

Joy.FULL – The Magnitude of Ingratitude

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MAIN VERSES

[Romans 1:21](#) • [Deuteronomy 9:7](#) • [Galatians 5:4](#) • [Exodus 5:21](#) • [Exodus 14:10](#) • [Exodus 15:24](#) • [Exodus 16:3](#) • [Numbers 14:2](#) • [Numbers 14:11](#) • [Matthew 7:2](#) • [James 1:25](#) • [1 Corinthians 10:14-16](#) • [Proverbs 17:10](#) • [Psalm 106](#) • [Hosea 13:6](#) • [Deuteronomy 8:18-19](#)

In the first century, the idea of grace was not synonymous with mercy. That was a definition that came after the Reformation. The Catholic Church, I believe, still maintains the original definition, or at least the concept, of what grace really was in the first century. Grace was a cycle. It was a structured cultural rite in which two or more individuals would pay respect to their roles in society.

In first century Roman culture, there were no banks to go to to take out loans—or at least not in the way we think of them today. The temples were the banking system, but it wasn't like today. If you needed something, if you were poor, you couldn't just go to Wells Fargo around the corner and go, "Hey, I've got good credit, 20 grand, I need to redo my debt, feed my family." It didn't work like that.

There was no mass welfare system in Rome. Julius Caesar implemented kind of like a food stamp system, but not on the scale of what we would call government assistance today. The integrity of the poor actually stood on the shoulders of the rich—someone they would call a patron. Anyone ever heard of that term? Patron.

If you needed something you couldn't obtain yourself, or if the city suffered a disaster and needed something, they would call upon the rich. And the rich would hear the cries and they would come and help and offer assistance. And this wouldn't be a loan, right? So if you had a patron that was giving you money or food for your family, this wouldn't be a loan where you had to pay back the food or the money. But you did have to pay back something for this gift that was granted to you. You were expected to reciprocate gratitude and honor back to your patron.

The Grace Relationship

This is a very common practice in the first century in the Roman Empire. Between a patron who is someone that would give a gift that was not obtainable, something you couldn't obtain yourself, and if you accepted this gift, you would be locked into this relationship of grace with your patron. You would become the patron's client. I know we've talked about this message several times before. I think we did a message earlier this year called "What is Grace?" and I go into great detail about this, but I really want to hammer this today so it's fresh in your mind.

It's interesting because there were three main stages to the concept of a grace relationship. You had your patron at the top and the patron would bestow upon you a favor, a grant, something that you could not obtain yourself or your family. Step two would be to receive it. You had a choice. You didn't have to receive this gift of your great patron. If you received it, then you entered into this binding relationship and there was something that was expected from you to go back to the patron and that was gratitude. And this is something that I call the circle of grace.

If you've seen Ryan White's teaching, it's the same message. It's an incredible message. The circle of grace. If you've ever heard of the three graces in Greek mythology—that's what this is based on. It's what I call the three graces. The three steps in a grace relationship. The one who gives, the one who receives, and the one who pays back. Gratitude.

The Greco-Roman society was structured in a way that hierarchical relationships made up the glue that held society together. Benefits were transferred with the expectation and appropriate return of gratitude. And at the heart of the patron-client relationships or networks is the understanding that reciprocity as a foundation of social and political relationships were to exist throughout the empire.

Understanding First-Century Context

I wanted to review this to impress upon you just how important it is to understand first century cultural context when reading first century documents. You know what some of the first century documents that we read every single day are? The New Testament. And so if we can understand these basic concepts, when we read the scriptures, we might have a clue what Paul's talking about.

You ever read a letter or a verse by a man by the name of Paul? And you ever looked at something that Paul wrote and was like, "Well, that just don't make no sense"? Anybody else? One of those verses is [Galatians 5:4](#). "For if you are trying to make yourself right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ, you have fallen from God's grace."

How many of you guys have ever been quoted this verse by a friend who was concerned about maybe you following toward keeping the commandments of God, so on and so forth? If we understand what grace is, if we understand that grace is not mercy, grace is actually a structured relationship, then you've fallen from this structured relationship that God has put in place called grace.

Paul's Teaching on Grace

If you're trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, if you're trying to do God a favor by keeping the law, Christ is of no effect to you. Do you know what this verse is saying? This verse is saying that, essentially, God gives you a favor. What's the one thing that you cannot obtain in this world that God has bestowed upon you? Forgiveness, redemption through his son Yeshua. This is the favor that God has given to you that you can never pay him back.

If you receive this, then you pay gratitude and honor back to his kingdom. You're now in his kingdom, so what do you do? You say thank you. You live with gratitude. You keep the commandments. If you love me, you will keep the commandments. If you are grateful, you will keep the commandments. So you keep the commandments of God to reciprocate honor back to him.

What Paul's trying to say is, listen, if you're trying to do God a favor by keeping the law and trying to get redemption out of it that way, you've fallen from grace. If you're trying to keep the Torah to get Yeshua, you're trying to be God's patron. You're trying to do God a favor by keeping the Torah and expecting him to be like, oh yeah, that's good. I'll give you Yeshua in return. Who do you think you are? You've fallen from grace. That's why it's important to understand cultural concepts. That's why it's important to understand first century context specifically with these types of things.

