

## How Can We Give Thanks in All Circumstances? | Jon Bloom



*Give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*  
1 Thessalonians 5:18

How is it possible to “give thanks in all circumstances,” especially if our circumstances are horrible? What fuels thanksgiving when life seems to be one discouragement, disappointment, disease, disaster, and death after another?

There is only one way. And Jesus both is the way (John 14:6) and shows the way. Eucharisteo: Thanks in the Face of Horror

The best place to see Jesus showing us the way is in the Upper Room where he, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22:19)

The Greek word for “thanks” in this verse is “eucharisteo.” And the best person I know to unpack this word is Ann Voskamp:

*The root word of eucharisteo is charis, meaning “grace.” Jesus took the bread and saw it as grace and gave thanks. He took the bread and knew it to be gift and gave thanks. Eucharisteo, thanksgiving, envelopes the Greek word for grace, charis. But it also holds its derivative, the Greek word chara, meaning “joy.” Charis. Grace. Eucharisteo. Thanksgiving. Chara. Joy. (Eucharisteo Conversation)*

Now, let’s think for a moment about what Jesus’s eucharisteo meant.

Thank you, Father, that my body, symbolized by this bread, is about to be brutally broken and I am about to be damned by your wrath (Isaiah 53:10) so that you will receive supreme glory in being able to forgive undeserving sinners (Philippians 2:11) and I will share eternally full joy (John 15:11, Psalm 16:11) with hundreds of millions of forgiven sinners made righteous through my sacrifice (Isaiah 53:11).

Jesus’s thanks were not based on his present circumstances. He was about to endure the worst possible horror. He felt thankful to the Father for the grace and glory that was coming because of the cross and this gave him joy. Eucharisteo.

## **Future Joy Fuels Your Thankful Endurance**

Jesus's eucharist was fueled by his belief in future grace. That's what the author of Hebrews meant when he wrote that, Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith...for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

Jesus's eyes were on his future joy. He got through the cross by not focusing on the cross but on the promised joy that would result from it. That's where God wants your eyes: on the future joy he has promised you.

## **What You Have to Look Forward to**

And what is your future joy? The very best possible future you could ever imagine — if you will believe it.

- You will have the free gift of complete forgiveness of all your sins extending into forever (Romans 6:23).
- You will never have to merit justification by keeping the law (Galatians 2:16).
- You will have all your real needs provided while on earth (Philippians 4:19).
- You will receive all the grace you need at all times so that you will abound in every good work God has for you (2 Corinthians 9:8).
- God will complete the good work he began in you (Philippians 1:6).
- You will be raised from the dead and never die again (1 Corinthians 15:52–53).
- That means someday you will see Jesus, be with him (2 Corinthians 5:8), and be like him (1 John 3:2).
- In that day you will know for the first time full, unpolluted joy (Psalm 16:11).
- You will be completely free from all corruption (Romans 8:21).
- You will have God forever (1 Peter 3:18) as your exceeding joy (Psalm 43:4).

And that's just a small sampling! The joy set before you is the same joy Jesus had set before him, because you are an heir of the kingdom with him (Romans 8:17).

## **Look to the Joy Set Before You**

So right now you have trouble. That's okay. Jesus said that you would (John 16:33). And Jesus really understands (Hebrews 4:15).

In fact, the trouble that you endure has a purpose: in it you are displaying the reality of Jesus to the world in a unique way. The kingdom of God is most clearly shown on earth when Christians gratefully suffer present trouble because they see a future weight of glory coming that makes everything this world throws at them as "light and momentary afflictions" in comparison (2 Corinthians 4:17).

So how can you give thanks in all circumstances? There's only one way: Jesus's way. Look to the joy set before you. Look to the joy! If the future joy Jesus promises is real and you believe him, there is no circumstance that can steal your thanksgiving.

May all your Thanksgiving celebrations be soaked in eucharist.