

Note: The following message will be shared by Reverend Caleb Kim this Sunday, October 11, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. for the congregation of St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls, and our community on Zoom.

Title: The Power of Thanksgiving

What do we do when burdensome thoughts keep us from sleeping well at night? Some of us toss and turn in bed. Some try to relax while listening to nature sounds. Others take medication for insomnia. I believe one powerful way to manage our anxieties in faith is found in that famous hymn: "Count your blessings, name them one by one."

One thing we need to be careful about when counting God's blessings is that our gratitude should not be based on material things alone. There is nothing wrong with being thankful for material provisions, but those things can change at any moment. The one constant in this unstable world is our intimate relationship with the Lord our God. This is why our Psalm today keeps pointing us back to Him. Remembering that the Lord is the source of every blessing—regardless of how much or how little we have—is what matters most. Thanksgiving is not primarily about what is on our dining table; it is about acknowledging God, our Provider and Protector, the real source of all we have.

In our Psalm reading this morning, King David numbered all the benefits he had received from God, placing them one after another on his list of thanksgiving. On this Thanksgiving Sunday, I want us to explore three things David was grateful for and apply them to our own journey of faith.

First, David thanked the Lord for the blessing of God's provision, particularly His divine healing. Someone once said, "Spiritually speaking, the greatest healing is the forgiveness of sin." Even though David was a man after God's own heart, he felt God's heavy hand upon him when he harbored unconfessed sin. But when David repented of his failures before the Lord, he received God's peace and strength in his troubled soul. In Psalm 103:12, he wrote: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Some of us have taken a road trip from the east coast to the west coast of our country. Driving coast-to-coast in Canada takes roughly seven to ten days, depending on your speed and stops. It takes a lot of time and effort to complete that journey. But praise God: we do not have to undertake a long, exhausting spiritual journey to earn our salvation. In Christ, as the Apostle Paul teaches, "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). To

receive God's forgiveness, we simply come to Christ just as we are, repent of our sins, and surrender our whole hearts before Him.

Sadly, many of us have heard stories of people who suffered deeply under the heavy weight of guilt. As I mentioned before, they constantly condemn themselves, replaying past failures or mistakes over and over in their minds. Having lived with that mindset before, I know how impossible it feels to free ourselves from that endless cycle of shame. As Christians, we are blessed because we have a Savior who understands our struggles, bears our burdens, and forgivingly cleanses our sins. David praised the Lord because He "does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103:10). What a merciful God we serve!

Do we know how many times the Lord our God has forgiven us? Is it seventy times seven? It is far beyond even that number. Though my own failures feel countless and I don't know how often I have asked God to wash away my wrongdoings, whenever I call on Him and ask for forgiveness, the Lord mercifully forgives me and heals the shame in my spirit. A friend of mine shared an illustration some time ago... But when we examine our hearts through the Word of God, repent of our sins, and turn to Him, all those recordings are completely erased. Through Christ's sacrifice, God chooses to remember our sins no more. We are forgiven and made a new creation by faith in our merciful God. That is why the Apostle Paul declares on our behalf: "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). We thank the Lord for His complete forgiveness.

Secondly, David praised the Lord for the blessing of God's protection. In Psalm 103:4, he wrote that God "redeems your life from the pit." To "redeem" here in Scripture means to rescue, and the "pit" refers to danger, destruction, or death. From his youth as a shepherd boy caring for his flock to his time as King of Israel, David encountered many challenges. Whether facing attacks from wild animals in the wilderness or hostile armies on the battlefield, God protected him. The Lord commanded His angels concerning David to guard him in all his ways (Psalm 91:11).

Whether we realize it or not, God protects us in countless unseen ways every single day. When we look back on our lives and the journeys of our loved ones, we can recognize God's hand of providence in many troubling situations. Now, please understand: I am aware of the questions many of us carry regarding difficult circumstances. The Bible does not answer all of our specific questions about why trials happen. But one thing we can be certain of is that in all things, "God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Let us pause and consider: have we ever thought about the thousands of kilometres we have driven without a severe accident? Many of us can testify to moments when God's protective hand guided us on the road, shielding us and guiding us along safe paths for His name's sake (Psalm 23:3).

I have shared before about a concerning time my family and I faced during the pandemic... Time and again, when unexpected situations cause worry, God brings to mind images of Jesus, our Good Shepherd, holding my loved ones and me in His mighty hand or standing right beside us with His comforting hand upon our shoulders. Those mental pictures remind us of His unending mercy and protection.

Thirdly, David blessed the Lord for how God satisfied his life. In Psalm 103:5, he said that God "satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." When David was young, he loved his sheep and wanted to be a faithful shepherd. Above all, he wanted to glorify God's name. Even though he was not old enough to be a soldier, he asked King Saul for permission to face Goliath since he could not bear to hear the enemy defy the living God. God honored David's heart and granted victory. Though Saul later envied David, God protected David and ultimately established him as king over Israel. The Lord not only fulfilled David's God-given calling, but also made him lie down in green pastures and led him beside quiet waters. In other words, God satisfied David's deepest longings and gave him true joy in His presence. That is why David could proclaim: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).

