

Greetings in the name of the LORD and savior JESUS CHRIST, welcome to The Well Community Church – Indian Service! Hope you all had great thanksgiving!!!!

We have been in this beautiful series called “Give Thanks.” We have seen from different parts of Scripture that thanksgiving is not just a nice idea; it is a command, protection, a weapon, a lifestyle. Today we are going to walk through the first six chapters of Daniel and see how a small group of believers lived out 1 Thessalonians 5:18 long before Paul ever wrote it. “In everything give thanks.” It does not say give thanks only when you understand. It does not say give thanks only when the answer is yes. It does not say give thanks only when the miracle is visible. It says, “In everything.” That includes good seasons and hard seasons, victories and losses, promotion and persecution, clarity and confusion. Daniel and his friends show us what thanksgiving looks like in the real world—when you are far from home, when the culture around you is hostile, when the laws are ungodly, and when your faith is tested again. As we walk through each chapter, I want you to keep asking yourself one question: “Lord, how can I give thanks in my situation the way Daniel gave thanks in his?”

1. **Daniel and His Friends – Thankful to Stand Firm (Daniel chapter 1)**

Daniel chapter 1 begins with what looks like a defeat. The people of God are conquered, the temple is robbed, and young men from royal families are carried away to Babylon. Among them are Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah. They are taken from Jerusalem to a foreign land, from the temple of God to the palace of a pagan king. Everything around them is shouting, “Your God has failed. Your God has no power here. Just blend in, compromise, and survive.” Babylon tries to change their names, change their language, change their education, change their diet, change their identity. Yet Daniel 1:8 says, “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king’s food.” That is where a thankful life begins: with a decided heart. We often think thanksgiving is just words we say, “Thank You, Lord, thank You.” But true thanksgiving shows up in the choices we make. When Daniel refuses the king’s food, he is really saying, “God, I thank You that You have set me apart. I thank You that I belong to You. I thank You that Your ways are better than Babylon’s ways.” His obedience is an expression of gratitude. A thankful heart does not need ideal conditions to honor God. A thankful heart says, “Lord, even here, even now, even in this place, I will still live for You.” Some of us are in our own version of Babylon—environments that are hostile to our faith, workplaces where people don’t share our values, schools where God is ignored, families where we may be the only believer. The temptation is to say, “When things get better, then I’ll really live for God. When life calms down, then I’ll pray, then I’ll worship, then I’ll obey.” But Daniel teaches us, “No, you can give thanks right where you are by standing firm right where you are.” And what happens when he does? God gives Daniel and his friends knowledge, skill, wisdom, and favor. They stand

out, not because they compromised to be like everyone else, but because they were thankful enough to remain different. Gratitude and faithfulness walk together. When you are thankful for who God made you to be, you will not sell your identity cheaply. The first lesson for us is this: one of the ways we give thanks "in everything" is by refusing to defile ourselves even in a foreign land. We say, "Thank You, Lord, that I am Yours, and because I am Yours, I will not bow to Babylon."

## 2. **Nebuchadnezzar's Dream – Thankful for God's Revelation (Daniel chapter 2)**

In chapter 2, the pressure intensifies. King Nebuchadnezzar has a troubling dream. He feels disturbed, afraid, restless. He calls his wise men and says, "Tell me the dream and its interpretation." That is humanly impossible. No one can know what another man dreamed in the night without being told. When they cannot do it, Nebuchadnezzar orders all the wise men to be killed. Daniel and his friends included. Now Daniel is facing a death sentence for a problem he did not create. Maybe that's how some of us feel: caught in situations we did not start, suffering consequences we did not choose, pulled into chaos we did not cause. What does Daniel do? He does not panic. He does not complain. He goes to his three friends and says, "Let us seek mercies from the God of heaven." They pray. In the night, the Bible says, "Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision." God speaks. God gives the dream and its meaning. Now watch Daniel's first reaction. Verse 19 continues, "Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven." Before he runs to the king, before he saves his own life, before he secures promotion, he stops to worship. He begins to thank God for revelation. He says, "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever... He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding... I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers." Daniel teaches us something powerful here: thanksgiving is not just for material blessings; it is for spiritual insight. Every time God gives you direction, every time He gives you understanding, every time He confirms a decision in your heart, that is a gift worth thanking Him for. Many times, we measure blessings only in money, health, or things we can touch. But some of the greatest blessings God gives are clarity in confusion, peace in anxiety, a word in the night, an answer to a prayer that no one else heard. How many of you can say God has spoken to you at some point—through His Word, through a sermon, through a dream, through a gentle inner voice? Have you gone back and thanked Him for that? Daniel shows us that a thankful believer does not treat revelation casually. He doesn't just say, "Wow, that was helpful." He says, "God, I thank You, because without You I would have no idea what to do." When we learn to give thanks for revelation, we become more sensitive to God's voice. We recognize that wisdom is not our achievement; it is His generosity. The second lesson for our series is this: give thanks not only when God changes your situation, but also when He changes

your understanding. A grateful heart values revelation, and a heart that values revelation will receive more of it.