The Wisdom of Seneca on Ingratitude

And so there was a man in the first century known as Seneca the Younger. Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Not Seneca Crane, we're not Hunger Games, this is Seneca the Younger. He was a first century stoic philosopher, right. He was contemporary, I believe, of Paul, and he writes about in his tract on the benefits how benefits between patrons and clients and how they should act with one another and giving gifts and so on and so forth. And he states this. He says, "Homicides are murderers, tyrants, thieves, adulterers, robbers, sacrilegious men, and traitors. There will always be such people. But worse than all these is the crime of ingratitude."

So this guy's pagan, but from a historical standpoint in the first century it was understood ingratitude, not being grateful to your patron, is the worst crime. You could be a murderer and it wasn't viewed as bad as this. Adulterer, thief, still really bad, but not as bad as being ungrateful to someone who bestowed upon you gifts that you couldn't get yourself.

Ingratitude in Scripture

It's funny because Paul says something eerily similar. In Romans chapter 1, verse 21, he states this. "What do you mean they knew God, but they glorified him not as God? Guys, let me let you in on a little secret. Thanksgiving to God is God-centeredness. When you say thank you to God, it's not just saying, oh, thanks, I really appreciate this. It is a form of worship, putting God at the top of your life, at the top of all good things that are in your life, at the top of everything in creation, at the top of everything. He is the ultra, ultra patron.

So when you give gratitude to God, it is a form of worship, of God-centeredness. That's what it all revolves around. They knew God, but they glorified him not as God. Then he goes on in verse 28. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, they forgot about him. God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignantly, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to their parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful."

All of these attributes are Paul is using to define this group of people. Who were these people again? They were the ones who were not thankful to God. Ingratitude is the root of much evil. Ingratitude is fertile soil for much evil.

The Magnitude of Ingratitude

This brings me to the title of this message, if you will, because we have to understand the scope of what ingratitude will bring in our life. The magnitude of ingratitude. How big of a deal is it if I'm not thankful? How big of a deal is it if I'm not grateful, if I'm not content, if I'm not satisfied for the things in our life? It's a big deal. It's a huge deal.

Overcoming Ungratefulness

The only way to overcome ungratefulness is to recognize it and pursue change. So you got to recognize it and pursue change. Recognizing it doesn't help you if that's all you do. Pursuing

change.

I have a great quote here from Rabbi Arush Shalom. He's written many, many different books. And he says, I posted this on Facebook a few days ago. And he says, "not even Torah study helps a person change. If it is not accompanied by constant prayer, self-assessment, and repentance. No matter what you do in your life, no matter how hard you study, no matter how much you know, no matter how much knowledge you obtain, if you're not pursuing to be molded, more likened unto the Son of God, Yeshua, then why are you here?"

Seriously, if you're not reading the scriptures with a heart of repentance and wanting to be more like the Son of God, why are you here? You guys could be living one heck of a life right now. You don't have to be doing all this stuff, submitting to God's commandments, keeping the Torah, Shabbat, following the feast days, not eating pork. This is the South. You can eat a lot of pork. If you're not doing it to change things, why are you doing it? YOLO. That's what Paul says. Eat, drink, be merry, for tomorrow you're going to die. YOLO. You only live once.

Why don't you go live it up if your intention is not to be conformed to the image of the Son of God? If you are wanting to pursue change, if you are wanting God, like a knife, to cut the holiness and the unholiness and separate them within your life—righteousness, unrighteousness, justice, and injustice, gratitude and ingratitude—in your life, if you're wanting God to mold you and you are pursuing that, yeah, now you're on the right track. But you have to have that heart. And for those of you who are walking in the commandments for the sake of being conformed to the image of God, it's not a YOLO for you. It's a YOLT. You only live twice. You live a life in this world, but then the foundation of the gospel, the very thing that drives the gospel, the very thing that empowers the love of God—something called the resurrection—will happen, and you will know eternal life. You only live twice.

There are people walking around who come to Shabbat every week and know all the Torah portions and study Hebrew and know all this other stuff, and they're seeking knowledge. And I love that. Knowledge empowers the word of God to be spread to all nations. But if your heart is not to spread it to all nations, if your heart is to not build up God's kingdom, if your heart is to build up your kingdom, you know what that's called? It's called stolen valor. See, that's a term that we have for the guys who dress up like they've been in the military and they show up at conferences or whatnot and they walk around in fatigues with medals that they didn't earn and they get called out. It's called stolen valor. If you're walking around trying to act like you're pursuing God and that you have all of these—ooh, the burdens of Torah and I'm keeping, I'm serving God—but in reality your heart is not for change, it's called stolen valor. You're trying to look righteous when in reality you're not putting in any effort. You're not trying to die to your

flesh. You're not trying to run towards the arms of the Father. You're just trying to look like you are. Why are you here?

The Purpose of Scripture

The only way we can overcome ungratefulness is to recognize it and pursue change. I believe that the Torah of God, I believe that the Bible was given to us not as a science book, not just as a history book, not just as a story book, God forbid. I believe the scriptures were given to us to be a manual of how we're supposed to live our life. Sure, there's a lot of history in it and there's a lot of science in it and there's a lot of stories in it. But God didn't give it to you just to read before you go to bed—"Oh, cool, Noah's Ark, that's a cool story." He gave it to you as a manual to change your life. Every element, every word, every item written in the Torah is put there to teach each and every one of us about God and what he wants and expects for us.

