MEN'S STUDY · THURSDAYS, OCT 29 – DEC 3

Let Thanksgiving Rise

Five times Jesus gave thanks before the answer came

THE SERIES

Five weeks of thanks for the Thanksgiving season: four Thursdays leading up to Thanksgiving Day, and a fifth the week after.

Week 1	Oct 29	**He Gave Thanks over Five Small Loaves** John 6:1–14 · thanks in the not-enough ♪ *Song: Country*
Week 2	Nov 5	**He Gave Thanks Through His Tears** John 11:1–44 · thanks at the grave ♪ *Song: Reggae*
Week 3	Nov 12	**He Received Thanks from the One** Luke 17:11–19 · the leper who came back ♪ *Song: Folk*
Week 4	Nov 19	**He Gave Thanks When the Cities Rejected Him** Matthew 11:20–26 · thanks in rejection ♪ *Song: Gospel*
		No study Nov 26 · Happy Thanksgiving
Week 5	Dec 3	**He Gave Thanks with the Traitor at the Table** Luke 22:14–23 · thanks with betrayal at His side ♪ *Song: Rock*

Each week follows the same pattern: a key verse, the passage from *The One*, a short devotional, questions to talk through together, and a closing prayer.

THE SONG

We'll sing **"Let Thanksgiving Rise"** every week, in a different style each time: Country, Reggae, Folk, Gospel, and Rock. Same words, a new sound. Each verse is one of these moments, in the same order as the studies: the five loaves, Lazarus, the ten lepers, and the Last Supper. The chorus is our answer: our own thanks.

> *I'll always give thanks for who You are and what You've done*
> *Incense rising through the night*
> *Let thanksgiving rise*
> *Let thanksgiving rise*
> *Let thanksgiving rise*
> *Before the dawn*

LINES YOU MIGHT MISS

"Incense rising through the night": Scripture pictures prayer as incense (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8).

"Before the dawn": thanks given in the dark, before you can see the answer. That's the thread through all five weeks.

Bread at both ends: the song begins and ends with Jesus holding bread and giving thanks: on a hillside with five loaves, then at the Last Supper. The Bible uses the same word for His thanks both times, *eucharisteō*, which is where the word Eucharist comes from.

He Gave Thanks Through His Tears

You may not know this about Jesus: He gave thanks at the grave

KEY VERSE

> *"And Jesus lifted His eyes and prayed, 'Father, I thank You that You listen to Me.'" — John 11:41*

PASSAGE · JOHN 11:32–44 · FROM *THE ONE*

Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was sick, and the sisters sent word to Jesus. He stayed where He was two more days, then told His disciples plainly that Lazarus had died, and that He was glad, for their sake, He had not been there, so they might believe. When He reached Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb four days. Martha met Him on the road, and Jesus told her He is the resurrection and the life. Then she went and called her sister Mary.

32 As Mary came to where Jesus was and saw Him,
she fell at His feet, and said, "Lord, if You had
been here, my brother wouldn't have died."

33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews with
her also weeping, He sighed in the spirit and was
troubled. 34 He asked, "Where have you laid him?"

"Lord, come and see," they told Him.

35 Jesus wept.

36 So the Jews said, "See how much He loved
him!" 37 Some of them said, "Couldn't this man,
who opened the eyes of a blind man, have also
kept this man from dying?" 38 Now Jesus, groaning
in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a
stone lying over its mouth. 39 Jesus said, "Take
away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister,
said to Him, "Lord, by this time there's a stench,
for he's been dead four days."

40 Jesus said to her, "Didn't I promise you that if
you would believe in Me, you would see the glory
of God?" 41 So they moved the stone away from the
entrance of the tomb, where the dead man was
lying.

And Jesus lifted His eyes and prayed, "Father, I
thank You that You listen to Me. 42 I know You
always listen to Me, but I said this because of the
crowd standing by, that they may come to believe
You sent Me." 43 When He had said this, He
shouted,

"Lazarus, come out!"

44 Then the dead man came out, bound hand and
foot with grave clothes, and a cloth wrapped
around his face. Jesus said to them, "Free him, and
let him go."

DEVOTIONAL

"So then he told them plainly,
'Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there,
so that you may believe.'" — John 11:14-15

"Glad."
Not for death itself—
His weeping at the tomb reveals His heart. — John 11:35
But glad for the timing.
Glad for the deeper trust this delay would forge.

