

**JEREMIAH 33:3 "CALL TO ME" GROUP BIBLE STUDIES – LEADER'S STUDY -  
LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES**

**LESSON #3 – A CHRISTIAN'S CALL TO GRATITUDE**

**A CHRISTIAN'S CALL** – When I was young, at Christmas I had a hard time saying: "thank you." Maybe you were the same way. If the gift was what I wanted, I got so excited, I forgot to say, 'thanks.' If the present was disappointing, why bother. Now that I'm older, I still do the same thing to God. If He grants my wishes and dreams, I take Him for granted. If my hopes remain unfulfilled, then why show appreciation. Our lesson reminds us that a Christian should call to God in gratitude.

**THE PRAYER** – Dear Lord, we begin with words which paraphrase the Catechism. You have made me and all creatures. You have given me my body, soul, eyes, ears and all my members, my reason and all my senses. You have give me food and drink, house and home, and all my property. You daily and richly provide all that I need to support this body and life. All this You have done out of Fatherly and divine goodness and mercy. I have no merit or worthiness to deserve it. For this reason, I offer up my gratitude to thank and praise, to serve and obey You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

**AN INTRODUCTION** – We can identify with Mother Theresa's care for others. In 1994, she gathered up an unfortunate soul and brought her back to the mission. Mother Theresa relates, "She took hold of my hand as she said two only words: "Thank you." Then she died." I wonder, if you had been that person, what two words would you have spoken? Would you have said, "I'm hungry?" "I'm dying." "I'm hurting." What two words would come to our lips in such dire straights? Would any of us say, "thank you"?

**SATAN'S SUMMONS** – I think most of us would a few centuries ago. Back then, Pastors used to preach about the man who stumbled upon the barn where Satan was storing the seeds of sins. The man was most impressed by the diversity of seeds and the abundance of one special type: the seed of disappointment. The man learned that a good supply of these seeds was kept because they seemed to be able to grow almost anywhere. "ALMOST anywhere?" he asked Satan. Satan eventually confessed, there was one place disappointment wouldn't grow - in the heart of a grateful man."

**THOUGHT:** If you listen to the prayers of the church on Sunday morning, you will quickly see that there are far more prayers which ask for future blessings than there are for those who are grateful for gifts received. There are only two conclusions that we can draw from this:

- a. God doesn't answer our prayers. If He doesn't answer prayers, we have nothing for which to be grateful.
- b. God does answer prayers, but we don't stop to show our appreciation. In that case, we, not God, need to remedy the problem.

Let's take a look at some Scripture and see what the Word of God says about our call to gratitude. Look up the passages listed and then reply to the question that is asked:

**SCRIPTURE SEARCH 1 –**

<b>TEXT</b>	<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>ANSWER</b>
Deut 32: 6	What does God want to be thanked for?	For the fact He made us.
Judges 8:34	What does God do to make us remember Him?	He rescues us.
Psalms 106:21	What should God's people remember.	He has done great things for us.
1 Samuel 8:7	Lack of thankfulness means what?	We reject the Lord as King.
2 Chronicles 26:16	What can bring about our downfall? Can power do the same today?	When we become powerful. Absolutely.
2 Chronicles 32:25	What else will cause us not to give thanks?	A proud heart.
Jeremiah 2:31	What do Jeremiah's people say to God?	We will come to You no more.
Hosea 11:3	What has God done for us? What didn't His people do?	Taught us to walk. Took us by the arm. Realize that God was in control.

**FIRST APPLICATION:** Wherever we have shared Jesus, we have found that ingratitude is part of the human condition. Ingratitude is not just directed against God, but against each other as well. At one time there was a radio program called "Job Center of the Air." The host of that program said that he helped over 2,500 people find work. Of those 2,500, only ten ever sent a thank you note. That's not nearly as tragic as the story of a retired parochial school teacher. After fifty years of service to the Lord, she has only received one letter of appreciation from all of her past students.

God's Scripture and our personal history are clear. We're just not very good at showing our appreciation to

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those who have helped us. We are like the little boy who, having returned from a birthday party was asked by his mother, "Did you thank the lady for the party?" "I was going to," he said, "but a girl ahead of me said it first. The lady told her not to mention it. So when it was my turn, I didn't."

Indeed, we not only fail to give thanks to those who have been special to us, oftentimes we are critical of them. Look at these passages and see what the Children of Israel said ...

**SCRIPTURE SEARCH 2 - CHRIST'S CALL -**

<b>TEXT</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>WHOSE WILL WAS ANSWERED</b>
Exodus 5:7-9,19-21	What did they complain about?	They had to work harder.
Exodus 15: 24	What did they grumble about?	They had nothing to drink.
Exodus 16: 2-3	What did they whine about?	No food to eat.
Numbers 16: 2-3	What was their gripe?	They said Moses and Aaron had set themselves up higher.
Numbers 20: 2-4	What was the problem?	No water for themselves or their animals.

Obviously, these people should have been grateful to the Lord and His prophet. Sadly, that appreciation never materializes. List some of the things for which they should have been thankful:

Food    Water    Family    God's guidance    Health    Clothing    God's miracles    His protection

In contrast to what we have seen above, take a look at the passages which follow and answer the questions:

<b>PASSAGE</b>	<b>WHO IS GIVING THANKS?</b>	<b>FOR WHAT DOES HE GIVE THANKS?</b>
Matthew 11:25	Jesus	For hiding things from the "wise" and revealing them to the children.
Matthew 26:27	Jesus	For giving the Passover meal and then the Last Supper.
John 11: 41	Jesus	For having heard His prayers and granting Lazarus' resurrection.

**THOUGHT & ILLUSTRATION -** If there is anyone who didn't need to offer up a prayer of thanks it was the Savior. Nevertheless we have record of these three instances where He gave thanks. We can be sure there were many more times when He called upon the Father in gratitude. Of course, we aren't like the Savior. Is it possible that we could be like the woman in this true story. A pastor was on a missionary tour which took him to a leper colony. There he consented to lead a brief worship service. A short while into the service, a lady raised her head. 'Hers', he said, 'was the most hideous face I had ever seen. Her nose and ears had been entirely lost to the disease.' The lady lifted a fingerless hand into the air and asked, "Can we sing *Count Your Many Blessings*."? Accompanied by a friend, the pastor had to leave the service. The friend said, "I guess you'll never be able to sing that song again." "Yes I will," the minister replied, "but I'll never sing it the same way."

Can you list some people you know who have experienced pain and problems who have continued to give thanks? \_\_\_\_\_

What things would they motivate you to give thanks for? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think these people can take the "but" out of your prayer. You know how it goes ...

We say, "Thank you, Lord, for friends, but I wish I had \_\_\_\_\_" or,  
 "I'm thankful for my health, but I wish I weren't \_\_\_\_\_" or,  
 "I'm grateful for our home, but I wish we could afford \_\_\_\_\_" or,  
 "I'm grateful for \_\_\_\_\_ but I wish \_\_\_\_\_"

It is time, my friends, to hear the Christian's call to gratitude.

**THE WAY OF PRAYER** – Dear Lord, I am thankful. Let me be more thankful still. In Jesus' Name. Amen.