

The Ingrate Trail – A Sermon About Gratitude

Matthew Vander Els • 2023-11-19 • foundedintruth.com

MAIN VERSES

Gratitude

All right, well, Shabbat Shalom, everybody. Welcome to Founding Truth Fellowship. Today, we're going to talk about gratitude. I am more proud of the graphic than I should be, and I know everyone won't get it, but the important people will. So there we go. Yeah, you got it in gratitude, right? Ah, old school.

So 10 years ago, my father passed away, and it was horrible to lose a loved one, to lose someone you feel close to, especially a parent. It was awful for a 27-year-old who had never known that level of grief, the weight, the pain, the physical pain, having memories of someone and knowing that you will never make more. And it's incredible because you never truly feel grateful for someone being in your life to the point that you do after they're gone. Gratitude.

What Seneca Says

So I want to quote a pagan, Seneca, a Roman philosopher, amongst other things, contemporary of the apostles, born somewhere around 4 BC and died in 65 AD. And here's what he says about benefits and benefactors and patrons and clients: "That's some bold things to say coming from a pagan." And he makes the point that the worst, the worst of the worst, if not the source of all sin, is never being content. That's what drives sinful nature. And when you receive benefits, when you receive gifts, when you receive blessings, not allowing that to satisfy and not allowing gratitude to flourish toward the patron or the person that gave you these things is a horrible foundation of evil and sin, whether it be to God or man or, in his case, gods.

But even the pagans understood this concept because gratitude is kind of a universal concept. What's so neat about what Seneca says is that Paul says pretty much the same thing in [Romans 1](#) through 3. But here's what Paul says after he names all of these same types of people in

[Romans 1](#), verse 21: "They disobey their parents. A couple people in here. They have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, and no mercy."

So Paul spends this whole chapter going on what we would call a rant, and he's speaking about a specific type of people who have all of these attributes. And he sums it up kind of in verse 21. He's like, they neither glorified him nor gave him thanks. They were never content with God's blessings. They were never content with the things God gave them, and they never showed gratitude. Neither were they thankful.

See, when you're thankful, you give God the glory, right? You give praise. When you're thankful, your hands go up, right? Yes, thankful—I love that.

Hands Raised in Praise

In the ancient world, we have many depictions in reliefs, writings, and images on walls and such, depicting people raising their hands toward the deities or toward kings and whatnot. Here's one, the Levitian depiction. And so this one's actually called prostrating before the king. But if you notice, what's everybody doing? They're giving honor to this king. Some type of gratitude or hopeful gratitude, let them live. But they're all raising their hands up. And this has nothing really to do with the message. I just thought it was really neat. Can you spot the Pentecostal? It's the upside-down one, I'm sure. He wants to make sure he's been the point. My background, I'm allowed.

There is another large relief that I couldn't find the image of, but it's of a king who has this massive throne, and he has just like tiers of people under him that are giving him honor, but they also have their hands raised, but it's drawn as a way that their hands are lifting his throne up, because when you look at the huge feet of his throne, they're not touching the ground. Everyone lifts the throne up, and so it's praise, yes, it's worship, it's honor, it's giving yourself over, it's surrendering, and it's gratitude toward your king, toward your patron, toward your God. Pretty neat.

My Tendencies of Ingratitude

And I admit that I know throughout my life, and even now, whether I realize it or not, I've had tendencies of ingratitude. I'd like to think prior to now, I've had greater levels of ingratitude in my life than I do now. But I've definitely been ungrateful through much of my life. And my guess is that if I was walking around as a completely ungrateful person and likely didn't realize it, there might be a few people in here that are doing the same thing. I don't know.

There might be a few people here that are running into walls and struggling in their life, and it's not like just one struggle, it's not one brick wall. You get through it, and then here comes another one, and then here comes another one, and here comes another one, and you don't understand why. And I say that because it could be sourced in ingratitude. That's too simple, Matt, come on. That's so naive to be able to make something so, you don't know what I'm going through. You don't know what my needs are, I don't.

