

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said: “Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? 19 And as if this were not enough in your sight, Sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant—and this decree, Sovereign Lord, is for a mere human! 20 “What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, Sovereign Lord. 21 For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant. 22 “How great you are, Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.

My brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, life continually requires that we write down a few words of thanks for presents and gifts, special meals out, or special people in our hearts. And once a year, we make almost a whole day of it in November. However, all too often, our messages of thanks can sound flat or even unconvincing. The note with our best penmanship says the dinner was ‘nice.’ The gift was ‘perfect’. The holiday was ‘the best’. Sometimes, we struggle to find words or a basis for writing a thank you.

So, on this Thanksgiving, as we draw our focus on writing a thank you note to God, how can we do so if we are struggling? Well, we will do so by running through an example of a thank you provided by one of God’s servants and taking some advice from an unexpected source: Art.

In effect, many paintings and poems are essentially a thank-you for the wonderful riches we experience: the sunset in the spring, the sounds of the evening, the face of a loved one. A talented artist is someone who can take us into the specifics of why a place is beautiful, a sound is calming, or a person so valuable.

It’s when we start to catch in our mental sieve the reasons why something is valuable, meaningful, or pleasurable that we really can understand and express our thanks more easily and openly. A key to giving thanks to God is being reminded of the details.

Let’s take a look at the thank you writer from our text, King David. Before our text, David had just considered that it was pretty despicable that he was living in a grand house of cedar while the ark that had just been brought to the city had to stay in a tent. So, he has it in his mind to build a temple to house the ark of God.

But God responds to him in an interesting way. He tells David that he doesn’t need a house. But even grander than that, God makes a covenant with him of Ten different promises that God will bring to completion for David. All beginning with “I will,” God promises to David that he is going to make his name great, drive out the enemies from around him, and continue his line on top of the throne, giving them peace in the land.

After hearing these promises, David goes and sits before the Lord and speaks a thank you in the form of a prayer. And David’s thank you shows some understanding that makes it easier for us to give to our God. And like a beautiful painting, it comes because David has not let specific details go unnoticed.

First, he understands who God is; God is the sovereign Lord. **“How great you are, Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you.”** This is God, the only God. The one with the power to create the universe with the sound of his voice. The one and only whose glory alone kills. There is no one like you. There is no other God besides you.

And then, David understands who he is: **“Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?”** I am only a mere human. I am only one man in the whole wide world. I am only one human in the history of time, only one of God’s people that he is in charge of. I’m only a man, I’m only one family.

David remembers and is in absolute awe of what God did for a mere human like him. He remembers the protection that he was afforded in the periods of his life when his life could have, probably should have, been ended. He remembers the blessings that God gave to him. But if that wasn’t enough, God has also told him what will happen to him in the future. All of this is happening even though David has not done anything for God in the first place. God has not asked him to do anything.

But David gives thanks for one thing, perhaps a small detail, that may seem minor given all of the grand things that God has given and promised for his future: **“You have done this great thing and made it known to your servant.”** David gives thanks for the fact that God has revealed these things to him in his Word. David says it is praiseworthy in and of itself that God revealed the things he has done and will do for him as a human being, both past and present.

On this Thanksgiving, what’s your thank you note to God like? I think we all can agree that the worst kind of thank is the one that doesn’t exist. I think it’s safe to say that we often don’t give thanks to our God nearly as often as we request something from him. Unless God has given the extraordinary, we can struggle to say thank you. Many times, our thank yous to God are entirely stale and coerced. We tend to let the details of all that God is and offers pass under our radar.

But like a great artist, paying attention to the details and using David’s framework, we can find a whole lot to be thankful for, not only today but every day. Because what was true of God then is still true of God now. God is the one and only Sovereign Lord. He has only added to the things he has done since then. He still is the only one who is worthy to be glorified. And who are we? Still just a drop of water in the ocean. Just a single individual among a current population of billions. Still just a fleeting breath in the history of the world.

But even though those things are true, God has blessed us with so much that often goes unnoticed. God gave you parents so that you could be brought into life itself. Perhaps he even blessed you with Christian parents who brought you up in the way of the Lord. He gave you a brain with interests and a body with skills to be able to have fun and get a job to support you. He may have blessed you with a spouse who is there and loves you. Children who bring a smile to your face. He keeps you from sickness. He guards against disaster. He has let you grow grey with age and wisdom.

But even if it feels like none of those things are true. Even if life is a wreck. The future uncertain. The past wanted to be forgotten. God has given you something that you can always be thankful

for. In the words of David: **“You have done this great thing, and have made it known to your servant.”**

God has given to us, to you, his Word. God has revealed to you through the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The mighty deeds of the past and the victorious events of the future. He has revealed to you how he made the world and everything in it. He has written about how he protected and guided his people.

But most importantly, he has written and revealed to you, a simple human being, the plan of your salvation. He has spoken to you of how he sent his own Son as a human being in order to live the life you couldn't. He revealed to you that he has paid your debt of sins. He has revealed to you your status as a holy child of God. He has told you that he has the power over death itself. He has made it known to you that because of all this, you have a future secured with him in heaven.

My brothers and sisters in Christ. On this Thanksgiving, or on any day, our thank you notes to God need never need to be stale, coerced, or entirely absent. In any and every phase and stage of life, God has blessed us in the most simple of details. Don't forget those details. But more importantly than that, don't ever forget the most important thing God has given us: He has given us salvation revealed through the Gospel. And there's not enough time in the world to give enough thanks for that. Amen.