

## Part 2

# What Happens when you are Thankful?

## 1. Jonah -The Thankful Prophet

The prophet Jonah was told by God to go to the city of Nineveh and preach repentance to the people. He was disobedient, and tried to flee from the presence of God by boarding a ship that was headed in the opposite direction toward Tarshish. He was eventually thrown overboard by the sailors when a storm arose and then swallowed by a great fish (Jonah 1:1-17, 2:1-9). Jonah would have died inside the fish unless he cried out to God, and he did with thanksgiving. Cramped inside the belly of the fish with seaweed wrapped around his head and slowly being digested was not a conducive environment to be thankful. However Jonah remembered his vows of thanksgiving to God and their association with salvation.

*Jonah 2:9*

*I will sacrifice to You with the voice thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.*

God spoke to the fish and commanded it to expel the prophet the instant Jonah gave thanks. It's interesting that God spoke to the fish and not the prophet. The fish represented adverse circumstances surrounding Jonah. The fish came from the bottom of the ocean, moved toward the shore, and spewed out Jonah onto dry land. There was no argument from the fish that represented his adverse circumstances when God spoke to it. When we bring our sacrifice of thanksgiving, it allows God to bring deliverance into our circumstances. Some may feel it is hypocritical to be thankful when we do not feel like it, but this is not true. God does require us to do it irrespective of circumstances, and knows we are capable of it even when we don't feel like it, or circumstances are not conducive to do it.

*Jonah 2:10*

*So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.*

A sacrifice of thanksgiving is the reaction of the renewed mind to the word of God in the face of adversity. Because you are created in the image of God, there is within every believer the capacity to give a sacrifice of thanksgiving irrespective of circumstances.

Key Point

The sacrifice is not so much in the individual act of thanksgiving as much as it is in the

lifestyle of maintaining it.

## 2. Thanksgiving Touches the Heart of God

Both prayer and thanksgiving touch the heart of God, but the mechanism by which they work are different. Prayer is motivated by the anticipation of answers, but thanksgiving is given because of the value ascribed to God. It is given based on everything He has already done, is doing, and will do in the future. However thanksgiving has a reciprocal effect because of the words of Jesus recorded in Acts 20:35. He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive', and in Hebrews we read 'the lesser is blessed by the better.' Thanksgiving activates the spiritual law of seedtime and harvest, sowing and reaping. When God is the recipient of your giving of thanks you will always receive a harvest in return from Him for what you have sown. Thanking God continually because you love Him maintains the cycle of being blessed by Him, because it's a spiritual law. God can never be out given, so when you develop a life of thanksgiving to Him, you put yourself in a position to receive from Him because of the principle He has established in His word.

### Key Point

The motivation to be thankful must always be because we love God, and not to get something from Him. However the principle of reciprocity, seedtime and harvest, operates with thanksgiving, that whatever you sow you reap in return.