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Heavenly Father, we praise You and we thank You for all of the wonderful, beautiful things You have brought into our lives. God, You gave us Your Son Jesus. You gave Him up to be crucified and died in our place so that You could restore us to Yourself. You purchased us back through the blood of Your Son, and that is amazing. But You didn't just stop there, God, You continue to bless us every single day in so many ways that we are aware of and that we are unaware of. And we pause right now and we say thank You for that. And we thank You especially for the Word that we are about to learn from today. Please open up our hearts and minds to understand what You've written there and help us to grow in maturity and to grow closer to You and together amongst one another in love. We pray in the name of Your Son. Amen. Well, yeah, like I said, it's Thanksgiving Sunday. Surprise. Yeah. In case you had to figure it out from all the food and advertisements and stuff. And another big surprise is I'm going to be speaking on thankfulness. And as I was writing it, I kind of felt like, "Oh, you're just taking the easy way out." Thankfulness. That's the obvious one. But you got to talk about thankfulness because thankfulness is so important in the gospel. Then if you're like me, you hear the preacher say, "We're going to talk about thankfulness." And then you're probably like, "Great. Thankfulness. One other thing I got to figure out and do." And the preacher's telling me all these things I got to do. But no. No. I'm going to stop you right there and say Leviticus 22-29. "When you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord, offer it of your own free will." So the first thing I'm going to tell you this morning is, if you're going to be thankful to God, be honest about it and do it from your own free will. Don't do it because you feel guilted or because the pastor told you to or anything like that. Be honest and sincere in your thankfulness. God knows your heart. He knows when you're being sincere and not. And he doesn't want insincere thanks. So offer thankfulness to the Lord, but only if you're actually thankful and if you're actually feeling it. Now, the Bible doesn't command us to be thankful. But God wants us to be thankful. And I hope that you're thankful. 1 Thessalonians 5.18 says, "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." It's God's will that you be thankful, not His command. When God looks at us and sees His children not being thankful, He looks on us with concern. He looks at us the way a parent looks at a kid who's sitting in front of the television eating junk food all the time. See, thankfulness is good for us. Now, don't get me wrong, God deserves all of our thanks. But when He wants us to be thankful, it's for our own good. A thankful heart is a healthy heart, and that's why God wants it for us. Colossians 3.15 says, "Let the peace of God rule your hearts, to which you were also called in one body and be thankful." And Hebrews 13.15 says, "Therefore, by Him, let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." "Thankfulness is the collision of God's goodness and our humility." Now, God, as I'm sure you're aware, is infinitely good towards us. So if you're having a hard time being thankful, then that needs to be a warning sign that we need to check our heart, because it could be that there's some pride growing in there, that we've started to fall into the false belief that all of the good things we have that we've somehow earned or deserved. And that's absolutely not true. You know, I said it before, and we were sinners and traitors when God came and rescued us from our sin. We absolutely did not deserve anything that He brought to us, but out of love, He did it anyways. And so when you recognize that, you begin to humble your heart. And as you become more humble and as you're overwhelmed with that goodness, then you respond with thanksgiving towards God. James reminds us in his letter, chapter 4, verse 6, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." And Romans 1.21 says, "Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were they thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened." They weren't thankful. They didn't glorify God, and they became futile in their thoughts, and their hearts were darkened. This is why God wants us to be thankful people. This is why it's His will that we be thankful, because if you're not thankful, your thoughts will be futile, your heart will be darkened, you'll be full of pride, and the Bible says God resists the proud. This is why God is so interested in us, being humble and being full of thankfulness. It's for our own good. Well, so how do you get thankful? How do you become thankful? You have to be mindful of that for which we give thanks. And once again, I'm going to encourage you, get into your Bible every day, read the stories of Jesus. Even if you've read them before, read them again. I promise you'll find something new every time. 2 Corinthians 9.15 says, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift." I mean, if you can think of no other thing to be thankful for, you can remember the price that Jesus had to pay for you. God couldn't overlook our sin, because we all know that God is love. And some people will foolishly say, "Well, because God is love, he just has to forgive me." You know, all he has to do is just say, "Okay, I forgive you because I love you." But it doesn't work that way. If I say I love you, and then I see somebody doing wrong or evil to you, and I don't get angry that this injustice is being done to you, if I don't demand justice for when you are wronged, that's not really a heart of love towards you. And so God, in order to be truly a loving God, has to also demand justice. And so, He couldn't just wink and say, "All right, you're forgiven, whatever." We were on the hook, and because of that justice, He couldn't just wink and take us off the hook, but He found a legal way to get us off the hook. And that was to have His perfect Son take the death and punishment that we deserve. And I know that that's... It's sad to think about what Jesus went through, but it's such a beautiful act of love towards us. He didn't just stop there. That was such an amazing thing that was more than we could ever want or deserve, and we could never pay it back, but He didn't stop there. After that, He said, "Now I'm also going to put my Holy Spirit in your heart so that you and me can be together from this day forward." And then He didn't just stop there, He continues to bless us. He promises that we'll always have the food we need and the clothes we need. He does things big and small for us every day, things we see and things we don't see. The blessings keep coming. Ultimately, what God wants from us is not just a day of thankfulness or a season of thankfulness, but a whole lifetime attitude of thankfulness. That attitude, when you're constantly thankful day after day, you're going to constantly be choking the pride that's in your heart. And as that pride gets choked, it says God opposes the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. So as you're thankful and as you kill that pride and as you develop humility in your heart, God will give you grace. He will pour out His grace and His blessing on you. You will go from being in a position where God is opposing you to where He's pouring out grace on you. So what I'm going to do right now is we're going to have our time of open worship, but I want to spend some time sharing the things we're thankful for. No one's