Thus the decree in [Joshua 1:8](#): "Keep the book of the law always on your lips, meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." [Deuteronomy 6](#) talks about having it on your mind as you walk during the day and as you lay down to sleep. And one very important commandment that I hope we never neglect: teach it to your children, because your kids are watching you. That will be the failure of this movement as an entirety. We're not teaching our children. We're trying to build our kingdoms instead of God's kingdom, and our children are watching us do that. We need to be teaching our kids how to build God's kingdom.

Israel's Pattern of Ingratitude

And so, that being said, if every single thing in the Bible is there to teach us something, then let's read some scripture. Let's go back to the point where a tribal coalition became a nation. The story of the Exodus from Egypt. I want to point out that from the time Moses told the Israelites he was going to lead them out, and through the entirety of the 40 years wandering around in the wilderness, Israel never stopped complaining—just kvetching about everything. And that's what we're going to focus on. We're going to try to examine to see if we can use the Bible for its intended purpose, to show us what God expects from us by reading the accounts of the Exodus. Is that okay?

In fact, did you guys know that God made a commandment? One of the 613—he made a commandment as a result of all their complaining. This is brilliant. [Deuteronomy 9:7](#): "Remember and do not forget how you provoke the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness.

From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord." Matt's talking about them being rebellious. Why were they rebellious? Because they didn't care. Because they weren't grateful. You guys better remember what you put me through. Ungrateful.

After Moses is told that he's going to lead Israel out of Egypt, he's going to be the guy who's going to assist God in redeeming Israel, right? He goes to Pharaoh and demands, "Let my people go," right? And he sings a song to him. And what did Pharaoh say? Yeah, boy, take them. That's fine. I didn't like them anyway. Pharaoh said no. In fact, Pharaoh not only said no—Pharaoh was so angry that a petition was made for him to be merciful and let Israel go. He said, "You know what? I'm going to make their life harder. They're going to keep making bricks for me. I'm not going to give them any straw to do it now. I'm going to make their workload worse."

Before this, Moses went to Israel and they were gung-ho. "Yeah, God heard our cries. Oh, wonderful. We're going to be a-okay. Go ahead, Moses. Go up there. Do your thing. Lead us out of here. We are behind you." Then Pharaoh gets mad and takes the straw away.

Blamed for Intensifying Suffering

You know what Israel says to Moses? Beautiful. [Exodus 5:21](#): "And they said to him, 'May the Lord look on you and judge because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.'" Well, that's an ungrateful reaction. Not only did they not thank Moses for risking his life to go before Pharaoh—and that's the big deal—risking his life to go before Pharaoh on behalf of them to redeem them, they blamed him for intensifying their suffering. A man that they believed was sent by God to represent them to Pharaoh, they blamed him for intensifying their suffering. An ounce of gratitude would have shown understanding of the full measure of what Moses did was and how it was Pharaoh that intensified the slavery. They didn't blame Pharaoh. They blamed Moses.

In fact, Pharaoh's angry reaction was part of the redemption climax. What glory would have been given to God if Pharaoh was just like, "All right, yeah, take some gold for you. There you go. Bye"? This was part of the redemption process, a birth pain for the redeemed. Moses, you did this. Ungrateful, ungrateful. We know what happens next: a series of plagues follow—awesome plagues where God demonstrates his power and authority over the gods of Egypt. The Israelites end up leaving Egypt after that 10th plague. That was a kicker. But then Pharaoh chased them. You guys remember? They're all celebrating, they looted all of Egypt, and they

start walking away. And then they come to a sea. It was the Red Sea or Reed Sea. And Pharaoh begins chasing them with armies.

Between an Army and a Wet Place

And they turn around and look and see Pharaoh's armies coming in. And then they look at the sea. They were caught between an army and a wet place. And what did they say? [Exodus 14](#). Come on. Wow. Wow. Sure, it was scary. Big sea in front of you, big army behind you. You're probably going to die. But at this point, it seems unfathomable that Israel would simply disregard one fact. One fact. God orchestrated all of this. God was in charge. He willed that they be there. He willed that they would be standing there before the sea and the armies coming up behind them. God willed that Israel would be tested. They had the potential to overcome this trial. They failed. They failed.

See, the difference between successfully withstanding the trial and failing it is dependent only on your level of gratitude. It was dependent on their level of gratitude. All they had to do: "God, thank you for taking us out of that land of slavery. Even if we died a thousand times, it would be better than serving the Egyptians in the land of slavery. Thank you, God, for redeeming us, though we die now." Instead, blaming. Did they recognize and fully appreciate God's miracles up until then, or deny them? Gratitude is not contingent on lofty spiritual heights, but rather a very, very, very simple, very basic thing. A decent human being can express gratitude. You know that, right? Pagans express gratitude. I'm so grateful. Everyone sits around Thanksgiving. I'm so thankful for this turkey in my house.

Who are you thankful to? I don't believe in God, but I'm just still grateful. Even those who deny God are still thankful. They still express gratitude to something, themselves something. No one would expect the recently freed slaves to have a rock-solid, mature faith. No one would expect them to pass some type of Elijah test or something. They just came out of Egypt. They've been thrown down, enslaved, forced to worship other gods, forced to worship the Egyptians. No one expected them to have Holy Ghost come upon me faith, rock-solid. But that's not what God was asking of them. God was simply asking: be grateful for something he's done for them. Regardless of the level of faith, they were still capable of showing gratitude to God.