But I am convinced that the level of gratitude that you have is a reflection of the level of joy and happiness in your life. I've at least come that far in my life. And if you're not expressing joy in your life, or at the very least contentment, it's going to show. It's going to show through your character and it's going to show through your witness. And the only way to recognize ingratitude, the only way to overcome it, is to identify it for what it is. The worst crime you can commit toward God.

Scripture and the Universal Consensus

See, I believe every single thing in Scripture is there for a reason, right? Every single letter is there. And we know there's a universal consensus of conclusion of showing gratitude. You open the door for someone, you say, thank you. Everybody does it. You could be pagan, you could be an atheist, you could be a Christian, whatever. Yeah, thank you. Thanks. Everyone knows that. Everyone knows that contentment is a good thing to have.

And I like to think, because I see it, that when the biblical authors were framing the opening stories of the Bible, I believe they framed that theme in there for us to draw from specifically in the story of the Exodus—right, the Exodus. You guys know the story of the Exodus. We have Abraham, Abraham's seed, his children. They settle down in Egypt and they have blessings and everything is going great—till it wasn't. You turn the page, things turn real quick, and they become slaves, they're enslaved. Their lives are miserable, then they cry out to God: "Bring us out of here, oh Lord. Bless us, Father. Take us out of slavery."

The Exodus Story Unfolds

And it's fascinating because in the story, God calls a man by the name of Moses, and Moses is completely unsure of himself. Completely. God, listen. Listen. I can't stand strong. I don't have any confidence. I can't talk right. Right? I don't know if I can do it. God's basically, I don't care. You're going to have to stand strong because I'm going to use you whether you like it or not. Stop making excuses. You're going to go before Pharaoh, and you're going to say, hey, Pharaoh,

let my people go. And whatever is going to go down, I'm going to be with you. Okay? Go. All of the power, all of the authority within my kingdom is going to be on your shoulders. You don't have to be afraid. Take your staff and go.

And so Moses goes before Pharaoh and he says, so easy, so good. Let my people go by the authority of my God. And Pharaoh responds how? He's like, You know what? I don't want to mess with your God. You go ahead and go. I'm sorry for the whole slavery thing and the kids in the water and all of that, right? That's exactly how it happened. No, no, not at all. Yeah, he said no.

And not only that, Pharaoh became so enraged, what did he do? Oh, okay. Well, you know what? That was so brazen for you to even ask that. I'm going to make the lives of all the Israelites even more miserable, right? You guys can build the bricks, masons or whatnot. You know what? I'm going to take your straw away too. You have to show up with that. And I want the same integrity of bricks and work out of you to build my cities, even though I'm going to make it harder on you. So good luck.

The Pattern of Ingratitude

And this is how Israel responded. In Exodus chapter 5, verse 21, they said, "They're speaking to Moses, the very man who just risked his life to go before Pharaoh. If you were standing before Pharaoh, wouldn't you be kind of scared? Kind of a big deal? No one ever stood up to Pharaoh that brazenly, that boldly before. No one would ever dare do that." Man, hey, Moses, you risked your life. Thanks for trying. This is unjust, you know. No, you jerk. Why did you try to save us?

And we see this pattern of ingratitude throughout the rest of the Exodus story. No matter what, Israel will not stop complaining. And complaining comes from a place of ingratitude where you're never content. If you're content, you don't have complaints. In fact, it got so bad that God even crafted one of the 613 commandments based around this.

In [Deuteronomy 9](#), 7, it said, "Remember this and never forget how you aroused the anger of the Lord your God in the wilderness from the day you left Egypt until even now. You have been rebellious against the Lord."

How were they rebellious? We don't want to do that. We deserve better than this. Why is this happening? I want watermelons. That happened. But we know what happens. All of the plagues come, the power of God, the Exodus, the Lamb, and Pharaoh changes his mind and he lets all the Israelites go. Not only that, take all of our gold and diamonds and stuff too.

