Text: Various
Title: Giving Thanks in Hard Times
Truth: God's work in us includes that we learn to be thankful in all circumstances, even the difficult ones.
Date/Location: Around 11/25/2026 at FBC

Introduction

I am writing these notes because I have just now (November 2026) been passing through a difficult season in life with care of an ill parent. In addition, I've been wondering how a very sick person might be thinking about life and death and God and how likely it is that thankfulness can be squeezed out of our thinking if we are in that situation.

Can we be thankful in times of trouble? The thanksgiving proclamation by President Franklin D. Roosevelt of 1942 suggests we can be thankful even in a time as troubled as the second world war. But we need not look to secular expressions because the Scriptures tell us we ought to be thankful to God in all things at all times. Here is some evidence on that subject from Heaven's Author.

I. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

This sounds comprehensive, doesn't it?

II. Habakkuk 3:16-18

The word *thanks* does not appear in this passage, but *rejoice* and *joy* do appear. Despite terrible agricultural conditions, which were the majority of the economy and lifeblood of the nation, Habakkuk expresses that He will rejoice in the Lord. This ties rejoicing with thanksgiving and with trust.

III. Ephesians 5:20

"Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Once again, we are faced with thanksgiving *always* and *for all things*. Another comprehensive statement.

We have to conclude that God wants us to be thankful in all things. I accept that we might not feel thankful all the time, and we might not be able to give thanks *for* some particular bad thing, but we can be thankful to God even amid bad things. We must be thankful. In our family's case just now, the excellent care our loved one received; the people who cared; God who provided in advance for the financial part of it—insurance, etc. Family members who visited and helped. Etc.

IV. Philippians 4:4-7

This text tells us to rejoice, always, and not to be anxious for anything. Something that causes us anxiety is probably something that is not very good. So, we are to pray about it and ask the Lord about it, *with thanksgiving*. Here again we are offering thanks in an adverse circumstance.

V. James 1:2-4

James exhorts us to be joyful in trials because those trials produce patience. This is something be thankful for.

Conclusion

The conclusion is clear: God wants us to be thankful even in difficult times. That is a real test of character, focus, and priority, isn't it? Ask God to help you to find the blessings for which you can be thankful—kindnesses you do not deserve, etc. And then bow your heart and/or knees to the Father and thank Him!

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