

Don't Forget to Thank Him

By

James E. Bogoniewski, Jr.

Theme:

This play shows the audience how easy it is to get caught up into the daily grind of life and forget that we have so much to be thankful for. I stress that a simple change of mind is all that is needed to turn a selfish heart into a thankful one.

Biblical Reference:

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Ephesians 5:19

always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 100:4

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.

Approximate Running Time:

15 minutes

Props:

A Pen

A pad of paper that can be tucked into a purse

Two purses

Cast of Characters:

Beth: Beth is a Christian woman whose faith has dulled her into becoming a casual Christian. She has forgotten to thank the Lord for all that He has done for her. She is close friends with Laura.

Laura: Laura is a Christian woman whose faith has dulled her into becoming a casual Christian. She has forgotten to thank the Lord for all that He has done for her. She is close friends with Beth.

Peter: Peter is an angel who is on a mission from God. His mission is to show people that they should be thankful for all that God has given to them. He should be wearing a white robe.

Scene:

It is Thanksgiving morning. We see Laura standing outside of the church sanctuary waiting to go inside for the service. The play begins as Beth walks up and greets her. A few lines into the play, Peter should enter the back of the stage and remain aloof until he is told to come forward. His movements are not to draw from the discussion that Beth and Laura are engaged in.

Beth: Hi Laura.

Laura: Good morning, Beth, and oh yeah, Happy Thanksgiving. [*Sarcastically - with no feeling.*]

Beth: Just another Sunday morning, except today Pastor takes a chance to embarrass each of us one at a time. Are you ready for our annual "What I'm thankful for this year" part of the morning service? I know that I'm not.

Laura: What are you kidding? This year's the same as last year. Nothing new has happened, nothing new to be thankful for, nothing new to say when it's my turn. You know, it's just the same old thing.

Beth: You're right. Every year I dread hearing the pastor say "And now I would like each person to stand up and tell the rest of us one thing that they are thankful for." I mean, it's so pointless.

Laura: I know. It's so easy to predict what will happen. Every kid will probably say "Nintendo" or some other toy...

Beth: And every grown up will probably say "This church" or "My house" or "My job" or "The trees and the flowers."

Laura: Or "my spouse" or "my health" or "my money."

Beth: We don't have to be here. I bet we can recite exactly what will be said here today.

Laura: I know, it gets to be rather boring. The only reason that I'm here is that it will make my mother happy. "Thanksgiving is supposed to be a family holiday."

Beth: I get the same treatment. Hey, since we're on the subject, what are you going to say when it's your turn to speak?

Laura: I'll probably say "My Job." I haven't said that in a few years.

Beth: Aren't you going to say "I got married"? [*Really romantic.*]

Laura: No, I'm going to let Mark say that. He said that He's been looking forward to saying that in this church service for years. So I had to find something else to say.

Beth: You know, I just don't have anything new to say. It seems as if God isn't doing anything new these days.

Laura: Yeah, I've already said I'm thankful for "God" and "Jesus" and "this church" and "the pastor" and "My parents" and "My family." I'm running out of things to say.

[*Peter has been watching from afar. He now moves towards the pair and slowly moves right in between the two as they talk.*]

Peter: Good morning, Ladies. [*They jump back - startled.*] Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you.

Beth: That's okay, it's just that we didn't see you walk up.

Laura: [*Realizing that he's a stranger.*] Are you new here?

Peter: Not really, I mean yes I am, I mean, well, you could say that I'm just visiting. My name is Peter, and I'm from Los Angeles.

Laura: Hello, Peter, I'm Laura.

Beth: And I'm Beth. We were just talking about this morning's service. [*Moves in close and talks in a conspiracy tone of voice.*] Just to warn you, each year during this service the pastor asks each person in the church to stand up and tell one thing that they are thankful for.

Peter: Just ONE thing? That's it? Aren't we allowed to say more than one thing?

Beth: [*Bewildered at the question.*] Well, I suppose you could say TWO things if you really wanted to, but...

Peter: No, you don't understand. What I meant to say is that I want to say a whole bunch of things that I'm thankful for.

Beth: A whole bunch of things?

Peter: Yeah, I've got a whole bunch of things to be thankful for.

Laura: [*Bewildered.*] Like what? [*More polite.*] I mean, would you mind telling us what kind of things that you are thankful for?

