A HEART OF GRATITUDE • NOVEMBER 2026

Responding with Gratitude

November 8, 2026, • Week 2 • CPC Plainview & CPC Rochester

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 29:10–18 (NRSVUE) • 12–15-minute sermon

Key Sentence: *Everything we have comes from God; our grateful response is to offer ourselves willingly and joyfully.*

Introduction — *From Remembering to Responding*

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, last Sunday, on All Saints Sunday, we began our November series, "A Heart of Gratitude," by remembering those through whom God has blessed our lives. We gave thanks for faithful witnesses, and we found hope in the promise that God will wipe away every tear.

But remembering raises a question: What do we do with the blessings we have received? Is gratitude only a feeling in the heart or a word on our lips? Or can gratitude become something we practice?

Today our sermon is called "Responding with Gratitude." Our Scripture takes us near the end of King David's life. David has made preparations for the temple that his son Solomon will build. The leaders and the people have offered gifts willingly, and the community rejoices. Then David stands before them and prays.

David does not begin by congratulating the people on how much they have raised. He begins by praising God. We will follow three movements: recognize the Giver, offer with a willing heart, and pass gratitude forward.

This is a message for both those who have much and those who are carrying heavy burdens. Gratitude does not require a perfect life or an easy season. It begins with noticing the grace of God even as we face the ordinary worries and responsibilities of daily living.

> *"Everything we have comes from God, and our grateful response is to offer ourselves willingly and joyfully."*

First, Recognize the Giver Before Counting the Gifts (vv. 10–14)

David begins not with a request but with worship. Greatness, power, glory, and majesty belong to God. Strength and honor come from the Lord's hand. Only after praising God does David say, "Now, our God, we give thanks to you" (v. 13).

That order matters. David sees the Giver before he sees the gifts. Even the materials for the temple, the skills of the workers, and the resources of the people belong first to God. David asks the wonderful question in verse 14: Who are we that we should be able to give so generously? What we offer to God has first come from God's hand.

Sometimes we forget this when we look at what we own or what we have achieved. We may say, "I earned this. I worked for it." And often we have worked very hard. But who gave us the people who taught us, the opportunities that opened, or the courage that carried us through a hard season? David invites us to see our accomplishments within the greater story of God's generosity.

The First Tomato from the Garden

Imagine a little girl helping her father plant a garden. In the spring he loosens the ground, gives her seeds, and shows her how to water them. Each day she comes outside to see whether anything is growing. At last a tiny green tomato appears. She watches it patiently until it turns red.

One afternoon she picks that first tomato, washes it, and places it carefully on a little plate. Then she carries it to her father. "Daddy," she says proudly, "I grew this for you!"

Her father smiles and receives it with joy. He knows he prepared the soil, supplied the seeds, and taught her to tend the plant. Yet he is delighted—not because he needs one tomato, but because his daughter has learned to turn what she received into a gift of love.

That is a picture of our relationship with God. We work hard, and our efforts matter. But even our ability to work, the people who sustain us, and the breath in our lungs are gifts of grace. We are receivers before we are givers.

So when we give thanks around our family table, when we receive an encouraging word, or when we see a neighbor helping another neighbor, let us remember the Giver. Naming a blessing is not a way of denying the pain that may still be present. It is a way of refusing to let pain hide every sign of grace.

"Before we count what we can give, let us remember the One who has given us everything."

Second, Offer What You Have with a Willing Heart (vv. 14–17)

David moves from praise to offering. He rejoices not only in the gifts gathered for the temple, but in the willingness of the people. He knows that God sees the heart. A large gift made grudgingly is not the measure of faithful stewardship, and a small gift offered with love is not insignificant.

In Acts 9, when Tabitha dies, the widows show Peter the garments she had made for them. They remember her through acts of charity. Her time, skill, and compassion had become gifts others could actually hold.

David's emphasis on willingness matters especially when our circumstances differ. One household may have resources to share financially. Another may be facing medical bills, caring for a loved one, or searching for work. God does not ask us to pretend that every person can contribute the same amount. What God welcomes is an honest heart that seeks to love and serve with the gifts available.

The Pot of Soup on the Porch

Imagine a woman who hears that a neighbor has returned home after surgery. She wishes she could do something wonderful, but money is tight, and her own week is full. Then she remembers a simple thing she can do: make a little extra soup for dinner.

She fills a container, wraps it in a towel to keep it warm, and walks next door. At the door she says, "I made enough to share. You do not have to talk or entertain me. I just wanted you to know you are not alone."