At the very least, they could have refrained from complaining about being freed from Egypt through the miraculous hand of God. God splits the Red Sea. They walk through it. Wouldn't that have been enough? I would have died happy. That would have been enough, right? They went a few days without water and came to a place known as Moriah. There was water there,

but it was bitter. They couldn't drink it. So what happens? And the people grumbled against Moses saying, "What are we going to drink? What are we going to drink, Moses? You dragged us all the way out here, right? Had us go through all that junk. We had to endure some of those plagues. That was your fault too, right? And so you dragged us out there. Sure, we got rich off the Egyptians when we left, but we got less. I didn't want to go, right? Went to the Red Sea. The thing split in half. I walked on dry land. Yeah. Now I'm thirsty. What are we going to drink, Moses? It's all your fault."

The Response of Ingratitude

It's incredible. They should have said, "Thank you for leading us, Moses. Thank you for redeeming us. Thank you for being awesome. Please, Moses, can you pray to God that we drink some water?" That would have been acceptable. A petition. Amen. That's why I love Fit. That's why I love my fellowship. Oh, you guys, I hope you are grateful. I am. What are we going to drink? Instead, they say, "See, I told you so. We should have stayed in Egypt. We had water there." Later on they talk about pumpkins. "We had pumpkins there and watermelon, yeah!" Oh geez. It is better for us to serve Egypt.

If you are standing between an army and a wet place right now in your life, you've been placed there for a reason. God knows where you are. How does He know where you are? We think that God leaves us at times in our lives. If anything, it's we leave God. But God doesn't lose us. He knows where we are. And maybe he placed you in the spot that you are. Maybe he put you between the army of Egyptians and the Red Sea. Maybe he put you there. Maybe he's given you the same test he was given to Israel. What will you say? God, this is all your fault? God, why is this happening to me? God, why would you do this to me? God, thank you for the redemption you've given me in my life. Father, my life's hard right now, but if I found favor in your sight, Father, I pray that you would bring peace to my life, bring answers, bring solutions. That would be a nice way to talk to God, even if your situation stinks.

God, it would have been better if I just never even did many, many, many. Whatever you do in that situation, don't complain. Do not complain. And we're going to talk about why it's imperative that you do not fail that test here after a few more examples. This is something I never saw before. Ingratitude—the scope is huge of the devastation it will bring to your life. Don't dare complain.

Desire and Dedication

So the story continues and we know that they're still wandering and it's interesting because where there is no desire for something in your life, there will be no dedication. Where there is no desire for something in your life, there will be no dedication and no self-sacrifice. None whatsoever. Any difficulty that comes your way will be viewed as an insurmountable challenge in your life. Whoa, it's me. I didn't want to do this anyway.

So you ever take your kids on a vacation or maybe not even vacation, somewhere, paid for their hotel, paid for everything. They're going to have a good time. Family vacation, but they didn't really want to go there. They want to go to Disney World. They want to go to the mountains. And they pouted on the trip. And then every single thing that came along—oh, it starts raining outside, so we can't go outside for the next few hours. Why did you bring me on this trip? Anybody? No? No? Just I was the only one who did that? Okay.

Where there's no desire, there is no dedication, and there's no sacrifice. That goes with your marriages. Men, if there's no desire for a good marriage with your wife, there will be no dedication on your part. There will be no self-sacrifice on your part. Wives, if you do not want marriage, or do not desire a strong marriage with your spouse, there will be no sacrifice and there will be no dedication on your part. If you do not want your children to grow up to be outstanding mature adults, there will be no dedication and no self-sacrifice in rearing them up. If there's no desire for you to have a fellowship, have a strong fellowship, there will be no dedication on your part and no self-sacrifice on your part to this fellowship. Did you hear Katie's request?

A brilliant rabbi and author, as I mentioned before, Rabbi Shalom Arush, he states that, and do I have the slide? I don't. He states that exile from God is a situation in which people do not desire truth. So if you don't desire the truth of God's relationship and God's presence in your life, that's exile. You've exiled yourself. They are willing to forfeit their bona fide mission in life in exchange for some comfort, even food and water. Israelites, They misconstrue liberty as the fulfillment of all of their material desires and comforts. But true liberty is the desire to fulfill one's mission and purpose in this world. Exile is life with no purpose. Liberty is life with purpose.

True Freedom in God

As a believer, what truly brings complete freedom and liberty in one's life is a desire to fulfill your purpose in God's kingdom. What purpose has God given you? Who does God want you to be molded into? And what are you doing? Are you running after that? Or are you YOLO?

Maybe this is what James talks about in [James 1:25](#). He talks about the law of liberty, right? And it's a confusing verse because what's he talking about? The Torah of liberty? Like, what's he talking about? God's reign and God's kingdom and fulfilling God's reign, keeping his commandments for the purpose of drawing yourself closer to him. That's what the Torah's purpose is. That's why James, I believe James calls it the Torah of liberty, the Torah of freedom. It's legalism. No, you're fulfilling God's purpose in your life by running after him through his commandments.

