

**MESSAGE:** THANKFUL LIVING... *In Difficulties* 11.17.19

**SPEAKER:** Al Schaap

**GETTING STARTED**

1. Describe someone you admire who has handled difficulties very well. What is it about them that you admire?
2. Can you think of a challenge in your life that turned out to be a blessing? Why was it a benefit in your life?
3. Is there anything in this week’s message that caught your attention, challenged you or confused you?

**DIGGING DEEPER**

1. Read James 1:2-4. In your own words, what reason did James give for Christians to be joyful in their trials? Do you agree with this passage?
2. Read 1 Peter 4:12-14. This passage talks about rejoicing in suffering, but for different reasons than the passage in James. What reasons are given? When have you felt you suffered for Christ? How did you feel?
3. Read Matthew 6:25-34. This passage instructs us not to worry. How does this passage “compliment” what is said in the previous passages? In what way does thankfulness remove worry?
4. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says rejoice always and be thankful in all circumstances. Take some time to list all the things you are thankful to God for. Be specific. Why do we often take things for granted? Why should we give thanks for everything?

**TAKE AWAY**

1. Take time to list everything in your life that you can thank God for and then dedicate a daily routine of thanking God for all He has done.
2. Are you, or someone you know, going through difficulties right now? How can you be an encourager to yourself or others this week?
3. How can people be praying for you this week?

RightNow Media Resources (see bulletin for sign up instructions)

- “Dealing with Difficult Problems” (6 Sessions) - R.C. Sproul
- “Where is God?” (4 Sessions) - Dr. John Townsend
- “Comforting The Afflicted” (6 Sessions) - Tony Evans
- “Ed’s Story” (5 Sessions) - Ed Dobson

**Video messages available online at [gatewaymerced.org/messages](http://gatewaymerced.org/messages)**

**Thankful Living – In The Middle of Difficulties**

*...Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!” “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for Me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.” (Mark 10:28-31)*

**...In 73 countries, 245M sisters & brothers are under threat of persecution**

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1:2-4)*

**...Trials (testing of our faith) → perseverance → \_\_\_\_\_ &**

\_\_\_\_\_ Cf. Philippians 1:12-14

**...Our own difficulties of whatever kind:**

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

• **Always** \_\_\_\_\_

• **Always** \_\_\_\_\_

• **Always** \_\_\_\_\_

*1 Peter 4:12-16; 5:8-9*

Key: mature, complete; rejoice, pray, give thanks