Peter: Sure. I'm always willing to tell others what the Lord has done for me. Let's see. [*Thinks for a minute as he prepares his list.*] Well, to start, I would have to say that I'm thankful for everything that I have. Without God and the things that he has done for me, I am nothing. [*Pause.*] And neither are you.

Laura: What do you mean by saying that without God and the things that he has done for me I am nothing. God hasn't done anything for me this past year.

Beth: What about your wedding?

Laura: What should I be thankful for about my wedding? [*Complaining.*] We were supposed to have an outdoors wedding. We had prayed for sunshine for months, but it poured. We wound up changing our plans at the last minute. If it wasn't for a couple of people who thought of an alternative plan our wedding would have been a disaster.

Beth: But it wasn't a disaster, was it?

Peter: I thought that your wedding was beautiful...oops I mean that um... I mean that [*recovering*] that's what I had heard about your wedding...oh...um... [*Changing the conversation.*] Well, wasn't your wedding last September?

Laura: Yes it was, but how did YOU know about it?

Peter: I was um...I was...Just talking to someone who said that they were there. They said that it was one of the most beautiful weddings that they had ever been to. They also said that they could feel the Spirit of God moving in that place, and that they could even see it in your eyes. I'd say that you have much to be thankful for - even though it rained. [*Changing the subject.*] You know, I think that you have forgotten what Thanksgiving is all about. Thanksgiving started with the Pilgrims, remember?

Laura: Well, I suppose you're right. [*Getting defensive.*] But YOU still haven't covered everything that YOU'RE thankful for. So far we've just talked about me.

Peter: Ok, ok. Here goes... Are you ready? [*They nod.*] I'm thankful that God loves me, and that He loves me so much that He sent His Son down to earth to die for my sins. That He was so giving, He gave His life so that I can go to heaven when I die. That's not all. I'm thankful for every breath of air that I take. Especially the air out here in the country. That city air isn't too good for my lungs. I'm also thankful for the communication that I can have with God. I can pray to Him and He speaks to me through His Word. [*Peter becomes engrossed in the following list of items.*] As far as tangible items go, I'm thankful for my job, my family, my friends, and all my relatives, my house, my dog, my clothes, my money, my computer, my television, my radio, the sky, the clouds, the stars, the sun and moon, the breeze on warm summer evenings, watching the sun set while sitting on a beach along the ocean...

Beth: Peter.

Peter: Being able to walk through the woods on a fall afternoon and look at the color of the leaves and to hear the birds sing around me...

Beth: Peter. We don't have all day.

Peter: [*He breaks out of his trance.*] Oh. Well, that's just a few of the things that I am thankful for. Now how about you, Laura, you have got to be thankful for more than just your job.

Laura: You know, I guess you're right. I had forgotten how much Christ did do for me. Since I became a Christian I haven't prayed that much, except when I really needed something. And the only time I read my Bible is at church on Sunday.

Beth: Yeah. I guess that I forgot that Thanksgiving is more than just what the pilgrims had for dinner. I need to remember why the pilgrims started Thanksgiving in the first place. You are right. I should be thankful for everything that I have. [*Deep, with thoughtfulness.*] I am nothing without God. How did you find all this out?

Peter: Someone special told me. But you can find everything that I've told you in the Bible. The Bible says "Always give thanks to God the Father, for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul wrote that. The Psalms are full of thanksgiving and praise. "Let us come before Him with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise of praise", as well as "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise." Now, my favorite Psalm "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. His loves endures forever." There are a lot more references, but "we don't have all day."

Laura: Wow. I had no idea that the Bible was so specific on how we should thank God.

Beth: *[She takes out a piece of paper and gets ready to take notes.]* Peter, do you know of any other places in the Bible that Tell us how we should thank God? I'd like to take some notes so that we can do better in the future.

Peter: Sure, but remember, I'm no expert. You should ask your pastor for more help. What I do know is that the Bible does give some guidelines on thanksgiving and prayer. It says..."Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, present your request before God". Paul wrote that too. He also wrote "Devote yourselves to prayer, being thankful and watchful". My favorite verse describes how the angels worship the Lord..."They fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God saying: AMEN! Praise and Glory and Wisdom and Thanks and Honor and Power and Strength be to Our God forever and ever". One thing that I haven't mentioned to you is that you can also thank the Lord for bad things that did NOT happen to you.

Beth: I never really thought about that.