3. **The Golden Image – Thankful in the Fiery Trial (Daniel Chapter 3)**

Chapter 3 shifts the focus to the three friends: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Nebuchadnezzar builds a massive golden image and calls the whole empire to worship it. The instruction is simple: when the music plays, everybody bows. The penalty is simple: if you do not bow, you burn. This is where their faith and their gratitude are tested in the fire. When they refuse to bow, the king gives them another chance. He says, "If you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?" Listen to their answer: "O king, we have no need to answer you in this matter. Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods." They are saying, "God is able to deliver. God is powerful. God can rescue us. But even if He does not do it the way we hope, we still will not bow." That is the sound of deep gratitude. Gratitude says, "God, You have already done enough for me to be faithful for the rest of my life. You do not need to prove Yourself again for me to worship You." Thanksgiving is not only, "Lord, thank You when You do what I want," but, "Lord, thank You because You are worthy even when things go the opposite of what I want." They are thrown into the furnace, heated seven times hotter, so hot that the soldiers who throw them in are killed by the flames. But in the fire, the king sees a fourth man walking with them, and the form of the fourth looks like the Son of God. They come out without even the smell of smoke on their clothes. Now here is the key: gratitude may not keep you out of every fire, but it will keep the fire from destroying you. Gratitude may not cancel every trial, but it will change your experience in the trial. When you give thanks in the fire, you invite the presence of Jesus into the fire. When you praise God in the furnace, the furnace becomes the place of encounter. Maybe you are in a fiery season right now—a health battle, a family conflict, a financial pressure, a mental struggle. You might feel like saying, "Why should I thank God now?" But this is the moment when thanksgiving is most powerful. When you say, "Lord, I thank You that You are with me; I thank You that this fire will not consume me; I thank You that You are able, and even if You do not answer the way I expect, I still trust You," the atmosphere shifts. The third lesson for us is this: give thanks in the fire, because your thankful faith will make room for God to show up in the flames.

4. **Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream – Thankful in Seasons of Humbling (Daniel 4)**

In chapter 4, we see another side of God's dealings with kings and with hearts. Nebuchadnezzar has a second dream, this time of a great tree that reaches to heaven, providing shelter and food for all, until a holy watcher from heaven commands it to be cut

down. Daniel interprets the dream and warns the king: "This is you. You will be driven from men and live like an animal, until you know that the Most High rules over the kingdom of men." Daniel even gently advises him, "Break off your sins by being righteous." But twelve months later, Nebuchadnezzar walks on the roof of his palace and says, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" The words are still in his mouth when a voice from heaven declares that the kingdom is taken from him. He loses his sanity. He lives like an animal. The proud king is humbled until he finally lifts his eyes to heaven and blesses the Most High. Only then is his understanding restored. What does this have to do with thanksgiving? Everything. Pride kills thanksgiving. Pride says, "I did this. My hand, my wisdom, my effort, my talent." Gratitude says, "God, everything I have is from You. Every promotion, every open door, every gift, every opportunity, every success." Daniel never lost this posture. Even when he was promoted, even when kings depended on him, he remained a humble servant of God. He did not treat his gifts as his possession; he treated them as God's loan. He did not treat his influence as his achievement; he treated it as God's assignment. Many of us have prayed in the valley and forgotten to thank God on the mountain. We cried out in crisis, but once the storm passed, our thanksgiving grew quiet. Chapter 4 teaches us that we must be thankful not only when God raises us up, but even when God allows humbling, correction, or discipline. Sometimes God will cut down a tree of pride in our life, not to destroy us, but to restore us to a better place. Can we still give thanks then? Can we say, "Lord, thank You that You love me enough to deal with my pride. Thank You that You correct me. Thank You that You do not leave me in my arrogance." The fourth lesson for us is this: give thanks in seasons of humbling and promotion. Gratitude protects you from becoming a Nebuchadnezzar, and gratitude prepares you to respond correctly when God puts His finger on your pride.