After Moriah, Israel came to a place known as Zin. It's a very peaceful place. [Exodus 16.1](#), "They set out from Elim and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Zin, which is between Elim and Sinai. And on the 15th day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt and the whole congregation of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the people of Israel said to them, would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt when we sat by our meat pots and ate bread to the full. For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

The Complaint in the Wilderness

God made the bitter waters of Morah sweet so they could drink it. God split the stupid sea open so they could walk through it. Whoa, that would have been enough, right? They went a few days without water and came to a place known as Moriah. There was water there, but it was bitter. They couldn't drink it. So what happens? And the people grumbled against Moses saying, "What are we going to drink? What are we going to drink, Moses? You dragged us all the way out here, right? Had us go through all that junk. We had to endure some of those plagues. That was your fault too, right? And so you dragged us out there. Sure, we got rich off the Egyptians when we left, but we got less. I didn't want to go, right? Went to the Red Sea. The thing split in half. I walked on dry land. Yeah. Now I'm thirsty. What are we going to drink, Moses? It's all your fault."

It's incredible. They should have said, "Thank you for leading us, Moses. Thank you for redeeming us. Thank you for being awesome. Please, Moses, can you pray to God that we drink some water?" That would have been acceptable. A petition.

Trading intimacy with God to fill their stomachs. So in the Mishnah—and I referenced the Mishnah, which is first, second, third century Jewish literature, if you will—and I look at it as a historical document because it is a historical document that we can understand Jewish culture in the first and second century, right? So in Tractate Avot, it's very interesting because the

author actually writes about this and he states this: a truly free person gets his vitality from his or her mission in life, from his or her mission in God, pursuing God's righteousness, pursuing the image of Yeshua, being like him, pursuing that dying to your flesh every single day. That's your purpose in life. You'd be fortunate if you can just feed yourself some bread, drink some water, and you've got a place to sleep on the ground. That's fortunate. But pursuing your purpose in life will bring good to you, and it was believed in the first century that that meant in the world to come.

Israel wasn't willing. "I don't care about an intimate relationship with God. We just want some food, Jack. Can't let us starve out here." Some rabbis teach that prayer in the form of a complaint is not only not answered, it incites further judgment from God onto your life. Now, is that true? Is that not true? I'm going to side on the side of caution with that. Prayer in the form of a complaint is not only not answered, it incites judgment from God. Hmm. At the height of Israel's complaints, when it reached its point, was in Parasha Shelek Lekah.

The Spies' Bad Report

It's when the spies came back from the land. You guys remember that? So the 12 spies went out to the land, and they got a whole bunch of big grapes and stuff—big suckers, basketball-sized. They brought them back. So two of the spies were like, "Yo, it's good stuff. We can take the land. Let's go do it, right?" And 10 of the spies were like, "Nah, this is good fruit and let's eat this. We just got it to go and let's just keep going because they got big giants in the land and they're sons of Anak and we're like little grasshoppers and I don't think we can do this."

How does Israel respond when the ten spies give a bad report of the land? And they said to one another, "Let's just choose another leader and go back to Egypt." Now, I get it. Big giants. I don't want to be stepped on by a giant. I get it. I've seen Jack and the Beanstalk. Big guys, right? But here's a more appropriate response: God, we're scared. You don't gotta hide that you're unhappy. But you don't complain when God brings you to the inheritance he promised your forefathers hundreds of years before. And you're the generation that's gonna get it.

God's Judgment

So let's see here. God gets fed up, and what's he gonna do? I'm just gonna kill them all. How about that, Moses? And the Lord said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? Despise him? Were they despising God? They were ungrateful for everything that God has done for them. Couldn't even recognize that. If you're ungrateful to your patron, you despise them.

"And how long will they not believe in me in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? In spite of everything I've given to them, I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them. I'm gonna take all their inheritance away. I don't care. Saved up all that money for their allowance to buy that Xbox. I don't care. Take it away. Take all that land away. And I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

He's talking to Moses, and he tells Moses, "I'm just going to kill them all. Poof. Look, I will destroy them like on a biblical scope, Moses. It's going to be awesome, right? I want to show you this. I'll put a little bubble around you. You got first front row seat. It's going to be epic, right? I'm going to kill them all. And you know what, Moses? I'm going to make a greater nation from your seed."

Moses' Humility

Why did he say that to Moses? [Numbers 12](#) states that Moses was the humblest man ever to live. Humility breeds gratefulness, right? And the reason why I said that was because his sister and Aaron were upset that he was marrying a woman from a class of people that was higher than them, right? The Ethiopian, right? The Kushite tribes were a very esteemed people. They were up there with the Egyptians, especially in warfare. They were highly respected, right?

In America, we're taught that, oh, they were mad because they were Ethiopian and they're black and blacks are from slave races, some junk like that. No, Israel was the slave race. The Hebrews were the slave race. The Ethiopians, the Cushites, they were master warriors. You want to know why they had black pharaohs throughout history? Because the Cushites overtook Egypt and made themselves pharaohs over the Egyptians. Some pharaohs would only allow Cushites, who they had conquered, to protect them as their bodyguards because they were such fierce warriors.

Maryam and Aaron, who does Moses think he is marrying a woman from such a high stock as the Cushites? But Moses was the humblest man ever to live. He wasn't doing it to be arrogant, right? Slave marrying a Cushite woman. He was the humblest man ever to live. The reason why he was grateful was because he was humble.

