubles, if we could put them aside for a moment, focus on the possible solutions and imagine a joyous future, we could find a peace within, and positive experiences would begin to unfold.”

Although the minister’s words seemed simplistic, Susan made a commitment to replace her fear with faith. “Instead of mourning the things that I felt were missing in my life I began counting my many blessings,” she says.

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“Throughout the day I would pause and give thanks for my life—for breath and health and the fact that I was here. I gave thanks that I still had my mother and my good friends.”

Within days her depression lifted, and the pressure in her chest disappeared. And within weeks, she received more editing jobs and, finally, a full-time editorial position which doubled her salary.

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The woman whose life was transformed by the simple words of a Sunday lesson is Susan L. Taylor, the highly creative and successful editor-in-chief (from 1981 to 2000) of Essence magazine.



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God’s will is for us to experience abundant good. However, we are the ones responsible for generating the feeling of thankfulness so that we can unleash the power of a grateful heart. And that is done by counting our blessing one moment, one hour, one day at a time by:

1. Cultivate a winning attitude: As an advertising slogan goes: Attitude is everything.

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If you believe the world is against you and it owes you a living, then that's what the Universe will give you. Life is consciousness and consciousness is energy, positive or negative the choice is always ours.

2. Open your mind to new opportunities:

How many people today are locked in a mind set of unhappy circumstances and can't see the blessings because they have imprisoned themselves in the negative experiences.

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3. Turn the pain into gain: No one is ever free from pain or suffering. It's part of the human condition we all face at some time or another. Last week we talked about how our life is filled with contrasts as we discussed An Idea Called Hell, so with that in mind let us remember this from someone who once wrote this short poem: "Everyone wants, happiness. No one wants pain. But you can't have a rainbow without a little rain."

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4. Create an avenue for joy in your life:

Emotion and action goes hand in hand to help us develop our experiences. To experience joy we must be the joy, we must find ways to laugh, even if it's at ourselves. One way is to be of service to others.

As Emerson once said, "Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself."

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There are many ways to spread joy. Think about this for a moment: People, animals, plants, and even the cells of our bodies respond to positive and sincere feelings and words of appreciation and praise.

It is up to each individual to create the spark of joy that will ignite the feelings of thankfulness within themselves. And as they do, they find that thankfulness multiplies the good they already have.

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Even though the Thanksgiving holiday weekend is coming to a close, our hearts and minds can stay open to it's true meaning and essence of counting blessings and being thankful. So let's affirm:

Thank you, God, for hearing me. I know You always hear me, and that You meet my every need. I give thanks for all my many blessings, and my only prayer is to know You more.