Between an Army and a Wet Place

Not a bad deal. Israel is running, and Pharaoh changes his mind, takes his army, and begins chasing the Israelites. They arrive at the edge of the sea. They're now between an army and a wet place. And they forgot every single thing God did for them up until this point in their journey from Egypt. All the miracles, all the plagues, all the power—forgotten. God gave them freedom—forgot it. Chariots are scary. Chariots are scary. But what's the very next thing they say? They begin to grumble. And here's what they say to Moses in [Exodus 14](#), 11: "They said to Moses, Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us out to the desert to die? Why have you brought us here, bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, leave us alone, let us serve the Egyptians? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert."

A little bit of gratitude. Hey Moses, thank you for risking your life. Thank you for everything you did. God is great. We saw that. He gave us freedom, liberation, something that we never could have experienced. What are we supposed to do next? I mean, are we supposed to go forward? We're going to try to swim? What's next? We know that God showed us power and he even made us rich and we've got gold falling out of our pockets. What are we supposed to do next? No, I knew this was going to happen. You always mess everything up. Should have just died in Egypt instead of freedom.

God splits the sea. Dry land appears. We have the new creation story. And they escaped, went across in dry land. And they sang and they praised, dancing, tambourines. It was great. Now we're getting somewhere. This is looking good. People are maturing in how they should respond to God's power and authority.

The Bitter Waters of Moriah

They started their journey to a place called Moriah. Here's what it says in [Exodus 15](#), 23: "When they came to the oasis—the paradise of Moriah—the water was too bitter to drink. So they called the place Moriah, which means bitter. Then the people complained and turned against Moses. What are we going to drink now, they demanded."

See, I told you, Moses. Something bad is going to happen. It always does. It's not what I wanted. See? It's not perfect. It's not perfect. Anyone ever met someone like that? You know who I'm talking about. Yeah. You're brushing your teeth and you look up and you see him in the mirror. Mad about something that happened. It's not perfect. It's not perfect.

Israel came to every place God wanted them to be. Every time something got difficult, their entire world crumbled. The entire resume of blessings they'd received in their life went out the window.

Contentment and Chasing

There's a quote here by Rabbi Judah Schachtel. He was a prominent rabbi in Houston. Here's what he says: It's kind of a play on words, but you get the point. Contentment. This is what breeds happiness. Not constantly chasing something else. Because the older you get, your legs start to get tired from chasing stuff—especially in a country that teaches you that if you get enough stuff, you'll be happy one day. After a while, you start realizing that chasing stuff will never satisfy and bring forth happiness. That's truth. I've come to believe that this is a lesson God wanted to teach his people, as well as the rest of the world. It's the same message Yeshua brought.

Stop Thinking About What You Don't Have

Stop thinking about what you don't have. Stop worrying about what you don't have. Stop trying to figure out what you can get to make you happy. The sparrows are perfectly happy with no clothes on. Kind of what he said. They don't worry about stuff. The flowers still bloom. God has taken care of all of this, but you can't get it through your heads that God might care about you as well.

And I believe this is the lesson. This is the lesson. Stop thinking about what you don't have and embrace what God has already given you so that you can illuminate contentment, hope, and joy to the world. Paul talks about God's glory being magnified through hardships. Israel couldn't be content because they didn't recognize where they were was part of God's plan.

You Haven't Seen the End of the Story Yet

And too many times we find ourselves in hard places. We find ourselves in hard circumstances. We find ourselves in places that we don't want to be and we refuse to be content or grateful because I'm in a horrible place right now. I don't want to be here. How bold of you, Matthew, to say I should be content or thankful for the place I find myself in. I emphasize that. But here's the thing. I believe—so bold to say from this pulpit—I believe God has you there for a reason. It may not be a reason you like. It may not be a reason you're enjoying. But the reason why we get

so upset—the reason why you are so upset—is because you have not seen the end of the story yet.

