



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: How to Turn Thanksgiving into Thanks-Living – Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Adrian Rogers

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and from all of us here at Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, happy Thanksgiving. In Psalm 34, King David wrote, "I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth." Now we all know we should be thankful, but how many of us actually practice gratitude beyond Thanksgiving Day? Well, on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, we're joined by the late Pastor Adrian Rogers, beloved author and former senior pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. Pastor Rogers went home to be with the Lord 20 years ago, back in 2005, but his powerful ministry, Love Worth Finding, continues even to this day. It still reaches millions of people each and every day through radio and through television. Here's the truth: God loves it when we praise and thank Him, and it's something we need to weave into our everyday lives, not just reserved for one special Thursday every year. But how do we take thanksgiving and turn it into thanks-living? That's exactly what Pastor Rogers will help us understand. During the next half hour during today's classic presentation, he will examine the biblical concept of sacrifice, and shows us how it connects us to authentic thankfulness. It's a powerful message, one of Dr. Dobson's all-time favorites and it just might change how you think about gratitude. So now let's listen into Pastor Adrian Rogers with a special message about how to turn thanksgiving into thanks-living on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's family talk,

Dr. Adrian Rogers: Psalm 107, verses 21 and 22, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men. And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving." Now, if you don't mind writing in your Bible, would you underscore that phrase right there, the sacrifices of thanksgiving because that phrase is the title of our message, "The Sacrifices of Thanksgiving." "And declare His works with rejoicing." Now, it has been said that talk is cheap. We thank the Lord and we say, "Lord, we're so thankful. We're so grateful for all that You've done for us." Well, do you know what we need to do? We need to turn thanksgiving into thanks-living. That is to offer to God the sacrifices of thanksgiving. Now, if we're thankful, it really ought to show in our lives, and by the way, I don't believe that there's any other sin quite like

the sin of ingratitude. Shakespeare said, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

Now, those of you who have loved and labored and invested much in the hearts and lives of your children, know how grieved you are when your children do not seem to appreciate, or to be thankful for the sacrifices that parents have made, mothers who've gone down into the valley of the shadow of death to bring these precious children into this world and dads who've labored long and hard. What a sacrifice, and I think Shakespeare was right. The poet Milton, the blind poet, he said that a person with an ungrateful spirit only has one vice. He said, because all of the rest of his vices are virtues compared to ingratitude. Every other sin is a virtue compared to the sin of ingratitude. How horrible, how terrible not to be grateful to God.

And yet in America, all around we can find those who are grumbly hateful rather than humbly grateful. Well, how can we translate our thanksgiving today into thanks-living? Well, we're to offer to God what the Bible calls the sacrifices of thanksgiving. Now, over in 1 Peter chapter two, don't turn to it, but 1 Peter chapter two tells that all of those of us who are saved are priests. You're looking at a Baptist priest. You ever seen a Baptist priest before? I'm a Baptist priest and you are a priest. Now, I don't walk into my collar, I back into my collar, but I'm still a Baptist priest and you are a priest. All of those of us who are saved are priest of God and every priest ought to be able to offer sacrifices to the Lord, and Peter tells us that because we're priests, we're to offer up spiritual sacrifices.

I've gone through God's Word and I've found five spiritual sacrifices. Sacrifices that you can offer all this week and the rest of your life as unto the Lord. I'm going to call them today the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and I want you to make a little checklist, maybe put it in your Bible and see, am I continually offering to the Lord these five spiritual sacrifices that we're going to call today the sacrifices of thanksgiving? Because I want to say again that talk is cheap. You can say, "Oh, we are thankful and eat a big meal and watch football." Now folks, it ought to go a little further than that. You ought to have more in your Thanksgiving than stuffing yourself and then becoming a couch potato. You need to do something else besides that in order to show how thankful to God you are. Now, we're going to do a little Bible searching this morning and let's turn first of all to Romans chapter 12, and I want to talk to you about presenting first of all yourself as a sacrifice.

Romans chapter 12, there is what I'm going to call the sacrifice of your very person of yourself. Look if you will, in verses one and two, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service and be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Now notice in verse one, he talks about a living sacrifice all the way through. We're going to be talking about that word sacrifice, okay? Now the very first

sacrifice that we're going to offer is what we call a living sacrifice, which is your body. Now, why should I do that? Well, notice what the apostle Paul says, "I beseech you, therefore brethren." It's almost as if he's on his knees in front of you and who was speaking when Paul spoke? God was speaking.