God Pardons Israel

"I will make a greater nation from your seed, Moses. Kill them all." As great as that sounds, I could be the new Abraham. This is pretty good stuff, right?

Moses petitions God. He says, "God, if you destroy everybody, then all the nations will look upon your name and say, 'This is the God who could not redeem his nation.' They're going to shame your name, God. Don't do that."

So what does God say? "Then the Lord said, I have pardoned according to your word." Fine, Moses. Love that.

The Lesson: Ingratitude Brings Judgment

Now there's a huge lesson to be learned here. Ungratefulness towards God will bring judgments—that's the lesson. You will live a life wandering through the wilderness, provoked by your own selfish heart, blinded to the riches God only yearns to fill in your life. You will not know the satisfaction in God's provision, nor will you be content in anything in your life. And without contentment and gratitude, you will never experience joy.

This is what we learn from scripture. I really want to drive this point home. If you don't take away anything else from today, I want you to remember and apply this to your life. And I don't want you to apply it to make yourself feel like a good person. I want you to apply it so you understand that molding yourself to pursue God's righteousness is what matters.

Satan's Ingratitude

Do you realize that ingratitude was one of the first sins? According to Ezekiel, he was up there next to God in the highest position. Wasn't good enough. Ingratitude was Satan's sin.

We know the story of the garden. He approaches Eve, right? "Hey, Eve! God didn't really mean that whole die thing, right?" So Eve takes the apple, she brings it to Adam, they eat, they're naked, right? And they put on fig leaves. Then God goes through the garden: "Hey guys, where you at? Where you at?" And God comes to Adam: "Who told you you were naked? Did you eat of the fruit, Adam?"

Adam Blames God

Remember what Adam said? This is brilliant, guys. He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you not to eat?" Then the man said, "The woman who you gave to me, she gave me the fruit of the tree and I ate."

I wonder if Adam's punishment would have been less severe if he just said, "The woman gave me the fruit and I ate." But no—"The woman you gave me gave me the fruit and I ate of it." It's

as if Adam was blaming God.

Oh my goodness. Any of you parents ever had your teenage son go out in the middle of the night and go down to the cul-de-sac behind the house with a whole bunch of big bottle rockets and he aligned the bottle rockets to shoot simultaneously and hit all the houses at three or four in the morning? Aimed down, had a contraption that he just lined them all up, right? And he had a timed fuse so he could run away before it shot off, right? And any parents ever had that happen before? Just my mom. Okay.

If my mom knew about that when it happened, I wonder what my punishment would have been if I had said, "I'm sorry, I just didn't know what I was doing. Bored, wanted to show off to my friend, whatever." Or if I responded, "You know, Mom, if you hadn't bought me those fireworks a year ago for 4th of July, I never would have done it. If you had bought me that Xbox I always wanted, I could have been entertained at the house instead of shooting fireworks. If you had, if you had, it's your fault that I did this."

How much worse would your punishment be if your son or daughter tried to pull that on you? Would you have just been like, "It's okay, son, you just need to go apologize"? No. "Son, I curse the land that you step on, and every single thing—when you plant a seed, only vines and bushes and thorns are going to grow out of it. By the sweat and blood, everything is going to be cursed." That's what God told Adam.

I don't know. It says that because you ate of the fruit, everything's cursed. The downfall of mankind happened. But in my mind, what if Adam was grateful and at that moment he recognized everything that God had given to him? Would he be back in the garden? What if God had said, "That's okay, son"? What would have happened?

The Root of Adam's Sin

Throughout the Old Testament, it's never called a sin for what Adam did. In the New Testament, it is. So I'm not saying he didn't sin when he ate the fruit, but what's interesting is there was something else that happened that was greater than the stupid fruit incident. What made eating the fruit so bad? He disobeyed God and was ungrateful, just like Satan.

When Israel complained after the spies returned, it was baseless. They had no reason to complain, nothing to complain about. God gave them the quail, gave them abundance. They got manna, all this manna, right? Rock, water, everything. Just amazing. "I will sustain you," He says. But they worried, "God, there are giants in that land."

The Complaint Principle

No, forget everything God's ever done for us. I'm complaining. I'm filing an official complaint to God. Why don't we just get more, get new leaders and go back to Egypt? Forget Moses, forget Aaron, forget God. Couldn't have said, thanks for bringing us this far. We're not going to go in there because of giants. Thanks for bringing us this far. I'm scared my wife and kids are going to die. I'm not really up for fighting. I'm too scared. I'm a coward. Thank you for this. I am lacking in these areas of my life, God. How are you going to fill that? Let's just get some new leaders and go back to Egypt.

You ever use this phrase with your kids? Your kids are whining and they don't have nothing to whine about. There's no point in them whining right now. There's no point in them complaining to you. Oh, you want something? I'll give you something to complain about. Anybody? Or a variation of that. You want something to complain about? I'll give you something to complain about.

Israel didn't have anything to be ungrateful about. So God gave them something to be ungrateful about. You want something to be ungrateful about? All right, I'll give you something to be ungrateful about. Oh, that's scary.

There was a Jewish proverb that talks about whatever path you choose in life, God will follow you. In other words, God, you can't run away from God. In other words, if you're gonna choose this path, then God is going to help facilitate the choice that you made, whether you agree with that or not. The logic behind it is interesting because... Anybody ever been at a lowest point in your life and God was there with you? God was still there with you, right?