He waited to break His disciples' bias—
their instinct to choose death over resurrection.
They trusted His miracles,
but not His timing.

So He waited.
And He let Lazarus die.

He arrived to the sting of tears—
the tomb holding the silence where hope had died.

“Take away the stone.”
Protest rose—
the smell, the scandal, the impossibility. — John 11:39

Then, before the dead man stirred,
Jesus looked up and gave thanks:
“Father, I thank you that you have heard me.
I knew that you always hear me,
but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here,
that they may believe that you sent me.” — John 11:41-42

You may not know this about Jesus:
He gave thanks at a grave.
With tears still on His face.
For an answer already given—
“have heard”—
while Lazarus still lay in the dark.

Then His voice cut through like dawn breaking:
“Lazarus, come out!” — John 11:43

And a man walked out wrapped in yesterday,
breathing tomorrow.

This is the instinct Jesus came to change.
Loss says, “Here is what I'm going to lose.”
Thanksgiving says, “Father, You have heard me.
I wonder how You will bring resurrection from this.”

Reflection Question

Where am I standing at a grave—
and what would it mean to give thanks before the stone moves?

What It Means to Me

I don’t have to choose between tears and thanks.
Jesus held both.
I can grieve what I’ve lost
and still thank the Father who hears me
before I see the dawn.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Jesus heard Lazarus was sick and stayed where He was two more days. John says it was because He loved them (11:5-6). How can a delay be love? When has God’s timing felt like silence to you?
2. Jesus told His disciples He was glad He hadn’t been there, so they might believe (11:15). What was He glad about? What might God be building in you through a wait you didn’t choose?
3. Mary fell at His feet: “Lord, if You had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died” (11:32). Martha had said the same words (11:21). Have you ever said “if only” to God? What was underneath it?
4. “Jesus wept” (11:35), knowing He was about to raise Lazarus. What does it mean to you that He grieves with us even when He knows the ending?
5. Before the stone was gone and before Lazarus stirred, Jesus prayed, “Father, I thank You that You listen to Me” (11:41). What would it look like to thank God for an answer you can’t see yet?
6. Martha protested, “Lord, by this time there’s a stench” (11:39). What “stones” do we leave in place because opening them feels too painful or too late?
7. Lazarus came out still bound in grave clothes, and Jesus said, “Free him, and let him go” (11:44). Who in your life needs help getting free? Is it you?

PRAYER

Father, thank You that You always listen to me.
Where hope feels buried,
teach me to give thanks before the stone is rolled away,
trusting that resurrection is Your answer.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

THE SONG THIS WEEK · LET THANKSGIVING RISE · REGGAE

Chorus
I'll always give thanks for who You are and what You've done
Incense rising through the night
Let thanksgiving rise
Let thanksgiving rise
Let thanksgiving rise
Before the dawn

Verse 1
A boy held five loaves in his hand
Five thousand hungry on the hill
You gave thanks before the baskets filled
I'll thank You now with empty hands

Verse 2 · this week
They rolled the stone where Lazarus lay
You lifted Your eyes, tears on Your face
You gave thanks before the dead man stirred
Lazarus walked out at Your word

Chorus
I'll always give thanks for who You are and what You've done
Incense rising through the night
Let thanksgiving rise
Let thanksgiving rise
Let thanksgiving rise
Before the dawn

Verse 3
Ten lepers walked in faith that day
Their scales like snow fell to the ground
One turned back with a shout of praise
Fell at His feet where grace is found

Chorus
I'll always give thanks for who You are and what You've done
Incense rising through the night
Let thanksgiving rise
Let thanksgiving rise
Let thanksgiving rise
Before the dawn

Bridge
Judas sat close enough to touch
The cross cast shadows on the wall
Yet You took the bread and gave thanks through it all
When the road is hard, I'll thank You still

Verse 4
You held the bread and knew the cost
Your body broken, Your blood poured out
Turning sorrow to a song of thanks
For the joy set before the cross

Chorus
I'll always give thanks for who You are and what You've done
Incense rising through the night
Let thanksgiving rise
Let thanksgiving rise
Let thanksgiving rise
Before the dawn

Ending
Let thanksgiving rise
Before the dawn
Let thanksgiving rise