Israel was so upset because they could not look beyond where they were at to realize that they're not at the end of the story, that this is the place where God wants them, and that they're going to move on from this place, and they're going to look back one day and see it as part of the resume of blessings in their life that molded them into the person or people that they will become. There's a longer part of your story than the place you're at right now. This is just the next step forward.

Without Desire, There Is No Dedication

Without desire, there is no dedication and self-sacrifice. That's true. That's true. That was a quote by Rabbi Shalom Arush. Pretty neat guy. Wrote some cool books. Without desire, there is no dedication or self-sacrifice. Men, women, if you want a good marriage, there needs to be—if you desire to have a good marriage, there's going to have to be some dedication and or self-sacrifice. If you don't desire that, then you're not going to dedicate anything to it.

Want to be good parents? Guess what? It's going to take dedication and self-sacrifice. If you don't desire redemption like the Israelites, there will be no dedication and self-sacrifice as part of your walk with God. If there is no desire to be part of a community of believers where you, your children, and your youth can grow in their walk with the Lord, there will be no dedication and self-sacrifice.

The Desert of Zin

Israel journeyed on, and they finally made it to a peaceful place where they got to do some stretching all day long. I was going to say yoga, but someone will say, oh, that's pagan stretching. And this place was known as the Desert of Zin. Zin. I know.

So they finally made it out of Moriah and came to this place. [Exodus 16](#), verse 1: "They grumbled against Moses and Aaron." It says—I love. The Bible is not randomly written. It was crafted as a narrative, as a story. It's not simply something to read, but a story that invites you into it. Because you and I both know this is all talking about you too. This is a theme in the story.

God Keeps Testing Gratitude

And so when you see that they grumbled against Moses and Aaron, you're like, again? Again? God, thank you for the power that produces freedom. Thank you for liberty. Thank you for splitting the sea. Thank you for making the bitter water drinkable. We're hungry. Can we have some food now? No. We used to have McDonald's in Egypt, and at least we could have died happy with a Big Mac. The Lord's plan all along was obviously to kill us out in the wilderness.

And to make things worse, Israel never said thank you. Never said thank you. God goes on to give them manna and all kinds of stuff. Man, time after time, God is trying to mold them into a people of contentment, a people of joy. God allows them to experience a perceived hardship and then shows them that he takes care of the grass and the sparrows and he's going to take care of them.

Israel's Ingratitude Reaches Its Climax

Israel's ingratitude reaches its climax in Parsha Shalak Lakah, which is [Numbers 13](#), which is when the spies, the 12 spies, go into the land to speck it out. And they returned saying, listen, it's filled with milk and honey, got some grapes, pretty cool. But we're like grasshoppers to the giants that are stomping around in there.

And once they said that, Numbers chapter 14, verse 2, here's how the people responded: "All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, if only we had—" here we go, you're getting sick of hearing the same thing. And then they're like, you know what? This Moses guy, he's been horrible the whole time. He hasn't done anything good. Let's pick a new leader to take us back to Egypt. Yeah, that seems like a great idea.

Verse 11—the Lord speaks to Moses, but Moses intercedes. God relents, saying fine. But none of these people in this generation are going to enter the land.

Bearing God's Name

Israel was the people called to bear God's name. Everything the people called to bear God's name—which includes you as believers in Yeshua—everything they do is a reflection of their loyalty to God in the story of the Bible. And what ends up happening? Well, when Israel does not embody the justice and righteousness of who God is, it always brings shame from the nations. That's what took place when they finally had all of the power, but they became the very thing that they were freed from. They were never content with the blessings of God. They wanted to be Egypt, and they became Egypt. And they oppressed the poor, and they enslaved others, the weaker nations, and that's what pushed them into exile.

Ingratitude Breeds Judgment

The other nations came in and kicked them out and brought them into Babylon. The people they are called to be a light to, they oppressed. And throughout all of this, all of the blessings, still no gratitude throughout the whole story. No thank you, no nothing.