Whatever life you choose, God will facilitate your yearnings. If you want to be ungrateful without having anything to be ungrateful about, God can help. None of them will enter into the inheritance of their people. There. Now their complaint is valid. Now they got something to complain about.

Perpetuating Ungrateful ness

Guys, when we complain about the things that God has given to us in our lives, when we complain because God hasn't given us enough in our lives, we perpetuate the sin that Israel participated in within this passage of being ungrateful to God. We perpetuate it. God gives measure for measure, right? God gives measure for measure.

If you keep hitting a brick wall after brick wall, one incident after another in your life, one incident of stress, one incident of anxiety, just something else is going to happen in my life. Oh Lord, good gracious. If you feel like everything in your life is falling apart, it might be. It might be. And it might be because God is making it that way. Just looking at scripture.

If you constantly complain about the things God has given to you, then God's going to visit that measure for measure, just like he did with the Israelites. See, God doesn't like invalid complaints. He'll make it valid. [Matthew 7:2](#), Jesus is talking, Yeshua is talking, and that's where we get the verse measure for measure, right? So how you judge someone is how you're going to be judged measure for measure.

Judging Others, Judging God

What about when you judge God? There's a commentary on the Midrash, I think by the Belshem Tov—I may have just made that up, but that's fine. There's a commentary talking about the idea of judging others. And I found this interesting, and I don't disagree with it. I really like it because it keeps me in check. And the commentary goes like this: it says that people are put in your life who have sin in their life, right? The sin that they have is a sin that you either have in your life or have had in your life. In other words, God will put people in your life that are struggling with something or have a fault or a sin in their life that you either have in your life or you've had in your life.

And the reason he does that is to see how you judge them. He allows you, measure for measure, to determine what's gonna happen when the gavel comes down for you. If you judge them harshly—look at you, looking down on them because they're struggling—when you have the same thing in your life or you've struggled with the same thing in your life in the past, look at you, you're worthless. God sees that. Measure for measure. That's what Yeshua says: you're worthless too. Look at you. I can facilitate this. Measure for measure.

If you are merciful on them, and you're not arrogant over them, and you're peaceful with them, and you try to help them the same way that someone else helped you, God sees that. Measure for measure, God will have mercy on you. I think that's profound.

Yeah, yeah, you're right. He did. That's right. That's brilliant. It scares me because everybody in Hebrew Roots used to celebrate pagan holidays. Everybody in Hebrew Roots used to think the wrong day was the Sabbath. Everybody in Hebrew Roots didn't know Yeshua's name was Yeshua. Jesus' name was Yeshua. Everybody in Hebrew Roots used to not know God had a name. Everybody in Hebrew Roots used to eat pork.

Measure for measure. How you judge others is how God is going to judge you. The same measure of peace and a yearning to help someone versus you banging it over someone's head that they're a sinner and they're a disgrace before God and even their prayer is an abomination and you're taking lots of scriptures out of context is the same measure that you will be met with. I say that as a warning.

Building God's Kingdom or Your Own

We're about to go into a very sensitive time of the year. Are you trying to build God's kingdom or are you trying to build your own kingdom? Scripture—Daniel—says that at the end, only God's kingdom will stand and every other kingdom on earth will fall. If you are trying to earnestly build your own kingdom based on God's righteousness, it will crumble. It is guaranteed in Scripture.

[Proverbs 17](#), 10 says, "A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool." In other words, a man who initiates his own repentance and subjugates himself before God needs no more rebuke. He's a wise man. He understands.

"God, I was ungrateful." "God, I'm sorry." "You are King. You are God. You know where I am." "It is your will for me to be here." "I will not complain." I will rejoice. I will give thanksgiving. Thank you, God, for the things that you have given me in my life. Forgive me for being spoiled and wanting more.

The Fool and the Wise Man

But a fool who lacks self-assessment, he has no idea why he suffers. He has no idea why he received the first lash. When your kid doesn't get it, after you whip him, what do you do? Typically, you keep whipping them. You go spanking. He goes and does it again. Spanking. Why do I keep getting spanked? Don't spank. Why are you spanking me? I don't mind. It hurts. Because you're not listening. I don't know why my life is so hard. I keep getting spanked. Dag nabbit. The fool does not recognize why the first spanking came.

Do not complain to God. You can petition to God. He is a good, good Father. He is our King. You have an audience before the King. You have an audience before the King. Will you give thanks? Or do you have the audacity to complain? Israel did. Just about lost everything because of it.

In other words, if you're ungrateful, to sum it up, from what I read in scripture, there's a very good chance your life is going to become extremely difficult. Things happen we don't like. Stress happens we don't like. Anxiety happens we don't like. I understand that. I do. I am one of you. I have bills to pay, right? I've got medical problems. I do. Ask me. Life is not always easy. Sometimes life is hard.

When Life is Hard

But that shouldn't cause me to forget what my God, my King, my Patron has given to me. If my life is too hard, I don't think I can bear it. Then I go into prayer. And do you know how I start out my prayer? The same way Paul does, giving thanks. Thank you, my gracious King. As if he was right here. You're kneeling before him because he is. Thank you, my gracious King, for all of your graces. If I found favor, please restore my health. If I found favor, Father, please help my teenager quit being a knucklehead. If I have found favor, Father, allow me to pay these bills. Nevertheless, you are King. You are God. Your will is supreme.