Now often we talk about our prayer to God. This is God's prayer to man. Have you ever thought about God praying to you? That's what He's doing. He's saying, "I beseech you, I plead with you." Now, if the Lord Jesus were to come and get in front of you and fold His hands and look up in your face and say, "I beg you, do this," would you do it? Would you do it? If the Lord were to get on His knees in front of you and pray to you and ask you to do something, that's what He's doing right here. The Lord is beseeching you. Here's the reason for it. By the mercies of God on the basis of what God has done for you, why should I give my body to Him? Because He gave His body for me. He suffered, bled and died upon that cross.

And when we drove those nails into His hands, His quivering heart was saying, I love you, I love you, and those nails were my sins and my hard heart was the hammer that drove those nails into the palms of Jesus and yet He suffered and bled and died for our sins and all of Romans chapter one right on up to chapter 12 tells us about the mercies of God. And then the apostle Paul says, "I beseech you therefore brethren, because of the mercies of God, because of God's goodness that you present your bodies to him." You see, "drops of grief can ne'er repay the debt of love I owe. Here Lord, I give myself away. 'Tis all that I can do." Now, that's the reason for it. And what is the requirement of it? How must I give myself to Him? Well, let me suggest three ways as this Thanksgiving season. You want to present a living sacrifice to the Lord. Well, the very first thing I want to say is that you must do it voluntarily. Nobody can make you do it. You see the word ye present? Do you see the word present? That's the word for a man joining an army voluntarily. Now, two ways to get in the army. You can go down and present yourself or they can draft you.

Now he's talking here about a volunteer, a volunteer. There's nobody, there's nobody can make you do this. You must do it willingly. So that's the first thing you must willingly say "Here, Lord of my own free will, I present myself." Have you done that? Have you just laid yourself upon the altar? Now secondly, not only must you do it willingly, but you must do it completely now that you present your bodies a living sacrifice wholly. Now that word H-O-L-Y is akin to our word W-H-O-L-E, which means complete. That you give yourself completely. Have you done this, completely? You see, look, a sacrifice doesn't have any more plans of its own. A sacrifice was slain. We're to die to the old way. My wife, my children, my home, my car, my vacation, my future, my bank account, my ambitions, they all belong to the Lord. Have you done that?

Have you just said "Here, Lord, I give myself away. 'Tis all that I can do." I do it completely. I do it voluntarily. I do it completely and different. Not only was it voluntary, not only was it complete, but let me tell you something else about a sacrifice. Now, there was the Old Testament animal sacrifice, the New

Testament living sacrifices compared to that. The Old Testament animal sacrifice after it was slain, it was bound to the altar. The Bible says, bind the sacrifice to the altar. Do you know why it was bound to the altar? Because it would tend to slide off. Have you ever picked up a piece of freshly killed meat? It's slippery. It's slippery, and so there were two flesh hooks and those flesh hooks would bind that sacrifice to the altar. Have you ever made a commitment to the Lord and then tend to slide off the altar?

Have you? I have many a time. I mean, I've told the Lord, "I've vowed and declared Lord, that's the last time I'll ever do that." Or I've said, "Lord, from now on I'm going to do this every day. God, you can count on me." And I just kind of slide off the altar. Do you ever slide off the altar? Yeah. You see, look, we need to be bound to the altar if we're going to have a living sacrifice. The priest had two flesh hooks. Let me mention two flesh hooks that'll keep you bound to the altar. Number one is devotion, your love for Jesus. And number two is discipline. Those are the two flesh hooks that'll keep you on the altar: devotion and discipline. Devotion and discipline. One is not a substitute for the other, but together they'll keep you bound to that altar so that you will stay locked in place, a living sacrifice by devotion and discipline, staying there giving yourself to the Lord.

Offer yourself this thanksgiving to the Lord and say, "Lord, before I give you anything else, I give you myself completely." Now, a lot of us don't want to be bound to the altar. I'll guarantee you we don't. That's the reason some men don't get married. They don't want to get bound down to marriage. Sure, they want to stay free. They want to be loose. There's the reason why some folks want to join the church. Did you know we have folks here this morning ought to come and join this church? You know why they won't join the church? They love to drop in and visit, but they don't want the responsibility of church membership.