We see that time after time, Israel has an opportunity to show gratitude to God. And they complain. And there's a little bit of judgment that happens. And they do it again. A little bit of judgment. You could say ingratitude breeds judgments in the Torah. No real way around it. That's what happens.

Hitting Brick Walls

And so do you find yourself going through life hitting brick wall after brick wall? Because I've been in that place. Every little thing that you attempt to do is just another brick wall of hindrance. And then you get in a place where complaining about it becomes an identity. It becomes who you are. Eeyore. You become Eeyore. Isn't this a great day today? Oh yeah. Stepped on a rock. My foot hurts now. Becomes your identity. I guess I had that coming. You get a step ahead, but then another brick wall. And you find yourself always complaining, maybe even complaining to God. Why have you brought me here?

God may have brought you there because that was his intention. Maybe God is trying to teach us the same lessons that he was trying to teach the Israelites to embody as his people. That they never did. They never did learn. Gratitude. Say thank you. If this is all I get, thank you, God.

Finding Contentment

And when you do that, notice the misery lifts a little bit. The anxiety of trying to get somewhere else lifts by just being content in that moment. Yeah, but it's not a very good circumstance. But look at the resume that got you here. Look at the things that you do have in your life. Look at life itself. My kids are a pain in the tuchus. Yeah, but have you thanked God for them recently? We've got a womb for one to beat. They're a mess. Yeah, but you have them in your life. And you know this is a season. You haven't seen the end of the story yet. Show gratitude. Say thank you. Because hardships aren't hardships anymore if you can see them as some type of a blessing. Even if it's an unfulfilled blessing, it's still coming. Like a package from Amazon, right? It's ordered. It's coming. It's not here yet, but I know it's mine. It's been ordered. This is a blessing.

The Sin in the Garden

You know what some say the sin in the garden was? Eating the little piece of fruit or whatever, apple or fig or whatever. Sure, yeah, they ate the fruit. Okay, check out what takes place in [Genesis 3.11](#).

So you know the story. The snake comes and talks to Eve and deceives her. And then she takes the fruit and she turns and gives it to her husband because he's there. He's like, yeah, I think it's a good idea. Eats it, right? And then they realize that they're naked. So they make some clothes, not very adequate. Then God comes and they're hiding, right? And then God finds them out. This is what he says: "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree I commanded you not to eat from?"

The man said, "The woman you put here with me. She gave me some of the fruit of the tree and I ate it."

Men. And I wonder, it may be heresy, I don't care. I wonder if Adam had just said the woman gave it to me. I wonder if his punishment would not have been as harsh. Every step you take will be barren ground and you will never grow anything and you'll till and nothing will grow and you'll be in misery, all plagues, curse, everything that your touch cursed.

A Teenager's Tale

The woman gave it to me. I don't have a teenager. Does anyone else have a teenager? I am not looking forward. Ben just turned eight and he was like, hey dad, in four or five years, I'm going to be a teenager. No, you get back in that crib. Reverse. Just so fast.

Can you imagine? Let's say you leave your team at home. Maybe they're old enough to be at home alone for a little while. I don't know. And you say, listen, I'm going to be gone all day. I'll be back later. Don't leave the house. Take care of the dog or cat. I just want you to pick up around the house. Just pick up the floor, okay? It's a football in the living room. Pick it up. Put it away. No big deal. Yeah, I can do that. No big deal.

And let's just say you come home and the football has collected dust, right? It has not moved. The things in the house have not been picked up. And you realize that your teenager has been playing Xbox all day long. I know, completely hypothetical, right? Never happens.

When Complaining Becomes Blame

So let's have two scenarios. Let's say you say, hey, why didn't you pick up the stuff? What happened? I say, well, Mom, Dad, I should have picked up the house. And I'm so sorry. I got distracted with the Xbox, and it didn't work. Hours went by, and I forgot. I'm so sorry.