5. **Belshazzar's Feast – Thankful Enough to Speak the Truth (Daniel chapter 5)**

In chapter 5, we meet Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's son. He throws a wild feast for a thousand of his nobles and, in his pride, orders that the holy vessels from the temple in Jerusalem be brought so they can drink wine from them and praise their idols. While they are mocking what is holy, a hand appears and writes on the wall: "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." The king is terrified. His knees knock together. None of his wise men can interpret the writing. Daniel is called out of retirement to come and explain. Now remember, Daniel is an old man at this point. He has served faithfully under different kings. He has nothing to prove. Belshazzar offers him purple robes, gold chains, and a high position if he will interpret the writing. But Daniel is not impressed. He says, "Keep your gifts, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king." He reminds Belshazzar of what God did with Nebuchadnezzar and says, "But you his son, Belshazzar,

have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this. You have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven." Then he interprets the words as God's judgment: your days are numbered, you have been weighed and found wanting, your kingdom is divided. That night the king is killed. What does this show us about thanksgiving? A truly thankful heart is loyal to God above man. A thankful person does not sell truth for gifts. A thankful heart says, "God, You have been so good to me, so faithful to me, that I will not betray Your word just to keep someone happy." When you are full of gratitude, you fear grieving God more than you fear angering people. Daniel was free from greed because he was already full of gratitude. He did not need the king's gifts; he had God's favor. He did not need the king's approval; he had God's approval. That freedom allowed him to speak truth clearly and courageously. Some of us are in situations where speaking truth will cost us something—a relationship, a position, an opportunity. Thanksgiving gives you the strength to say, "Lord, thank You that obedience to You is more valuable than any earthly reward. Thank You that truth is better than comfort. Thank You that faithfulness to You is the greatest honor." The fifth lesson for our series is this: give thanks by staying loyal to God's truth, even when it is uncomfortable. Gratitude produces courage. It keeps your heart tied to heaven when the pressure on earth is strong.

6. **Daniel and King Darius – Thankful in the Lions' Den (Daniel Chapter 6)**

Finally we come to chapter 6, the story most people know: Daniel in the lions' den. By now Daniel is an old man, maybe in his eighties. A new king, Darius, reigns. Daniel is promoted above the other officials because the Bible says, "an excellent spirit was in him." Jealous leaders look for a way to accuse him but find no corruption or negligence. So they decide the only way to trap him is in the matter of his faith. They convince the king to sign a law that anyone who prays to any god or man except the king for thirty days will be thrown into the lions' den. The law is signed. It cannot be changed. Daniel hears about it. Now, if there was ever a time to adjust your prayer life, this would be it. He could have closed his window, prayed silently, skipped a few days, or said, "God knows my heart." But Daniel 6:10 says, "When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home; and in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days." There it is: he prayed and gave thanks, as usual. Not extra dramatic. Not less than before. Just as he had always done. Thanksgiving was his rhythm. Gratitude was his habit. He did not start thanking God because of the crisis; the crisis simply revealed the thanksgiving that was already in him. He is arrested and thrown into the lions' den. A stone is placed over it. The king spends a sleepless night fasting and worrying. Early in the morning, he runs to the den and cries, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" And Daniel answers, "My God sent

His angel and shut the lions' mouths." The God he thanked in prayer is the God who delivered him in the pit. The God he honored in his habits is the God who honored him in his trial. Thanksgiving did not keep Daniel away from the den, but it guaranteed he would not be alone in the den. Some of you are in a lions' den season—surrounded by threats, accusations, fears, and unknowns. This is the moment to keep your windows open toward heaven. This is the moment to keep kneeling. This is the moment to keep giving thanks. You might say, "But I'm tired." Then say, "Lord, I thank You that You are my strength." You might say, "I don't see a way out." Then say, "Lord, I thank You that You are my way, my truth, and my life." You might say, "I feel surrounded." Then say, "Lord, I thank You that those who are with me are more than those who are against me." The sixth and final lesson is this: give thanks continually. Let gratitude become such a part of your life that when the attack comes, you don't have to learn how to thank God—you just continue what you were already doing.

So, from Daniel chapters 1 to 6 we see six different expressions of thanksgiving: thankful to stand firm in identity, thankful for revelation and wisdom, thankful in the fiery trial, thankful in seasons of humbling and promotion, thankful enough to speak the truth, and thankful in prayer even when it leads to a lions' den.

May the LORD bless you.