That's the reason why some people won't teach a class. Now, some of you have the gift of teaching, but you say, "You know, pastor, we've got a cottage over with us in such a place. We don't want to get bound down." That's the reason why some folks won't make a pledge to the building program. They say, "Well now look, I just don't believe in making commitments." They're married, they've got a mortgage on the house, a mortgage on the car. They don't believe in making commitments. What they mean is they believe in making commitments to everybody else except to Jesus. They just don't want to make a commitment to the most important thing. "I'll give as the spirit moves, but I just don't want to be bound down."

Hey, I think it's pretty good to be bound down. I think it's pretty good to get devotion and discipline and say, "I am giving myself and I am making a commitment to Jesus." Alright, now let me mention another kind of a sacrifice. Now remember we're talking about the sacrifices of thanksgiving. First of all, your person. Now right behind that should come the sacrifice of your praise. Turn with me to Hebrews chapter 13. Hebrews chapter 13 and look if you will in

verse 15, "By him therefore," and the hymn refers to Jesus, "By him therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise." Underscore it, the sacrifice of praise. Have you ever thought of your praise as being a sacrifice? The sacrifice of praise to God continually. That is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto His name. This is a wonderful, wonderful sacrifice. Now folks, when you offer the sacrifice of praise, I'm going to tell you something that may amaze you. God had rather have your praise than have your money.

Your praise is of more value to God than whatever you put in the offering plate this morning. That is if it is genuine praise and I have a verse. I found a verse that proves that. Psalm 69 verses 30 and 31, don't turn to it. Let me read it to you. "I will praise the name of God with a song and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or a bullock that have horns and hooves." Do you know how much an ox was worth in this day? That would be like you coming to the church this morning and saying, "I'm going to give my Mercedes, I'm going to give my Cadillac, I'm going to give my Oldsmobile." An ox was extremely valuable. A man had an ox; he was a wealthy man. But God says here that your praise, your song of thanksgiving will please the Lord more than your material gifts.

Now, I want to tell you that praise is no substitute for your material gifts and we're going to see that later on, but I'm saying this morning, if you could only understand how important your praise is and your praise ought to be a way of life. Look at our verse again, verse 15, "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God." What's that next word? Continually, continually. Folks listen to me. You do not come to church to praise the Lord. You're to bring your praise with you to church. You don't commence your praise here. You continue your praise. Here you are to praise the Lord continually. And the reason that some of us do such a poor job of praising God when we come to church to praise him corporately, is we haven't been praising Him privately. Psalm 34 verse one, "I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth," and we're to come to the Lord's house today and just worship the Lord and we're to worship Him, not grudgingly. Nobody ought to have to beg us to sing. Brother Whitmeyer, it ought to break your heart that you should have to stand before congregation of people who are supposed to be saved and know Jesus and plead with them to worship, beg them to sing. No wonder the songwriter said, "Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God," That you should have to be coerced to sing. The Bible says in Psalm 119 verse 108, except I be thee the free will offerings of my mouth, the free will offerings of my mouth. God help us to offer to Him this morning the sacrifice of praise. Now, there's a third sacrifice I want to mention. First of all, remember we give our bodies a living sacrifice.

That's our person. Secondly, there's the offering to God, the sacrifice of praise. That's just the fruit of our lips continually, it means more ladies and gentlemen than you are giving your wealth is for you to give your worship to our great God. Now, here's the third thing and very closely akin to our praise, but not exactly the same is our prayer. Our prayer. That's the third sacrifice of thanksgiving and

that is our prayer. Our person, our praise, and now our prayer. Let me give you the verse. Are you ready for it? Psalm 141 and verse two, listen to it. Listen to it. "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense." Now if you again, don't mind marking your Bible, underscore the word incense "and the lifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice." There's our word sacrifice again. In all of these Scriptures, we have the word sacrifice.

Psalm 141, verse two, "the lifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice." Now your prayer is to be like two things. Number one, it is to be like incense and number two, it is to be like the evening sacrifice. Now what does this mean? What is incense? Incense is perfume. That in order for that perfume to be released, it has to be put on the fire. It is burned and as it is burned, the aroma is perfume that just goes up in smoke. Now your prayer, the Bible tells us in Revelation chapter five that that incense is the prayer of the saints. Incense in the Old Testament that ascends up, that sweet smelling smoke that goes up is like our prayer that goes up to God. Now, the Old Testament Jews worshiped in a tabernacle and if you were to walk in the front door of the tabernacle, you would come into the tabernacle and as you approach the tabernacle, there in that outer court is a great altar made of brass.