You're still going to ground them, right? Still going to ground you, maybe a little punishment, but hey, don't let it happen again, no big deal.

Scenario two. Listen, Johnny, why is the house not picked up? You've been playing Xbox all day long and you didn't do one thing I asked you to do. Well, mom and dad, I got distracted playing the Xbox that you gave me. So if you had never given me the Xbox, none of this would have happened.

Now, I'm not an advocate of spanking, but I'd understand. Can you imagine? Can you imagine?

The woman you gave me that you put here gave me the fruit. It's a lack of contentment. Eve wasn't content. Adam wasn't content. We always want more.

Perpetuating Satan's Sin

In [Ezekiel 28](#), there is a metaphorical depiction of Adam's fall being ascribed to the king of Tyre. Some think it's the story of Satan falling from his place. Sure, let's go with Satan's fall, whichever. But it says things like, oh, you wore the anointed cherub on the mountain of God. You walked through the stones of fire, had all of the high priest type of stones on you. You were the anointed one of God, the priest of the garden. And pride entered your heart and you wanted more. You wanted more. You could not be content with the highest place of honor ever. In God's court. You were not thankful, which caused you to rebel.

If you're walking through life never satisfied, never content, always wanting more, always chasing after something else, always miserable because of it, you may be perpetuating the sin of Satan itself.

It's a joke until it's not, right? It's a joke until you look back on your life and you realize if you would just dare to change your mindset a little bit, you could have been happier, but you also could have been a happier person to others, the people that we should be grateful to have in our lives.

What If Israel Had Given Thanks

What would have happened if Israel had said, God, you freed us from Egypt. You split the sea. You gave us the water, gave us the manna. You gave us freedom from our oppressors. Thank

you. We don't know how we're going to overcome these giants, violence in the land. We don't know how we're going to—I mean, look at these armies. We can't fight them. I wonder what would have happened if Israel had relied on God instead of making their own stipulations.

God always gives measure for measure because in reality, his wrath is always our own disobedience and sin turned in on itself. And so everybody in that generation, they were scared to go into the land because they might die. Now they're going to walk around the desert until they are dead. And their children will be the generation that walks into the land.

A Wise Youth Takes Rebuke

Proverbs 13, 17 says this: What's that mean? Well, it means a wise youth, right? We'll go back to the story. If a wise person gets rebuked or punished and understands why, right? They understand. They take it. But a foolish person, a foolish person is never affected by it. They never see and acknowledge why they're being punished, why they're being rebuked.

Imagine a youth being rebuked or punished and they keep complaining. And so you punish them more, rebuke them again, and they keep complaining. When I was a kid, it would be, you're grounded for a day. Or maybe we do this with our kids. You're grounded for a day. And then I'd be like, that's too much. That's being unfair. You're never giving me anything in life. Why are you taking this? If you don't stop complaining, it's going to be two days, right? No, that won't do it. Two days, you know what I mean? No one's ever done that with their kids. Never. Three months, right? Don't come out of your room. Life is just horrible. Again and again and again. Ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch. The brick wall after brick wall after brick wall after brick wall.

And all the parent is doing, at least in this verse, if we apply it, all the parent is wanting is for their children to quit complaining and to find some type of contentment where they're at. To come to a place of wisdom and understand whatever you have is a gift. And it may be a gift you don't want, but you still say thank you to Uncle Bob.

Gratitude in God's Kingdom

Are you wise today? Some say that there's never an excuse to complain about God's blessings in his kingdom. And again, that's hard. It's a hard thing. Hard thing to say behind a pulpit, but it doesn't make it any less true.

Gratitude. So when my dad passed away, I learned very intimately about the stages of grief. And if you've ever had someone you love pass away...

Lots of confusing emotions. Guilt tends to be at the top of the list. It's like number three on the seven stages, but it's not the standard. Guilt. Why do we feel guilty when a loved one passes that's really close to us? We wish we would have spent more time with them because now the reality is we don't get to. And we feel guilty that we were not as grateful for them being in our lives as we should have been. And it hurts. It hurts.