forcing you. You don't have to, whatever. It's amazing all of the ways that God blesses us. It will be healthy for our hearts to express that in public. It'll be healthy for the people around you to hear all the ways that God has working in the lives of the people around us. So I'm going to start now. I'm going to pray and then we're going to have it's going to be open worship. So if we can, we still be moments of silence. If you're new here, if you're a visitor with us, don't freak out. We do. We have this is the way that one of the ways Quakers worship is through quiet meditation on the Spirit of God in our hearts. But as we're doing that, I also want to encourage you to stand up and share something. And there's me and there's one other person. We have microphones and we're going to run over so that anyone who's listening on their recording can also hear the things we're thankful for and they can share in that joy. And that will fill their heart up with blessing and praise towards God. So let's pray first. Thank you, Heavenly Father, for this amazing, indescribable love that you have for us. God, every day I just try and understand this love and I cannot wrap my head around it. It is so big and so beautiful. And all I can say is thank you. I can't pay you back for it. I can't earn it. And yet you just poured on me and you poured on me and I say thank you. God, as we sit here now in our time of open worship, I pray that if there's people here who've just been weighed down with difficulties and burdens, I pray that you will remind them of the beautiful good things that you do in our lives and in their lives. I pray that you speak to their hearts through your Holy Spirit. Dedicate this time now to you, God. Please come and speak to us. Feed your lambs. In Jesus' name, amen. I could go on and on about all the things I'm thankful for this morning, but there are two things on my mind. One is I'm thankful for France, one French especially, that took me to Australia with her. I spent two weeks down there. Had a wonderful time. But while we were gone, a tornado hit the Coca-Cola. It hit her brother and sister, brother-in-law's house. Took off part of their house, all the green bins, tractors, wagons. But the next morning when they got out, there were 50 people out in their yard waiting to help them clean up what seemed to be an insurmountable job turned out to be a joy and a blessing. And I'm thankful that I live in an area where people have the gaming hearts to go out and help other people. Thank you, Lord. I am thankful that I have an amazing, wonderful family. And I know when I talk to other people my age and they talk about all the hurt and the bitterness that they have with their parents and their siblings, I realize just how blessed I am to have a family that I'm looking forward to seeing over Thanksgiving and the holidays. And I'm thankful that I'm going to get to see them later on this week. I'm thankful for a lot of things, but I guess it's no fair saying your family because everybody's thankful for their family. I want to praise God for my wonderful family and how I've been blessed with three wonderful grandsons and another one coming. And that's just a blessing. And it almost seems so obvious to have us all say, "Boy, I'm thankful for my family, but I really am. I just thank God for the wonderful children that he gave me, my wonderful husband." And we all grew up in a Christian home and people weren't afraid to talk about it in our homes, and I am grateful for that. I also wanted to say that I'm thankful for music. And again, that may seem so obvious, but I just feel like music can speak in ways that words can't. And I felt very blessed at my school that I was allowed to have a Veterans Day program. And we invited all the community veterans and the kids saying and wrote essays thanking the veterans for their sacrifice and what they had done. But what I really loved was that at the end, I had 900 people all singing "God Bless America" in our school. And it was a beautiful thing, and we were able to sing that. I wouldn't be allowed to talk about it, but we were able to sing it. And I am very thankful for that, that the music was able to speak in a way that our words can't say. I'm thankful this morning for my family, my two children, and three grandchildren, and five great grandchildren, and that they all know the Lord and serve him in various ways. But I'm thankful, too, for Rhonda and Clover and Dick this morning for the music they provide for us and for our praise team. The music is just very touching every Sunday morning. And I'm thankful, especially for Ken's prayer this morning, it touched my heart. I'm thankful that if we are faithful and just to forgive, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins if we confess them to him. As I sit here and think about all that I've got to be thankful for, and I could be here for a long time talking to you about everything I have to be thankful for. But the one thing that comes to surface real quick is how God has cared for Dick and I through the year where Dick's had some health problems, and it's been pretty frightening at times for both of us. But God has sustained us and gave us a peace that really does pass all understanding, and I know it's because of him that we're going forward and looking forward to more years together. But the other thing that I think about, and it just overwhelms me sometimes, is the fact that Marg and Keith Glasgow love us. And from a country very far away, they found Carmel, France, and seemed to fall in love with us. I think maybe I've forgotten the passion that you feel when you first fall in love with the congregation and you first feel at home. But Keith and Marg certainly have that, and I think that is a wonderful, precious gift that could only come from God, and I do thank God for that. I'm thankful that while we are waiting for Keith and Marg to come and be our resident pastors and love us all and get us as excited as they are, I am so thankful that Matthew Klossmeyer is here with us, and I think he is doing a fantastic job, and I know that he listens to the Lord and does not do things just immediately, but he listens and is very aware of what God is telling him, and we are blessed. I am so thankful to be here today. I have a friend and her family who are so inspirational to me, and she believes in God as I do, and there's a lot of strife in our life, but we look to God for it, and I'm so glad to be able to share it and bring her into the health of God with me today. Thank you. This is your last chance. I've been going through the Psalms. I told you guys that before, but I'm right around in the early 100s, and the psalmist keeps using this phrase, "I will praise you in the assembly, I'll praise you in the congregation." That's what we're doing here when we stand up and share what we're thankful for. We are praising him in the assembly, so if anyone else would like to give God glory before we have our last song, stand up. Let me close in prayer then. Heavenly Father, thank you for all of these things. Thank you that we haven't begun to scratch the surface of all that you've done for us. That your love and your blessings never fail and they never end. So we say thank you in our humble human way here today. As we go out throughout the rest of this holiday season, God, please continue to open our eyes to the blessings you have given us. Show us the things that we should be thankful for and help us to truly acknowledge that they are all from you, that you are beautiful and wonderful for investing in our lives. Thank you again. Amen.