The Lord our God wants to satisfy our souls with good things far beyond what we can imagine. The world cannot fill the deepest desires of our hearts; that inner void is not due to a lack of physical resources, but a need for spiritual life within us. Saint Augustine recognized this truth when he prayed: "Thou hast made us for thyself and our hearts find no rest until they rest in Thee!" Only the Lord can satisfy the longing soul. When we reflect on the past, we see that the God who began a good work in us and our loved ones will bring it to completion in His timing and in His way. Some of those works may still be in progress, so we must continue trusting in God's plan.

For years, I prayed about many things for our church, our congregation, my family, and my own heart. One of my deep desires was to invite my mother to visit us in Fenelon Falls... I am so grateful to God for answering that prayer and allowing us to share those memorable months together face to face.

There are many other blessings David mentions in this Psalm, but I want to highlight that David praised God continually because he recognized the Lord Himself as his ultimate blessing. According to Bible scholars, David speaks of words of praise to the

Lord more than two hundred times in Scripture. Do we know one of the greatest sacrifices we can present to God? It is honoring Him by offering “thank offerings” (Psalm 50:23). Do we count God’s blessings one by one, or do we dwell on our troubles and sorrows? One of the most tragic things we can unintentionally do toward God is to forget Him or take Him for granted. If we only remember the things we have accomplished through our own power or strength, our thinking becomes futile and our hearts are darkened. That mindset prevents us from glorifying God as our Creator, Giver, and the Owner of our lives, or giving thanks to Him even when we know Him well (Romans 1:21). That is the root of an unthankful mind. When we focus on our problems, we begin to complain about what we lack. Instead of thanking God for what He has done in the past, seeing what He is doing in the present, and anticipating what He will do in the future, we only count what is missing... With an ungrateful heart, we miss out on the precious blessings God has placed right before us.

I once heard a short about two angels assigned special duties. God called them and gave each a basket. To the first angel, He said, “Go and collect the prayer requests of My people.” Very quickly, that angel returned with a basket overflowing with petitions. To the second angel, God said, “Go and collect the prayers of thanksgiving from those same people.” That angel searched for a long time and struggled to fill even the bottom of his basket.

In our Gospel reading today, ten lepers were healed by Jesus, but only one returned to give thanks, praising God with a loud voice. Jesus asked: “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?” (Luke 17:17). Jesus did not ask because He was uninformed; He knew where they were. He asked because he wanted them to experience not just physical healing, but spiritual wholeness. He said to the Samaritan: “Rise and go; your faith has made you well” (Luke 17:19). Friends, sometimes we act like those nine lepers. We experience God’s answers to prayer, but we forget to return and give Him thanks. Gratitude is not a matter of how much we possess; it is a matter of how deeply we appreciate what God has done.

Ever since my mother and I started exercising together over video calls on KaKaoTalk, one of our regular routines has been to raise our arms to the sky and say aloud, “Thank you, Lord!” Even when we do not list every specific blessing one by one, we hold God’s goodness in our hearts as we give thanks. As we look back over this past year, how do we view our journey? Do we judge ourselves by worldly standards and feel inadequate, or do we see ourselves through God’s Word? As God’s children, we are His workmanship (Ephesians 2:10). We may make mistakes and fall short, but our Lord understands our weaknesses. When we repent, He forgives us. God desires for us to

rest in His truth—to accept that In His eyes, we are His creation, and He calls us “very good.”

Whether we realize it or not, we are in a spiritual battle. God has given us the freedom to choose where we stand. Let us use our God-given freedom to fix our minds on all of His abundant blessings—“seen and unseen”—and thank the Lord by naming them one by one.

In closing, I want to share a passage from Helen Keller’s essay, “Three Days to See.” Helen Keller lost both her sight and hearing at nineteen months old due to illness. Yet despite living in silence and darkness, and facing many personal heartbreaks throughout her life, she found the light of Christ and lived with profound gratitude.

She wrote... Helen Keller cherished the simple blessings that many of us take for granted every day. Are we carrying heavy burdens today? Are we feeling overwhelmed by concerns for ourselves or our loved ones? Take a moment to pause, count our blessings, and name them one by one. Have we ever considered the close connection between the words “think” and “thank”? The only difference is one letter: an “I” in “think” and an “A” in “thank.” Both verbs share the same root: “to consider” or “to ponder.” When we take time to think about God’s goodness, our hearts naturally overflow with thanks.

Let us take that moment together right now to reflect on how abundantly blessed we are today. On this Thanksgiving Sunday, we thank God for the privilege of waking up this morning. We thank Him for the opportunity to gather and worship Him. Our hearts overflow with gratitude for our families, our church, and our community. We give thanks for our health, the clean air we breathe, the abundance of pure water, and all the blessings of living in this nation. We are thankful to God, who has adopted us as His own children and helps us live with courage and confidence before our Heavenly Father—our loving Dad—in our daily journey. We specifically thank God for His protective hand—including the times He shielded us from dangers we were never even aware of. We are so grateful for His daily provision, His ongoing forgiving grace through Jesus Christ, and His faithful plan for each of our lives.

As King David declared, God is our Creator, Provider, Protector, Redeemer, and the Source of all that we possess. When we reflect on His goodness, we realize we can never thank Him enough. We are truly, abundantly blessed. Amen.

*In this sermon, I have drawn inspiration and materials from various messages based on Psalm 103:1-12; Luke 17:11-19.