Laura: I once heard a song talking about how angels keep harm away from us. Like a car runs out of gas a couple of blocks before it would have hit us. Or how angels watch over us.

Beth: *[She begins making a list of Laura's suggestions.]* So, we should thank God for angels.

Laura: I also heard about people not getting a job that they really wanted because God had bigger and better things planned for them and if that had gotten that job then they wouldn't have seen the bigger and better opportunity.

Beth: *[Writing.]* So, we should thank God for the jobs that we don't get.

*[Laura and Beth now begin to talk closer together, in a kind of huddle, ignoring Peter. Peter now begins to step slowly aback and watches from afar.]*

Laura: The more that I think about it, if it wasn't for my parents I'm not sure if I'd even be a Christian.

Beth: *[Writing.]* Christian parents.

Laura: And my friends sure help me through an awful lot. I don't know where I'd be if it wasn't for them.

Beth: *[Writing.]* Christian friends.

Laura: We should even be thankful for our country. With all the walls coming down in foreign countries it sure is easy to see how blessed we have been here.

Beth: *[Writing.]* Our country.

*[Peter has now moved out of their line of sight. He is still watching them from across the room.]*

Laura: Now that I'm looking in the right direction I can see that we have a great church here. I mean the pastor really loves the Lord, and he teaches from the Bible and about the Bible. He is also really concerned about his congregation.

Beth: [*Writing.*] Our church. Our pastor.

Laura: And this world would be doomed if it wasn't for Christ.

Beth: [*Writing.*] Christ. He should be at the top of the list. Don't you think so Peter? [*Looking up.*] Peter?

Laura: Peter? [*Looking around.*] Where did he go?

Beth: He was just here a minute ago.

Laura: Maybe he went into the service all ready. [*Looking at her watch.*] You know, it is almost time for it to start.

Beth: I still think that this whole thing seems to be a bit fishy.

Laura: What do you mean?

Beth: Was he wearing a dress?

Laura: I can't believe that he could be wearing a dress.

Beth: Did you see what he was wearing?

Laura: I didn't get a good look at what he was wearing.

Beth: Well, I did and it did look like a dress.

Laura: Maybe it was a choir robe?

Beth: No, those are [*use color of your choir robes.*]

Laura: He said that he was from Los Angeles. Maybe he's wearing the latest style. Anyway, I don't have time to worry about what Peter was wearing; I have to decide what I'm going to say that I'm thankful for.

Beth: I thought that you were just going to say that you were thankful for your job.

Laura: Well, with all of the things that Peter was saying, I know that I have much more to be thankful for than my job.

Beth: Yeah, me too.

Laura: So, now the tough part is having to choose what I won't say that I'm thankful for.

Beth: I'll have to say something that you're not gonna' say.

Laura: Do you think that pastor would be mad if I just went down my whole list and said that I'm thankful for each of these things?

Beth: I don't know. [*Smiling.*] But there is one sure way to find out.

[*They turn to enter the sanctuary as they speak their final lines.*]

Laura: Maybe we should stand up and read the list together.


Beth: [*Pointing to the list.*] I want to read that first one.

Laura: All right, but I get to read the next two.

[*They exit into the sanctuary. They continue to choose things to be thankful for as they exit. Peter follows them to the edge of the stage. He stops, and addresses the audience from there.*]

Peter: I love my job. You see, they knew that they had plenty to be thankful for. They just needed a little reminder, that's all. It usually doesn't take long to convince them that they're looking in the wrong direction. Oh, and I don't mind the talk about the dress. While I'm here - how about you? Have you told the Lord how thankful you are for all that He has done for you? Have you even thought about all the Lord has done for you this year? Now don't just say "My job" or "My family" or "My friends. Everyone is thankful for things like that, well, at least most people are thankful for things like that. I want you to really think about it. What kind of things has the Lord been doing in your life? He has blessed you in many ways. I'm sure of it. God blesses all of his children. Now that it's on your mind - DON'T FORGET TO THANK HIM for it. And I mean every day. You should tell Him how thankful you are for the things that he has done for you while you can. You never know which one of these days shall be your last. One day we will all stand before him face to face. The Bible says that "every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." I wouldn't wait until then to thank Him for what He's done, because then it'll be too late to make up for lost time.

- CURTAIN -



Copyright © 1996 by James E. Bogoniewski Jr.