It was called the brazen altar. There was a fire in that altar and that fire was kindled from Heaven. That's very important that you understand this, that Aaron, the high priest and others, they didn't strike a match and light that fire, of course, they had no matches, but they couldn't light it with fire from any other fire or lightning or anything else. That fire had to be kindled from Heaven. It was holy fire in that brass altar and it was on that altar that the animals were burned and consumed. That picture, Jesus dying for our sins, that fire from Heaven, pictures the wrath of God, the holy wrath of God against sin. Then you would walk into that tabernacle and in that tabernacle on one side would be a beautiful candelabra. On the other side would be a table with bread on it called show bread that the priest would eat and the candelabra.

This pictures Christ our sacrifice. That's the altar and the show bread, pictures, Christ our sustenance that we feed on Him. And then over here, the candelabra pictures Christ our sight, Christ our sacrifice, Christ our sustenance, Christ our sight. And then we come to another altar, which was a golden altar. Now this golden altar is right in front of a curtain and behind that curtain is the holy of holies and the golden altar was the altar of incense. As the priest would come in morning and evening to trim the lamps, he would first go and he would offer incense upon that golden altar. But now let me tell you that the fire in the golden altar was kindled by fire from the brazen altar. Very important you understand this. That the priest always had to make certain that the fire that was in this altar was the fire that was in that altar and the fire in that altar was fire from Heaven.

Now, he would come in with this incense which was especially concocted for God alone and he would burn it. Now of course, if there were no fire in the altar, no incense would rise to God if there were strange fire in the altar, what

the Bible called strange fire was fire that God did not ignite. If there were strange fire, there would be swift judgment for offering to God something with strange fire, that is fire that God had not ignited. You say, pastor, what is all of that about? Well, now look, what our aim is is to get on into the Holy of Holies. Now remember, the Holy of Holies is where God is. That's where the Shekinah glory of God is right in that Holy of Holies and in that Holy of Holies is where we have communion with God and is in that Holy of Holies where the glory of God, the Shekinah glory of God was. Now, if this brazen altar is Christ our sacrifice and this candlestick is Christ our sight, and this is Christ our sustenance, and this is Christ our supplication, that prayer that ascends to God, that just makes way so we can go into the Holy of Holies with Christ our satisfaction. Do you understand where we know the Lord, where we meet the Lord, where we are satisfied and the deepest longings of our heart are met? But friend, you cannot come into the holy of holies unless you come to the altar of incense, which is prayer.

Roger Marsh:

Pastor Adrian Rogers reminds us that gratitude isn't measured by what we say just on Thanksgiving day, but by how we live every day after that. You've been listening to a special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk with a timeless message perfect for Thanksgiving from the late pastor Adrian Rogers. It's one of Dr. Dobson's favorites, and if you missed any part of today's program or if you'd like to share it with a loved one, simply go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk. Now, here in the U.S. as we celebrate Thanksgiving today, I want to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to you, our faithful listeners and supporters. You are the reason that we can continue this ministry. Your prayers sustain us, your encouragement lifts us up, and your financial partnership makes these broadcasts possible. If you are grateful for the way Family Talk, strengthens your family, your community, and our nation, we invite you to partner with us right now by making a special donation to our ministry here at James Dobson Family Institute.

Thanks to some generous friends at the ministry, we have a matching grant in place that will match every donation dollar for dollar up to \$6 million. For more information on how you can give a secure gift online, go to drjamesdobson.org/broadcasts. That's our special page that'll tell you more about how you can participate in this special James Dobson Memorial matching grant. That's drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. Or you can mail your contribution to our ministry mailing address, which is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code, 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh and on behalf of all of us here at Family Talk and the JDFI, happy Thanksgiving from our family to yours. May God continue to bless you and your family today and every day, and be sure to join us again next time for part two of Pastor Adrian Rogers' presentation on the sacrifices of Thanksgiving and turning thanksgiving into thanks-living. That's coming up right here on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you can still trust, for the family you love.

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.