The neighbor's eyes fill with tears. "Thank you," he says. "I have been worried about how I would manage this week." The woman has not given an expensive gift. She has given food, yes, but also attention, compassion, and time.

This is what a willing heart can do. It may give money to sustain the church's ministry. It may teach a child, welcome a stranger, visit someone who is grieving, or pray when nobody else sees. We do not offer these gifts to purchase God's love. Christ has already loved us freely.

In our congregations, this matters more than we sometimes realize. Someone prepares the communion table. Someone calls a member who has been absent. Someone quietly makes sure a new visitor is not left standing alone. These acts may never appear in a financial report, but they reveal the living heart of the church. And every generous act points beyond the giver to the generosity of Christ.

"Gratitude becomes visible when the gifts we have received become blessings for someone else."

Third, Pass Gratitude Forward to the Next Generation (v. 18)

David does not end his prayer by saying, "We have finished." In verse 18, he asks God to keep these generous purposes alive in the hearts of the people and to direct their hearts toward the Lord. David

knows this work will continue beyond his own lifetime, through Solomon and those who come after him.

Scripture gives us another example in Ruth, who stays beside Naomi in a time of loss and uncertainty. Ruth could not see all that her faithfulness would mean. Yet the book closes with a family line leading to David. The blessing reached further than Ruth could have imagined.

A church can become so concerned about keeping everything the same that it forgets to prepare for those who are coming. But David did not prepare the temple only for himself. He prepared for Solomon and for a worshiping people who would continue after him. We too are invited to make room for younger voices, to teach the faith patiently, and to pass on a spirit of welcome rather than merely a list of responsibilities.

The Tree Beside the Church

Imagine an older church member planting a young apple tree beside the church. A child watches as he presses soil around the roots. “How long until it has apples?” the child asks. “Several years,” the man answers.

“Will you get to eat them?” the child asks. The man looks at the little branches and smiles. “I hope so. But if I do not, someone else will. That is why we plant it.”

Years later, imagine that child grown up, bringing another child to church. The tree gives shade. Its branches carry fruit. The person who planted it may no longer be there, but the gift is still giving. Someone cared for a future they could not fully see.

Our ministry is like that. A Sunday school lesson, an encouraging word, a welcoming congregation, or a faithful gift may bless people whose names we do not yet know. We cannot control the future. But by God’s grace we can plant faithfully today.

Perhaps you have seen this in someone who taught you to pray, or in an older member who faithfully welcomed your family. You may not remember every lesson or every sermon, but you remember the kindness. That kindness can become a gift you offer to another person. In this way, one generation’s gratitude becomes another generation’s invitation to trust God.

> *“A grateful church does not only thank God for yesterday; it plants faith, hope, and love for tomorrow.”*

A Practice for This Week

This week, let us respond in one concrete way. First, name a gift you have received from God. Then ask, “Lord, who could be blessed through this gift?” Perhaps you can call someone who is lonely, share a meal, encourage a young person, offer your skills, or support the ministry of the church as you are able. Let your thanksgiving take one small step into the world.

Conclusion — Let Your Thank-You Become Your Life

Friends, remember our three pictures: the child bringing the first tomato back to her father; the woman placing a pot of soup at her neighbor's door; and the older member planting a tree that someone else would enjoy. Three pictures, one message: what we receive with gratitude, we can offer with love.

First, recognize the Giver before counting the gifts. Second, offer what you have with a willing heart. Third, pass gratitude forward so the next generation can know the goodness of God.

As we come to the Lord's Table today, we remember the greatest gift of all. Jesus Christ gave himself for us, not because we had earned his love, but because God's grace is generous beyond measure. We receive the bread and cup with open hands. Then Christ sends us into the world to live with open hearts and open hands.

A thankful heart is beautiful. But a thankful heart that acts can strengthen a home, bless a neighbor, and renew a church.

"Lord, everything comes from you. With grateful hearts, we offer ourselves back to you."

That is how we respond with gratitude. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reference Notes

1. The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE), 1 Chronicles 29:10–18 (primary sermon text).

2. The Holy Bible, NRSVUE, Acts 9:36–42 (Tabitha's service and the clothing she made for widows).

3. The Holy Bible, NRSVUE, Ruth 1:16–18; 4:13–22 (Ruth's faithfulness and the genealogy leading to David).

4. The three everyday-life illustrations are original imagined stories prepared for this sermon, not accounts of verified historical events.