It's a hard prayer to pray. I'm not saying it's easy, but I'm saying we're supposed to get to a point in our lives where we are able to pray like that.

Ingratitude and Forgetting God

[Psalm 106](#) recounts Israel's ingratitude and forgetting God in the wilderness. Just read the chapter. [Psalm 106](#), if you have time, is a beautiful illustration of what ingratitude looks like. [Hosea 13.6](#) kind of sums it up. He says, When I fed them, they were satisfied. And when they were satisfied, they became proud. Then they forgot me. They always knew God exists, but they forgot what God had done for them.

[Deuteronomy 8](#), 18 through 19 states, if you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. There we see that word forgetting God again, but there's another attribute to it. When you forget God and worship other gods, forgetting God is worshiping other gods.

If you are ungrateful to God, then you're giving gratitude to someone else. It could be you, could be you. Look what I did. Look what I got from my family. I got all this good stuff from my family. I did that. I bought that. I got this. Yeah, I got the resume. I got graduated. When you do not give gratitude to God, you forget God. And when you forget God, you are following other gods.

Flee from Idolatry

It is idolatry. Paul asserts this in [1 Corinthians 10:14–16](#). Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. Flee from idolatry. All right, these folks are obviously worshiping other idols and not worshiping God, right? I speak to sensible people. So who's he speaking to? Are we sensible? Can we figure stuff out? I mean, we got a little bit of common sense. We're going to read what he says, and we're going to be able to figure out what he's talking about, right? Because we're sensible, some of us. Judge for yourselves what I say. Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? Now, I understand the last part. It's talking about coming together, breaking the bread, right? Remembering who our king is as brothers and sisters in the kingdom. But why does he start out? Flee from idolatry. Flee from idolatry. You're supposed to be given thanks for who God sent to redeem you. Forgetting God is idolatry.

We have the ability to change our lives. Do you guys know that? With this concept, we can change our lives. From what we read in scripture, we always have. You have an audience before the king. When you pray today, tonight, when you get in your face before you go to bed, when you approach the king, I want you to imagine you're coming into his throne room and you're kneeling down.

Come Before the King

You guys seen the medieval movies, right? You can't just run up. What's up, king? Listen, my life stinks and I blame you. So make it better. Oh, that's baseless. Here, I will make your invalid complaint valid. And then let's see what you say when you come back to me. Hopefully I don't have to keep doing that. I want you to imagine walking into the throne room. The guards, angels on each side, right? On the throne and you kneel down, and what is the first thing you're gonna say? Thanks be to you, oh my sovereign king. I hope that's how you begin your prayers. Same way that Paul did with Thanksgiving. I hope you will begin to reflect the light of God's spirit through you when you walk every single day, when you lie down at night, when you engage at work.

Gratitude Is Not Silent

You guys know that gratitude is not silent? Repeat after me: Gratitude is not silent.

Men, your wife created a really good meal for you. She creates an environment that you want to live in at the house. She is your helpmate, meeting you at every need in your life. Even though

you're thankful, remaining silent shows ingratitude.

Wives, your husband does work hard for the family and for the home. He truly does. He wants to make you happy. He wants his kids to be successful. He wants to be successful for the sake of you. Even though you're thankful, remaining silent shows ingratitude.

Gratitude, Contentment, and Joy

You are not entitled to anything in this world. If you feel entitled to anything in this world, you are incapable of feeling gratitude for it. Once you are grateful for it, you become content, and after this, you can achieve joy. Joyfulness springs from gratitude, and only after this can you be generous to others.

Jason was talking to me last week. I only have one kid, man. He had two little girls—lots more experience. He was talking about the perfect analogy. You go to a fast food restaurant or whatnot and you give your kids a kid's meal, and only after they eat their chicken nuggets and hamburger, a few french fries—at that point when they are satisfied and content, that's when they offer, "Hey, you guys want some french fries? I got some french fries, right?" It's after you are content, after you're grateful. That's when you're generous.

I want you guys to remember that this Thursday, after you've had your fifth plate of food and you cannot eat another bite. I want each and every one of you to know the point I'm talking about: when you're like, "I made a mistake." At that point when you're like, "I shouldn't have. I knew I shouldn't have eaten another roll with turkey and cranberry sauce and mashed potatoes and green beans inside of it. I knew I shouldn't have done that."

At that moment, when you're feeling eater's remorse, I want you to feel gratitude. I want you to look at your satisfaction, your full belly. You can look at it. It's apparent at that point. I'm serious. I want each and every one of you to look at your bellies and realize that you're satisfied, that you're content, and that you're grateful. And then I want you to notice that spring of joy that begins to flare up inside of you. That's what joy feels like. But you can't have one without the others.

Practice Gratitude This Season

This is an appropriate season in our country to make a change and practice gratitude. It's appropriate to show gratitude more than ever in our country right now. Show gratitude to your coworkers, even Stinky Steve. Show gratitude for the people that you work with. Show gratitude

to your spouse. Show gratitude to your fellowship, to the community that you're a part of right now. You have to put that into practice. You support them. You're there for them. Do you want joy in your life? Then start putting gratitude and generosity into practice.

Closing

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