Memories That Hurt

For months, maybe a year or two, it seemed like forever. Every time I thought about a memory with me and my father, physical pain, just made you angry, rage, because you're living in a world that you never wanted to live in, and that's without this loved one. And the memories hurt so much for the same reason that we feel guilt. It's a reminder that you're never going to get any more. And what tends to happen for some people, and unfortunately not others, and this is something that dramatically affected the way I view my current life in this moment and every part of it, is that you come to a place where those memories no longer hurt. There comes a transitional point where those memories begin to bring happiness and joy when you remember being with your loved one. Because in that moment, you find contentment with the time that you did have with them. And because you found contentment, there is a sense of gratitude that now comes with every single memory that you have.

Entitlement vs. Gratitude

Why did I feel so guilty? Why did it hurt so much when I lost my father? Because when he was alive, I guess I felt, and ignorantly enough, I don't necessarily think it was my fault, but I felt entitled to him always being there. It's my dad. Where's he going to go? Right? Where's it going to go? It's entitled. I felt entitled to that. You could say I took it for granted. Felt entitled to that. And the thing about entitlement is you can't have a great degree of gratitude for something that you feel entitled to. You can't. And whether that's your marriage, whether that's your job, whether that's your car, you cannot have a deep sense of gratitude for something you feel entitled to.

The Gift, Not the Entitlement

I bought my car. I worked for my car. Right? Right? I bring home the turkey bacon, all right? Men or women, breadwinners, I bring it home, therefore, I'm entitled to this, this, this, this, this. Sometimes it trickles down to your family. I'm entitled to X,Y, Z. I'm entitled to this house. I'm entitled to this money. I'm entitled to the car, so on and so forth. You might do it with your marriage. You might do it with your kids. You might do it with your family. You can never reach a deep sense of gratefulness for anything that you feel is not a gift and a blessing, but something that you did. That's a hard lesson to learn, and it's even a harder lesson to implement and activate in your life.

Desire, desire. The desire to be grateful for those blessings will always produce dedication and self-sacrifice for them. Romans chapter 121 says, Verse 1. Paul was, of course, speaking to people who had statues and idols. I don't have any idols in my life. Who do we tend to exchange the immortal God for? Most of the time, it's just us. Most of the time, it's just us.

The Story of Israel

And so I encourage you to meditate on the story of the Bible, the story of Israel being enslaved, gaining redemption, and time after time, God bringing them to a place where they could take the opportunity to learn to be content, not only with what God has done for them and the blessings that they have had, but also watch God take them past the point of struggle and into the next story, to the end, and not get stuck. And the story of the wilderness is exactly that reminder of what it looks like when we refuse to come to that place. And so we're in the season of thanksgiving today and giving thanks. And so what an appropriate time to meditate on just that.

Please stand as we conclude services. And during this time, I invite you to pray. You can sing with us, worship, and meditate. If you need prayer today, we have prayer warriors on either side of the stage. Take advantage of that and be grateful. Be grateful.

In Yeshua's Name

Alvina Malcano, our Father, our King, Father, we thank you for this opportunity to once again dive into your holy word today. To be reminded of the power of contentment, the power of gratitude, and the power of simply recognizing that we're not entitled to the things and the people in our lives, that they are gifts that were given to us, and they can disappear just as quickly. And I ask that you would instill in us that sense of gratitude that you called Israel to

have in the wilderness, that we could be the people of contentment, of joy, of happiness, and of hope to the world around us, representing your kingdom. In Yeshua's name we pray. Amen.

Sing the Shema with me. Shema Yisrael. Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. Blessed is the name of his glorious kingdom for all eternity. And may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance toward you and give you peace. Because Yeshua, you are the Tsar Shalom. You are the Prince of Peace. And we bless you and we thank you. Shabbat Shalom, family.

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