

In Everything Give Thanks

Text : I Thes. 5: 12-22 (esp. 16-18)

INTRODUCTION :

A. We are coming up on my favorite holiday of the year ... THANKSGIVING.

1. Not because of the football.
2. Not because of the feasting.
3. Because it is a day in which more people are called to acknowledge God.

B. The giving of thanks is a universal value.

1. Cultures are different, but all have a way of acknowledges graces received.
2. Universally, parents are expected to teach gratitude to their children.
3. Ungrateful people tend to fail and to drag their culture down.

C. Thus, ingratitude is an avenue of attack used by the devil.

1. The more one's heart is turned toward his own desires,
the farther it's turned from God.
2. Thus, the possession of wealth is among the greatest of temptations.
 - a. **Matt. 19** ... Rich young man ... Jesus observed,
"it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven."
 - b. Jesus added ... "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle,
than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."
3. The primary function of commercial TV is to make people dissatisfied.
 - a. It's hard to stay contented when they keep telling you all the things you need.
 - b. If they don't make you want things, they go out of business.

D. God wants us to look beyond our desires and lead lives which are characterized by gratitude for what He as given to use.

1. The devil wants us to stay focused on the "things" of this world.
2. God wants us to trust in Him completely.
3. God wants for us to be contented with what He has give us. (cf. **I Tim. 6**)
4. In addition, **God** wants for His creation to be grateful to their creator

TRANSITION : As we study our text, we will observe this to be true.

I. It is God's will that Christians be thankful people.

A. Vs. **18**- in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

B. Ingratitude is a mark of the unbeliever.

1. **II Tim. 3: 1-3** But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.
2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, **ungrateful**, unholy, ... **5** ; **Avoid such men as these.**

2. Gratitude is a point of contrast between the godly and the world.

Eph. 5:3-4 But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; **4** and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, **but rather giving of thanks.** (*Keep your heart mindful of God.*)

C. A grateful heart is fundamental to one's relationship with God.

1. **Rom. 1: 18-21** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, **19** because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. **20** For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. **21** For even though they knew God, **they did not honor Him as God or give thanks**, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

2. Vs. **19** ... The world exists, so it is obvious that someone created it. ... **God**

3. Vs. **20** ... What does it take to create ? **Power**

a. Since God created the earth, he has authority over His creation.

b. Therefore, man has no excuse for not acknowledging God's sovereignty.

c. Consequently, those who do not acknowledge God deserve His wrath.

*** Even idolatrous, primitive, tribal people give thanks to some god.**

D. **Luke 17: 11-19** ... Jesus healed 10 lepers.

1. Only one returned to give thanks.

2. That one was a Samaritan ... not one of those who had God's law, His temple, etc.

E. Giving thanks points one's mind to the giver (God) not the gift.

1. To focus on the gift is to focus on one's self. *This pleases ME.*
2. Everything you can see will cease to exist (**2 Pet 3: 10-13**), but the source of all things is eternal. So, it is wise to maintain relation with the giver, not with the gift.

ILL. - When you give a child a piece of candy and he drops it in the dirt, getting it replaced depends on his relationship with you.

3. Gifts pass away so it is essential to maintain a relationship with the giver. Saying thanks is the logical place to start.

THEREFORE : *Thankfulness turns the eyes of the Christian toward God and it distinguishes him from the world.*

- a. The grateful Christian becomes increasingly less like those in the world.
- b. His light points people to GOD ... not his own accomplishments.
- c. Being truly humble, he glorifies God. cf. .. the one leper .. **Luke 17: 15**

II. Being thankful leads to JOY. Vs. 16- Rejoice Always**A. The person who has the faith to be truly thankful can enjoy the present.**

1. He understands that he lives by the grace of God.
2. His total faith and trust is in God's provision ... not his own.

B. Thankfulness leads one out of sorrow, fear and self-absorption.

1. Ungratefulness is all about self.
2. It is a zero sum game ...
 - a. No man can have all he desires to have. (**III- Bill gates**)
 - b. Be man can be all that he wants to be.
 - c. Man's wants can never be satisfied. (*Our "wanter" is too big.*)

C. True Joy does not depend on external circumstances. (**FRUIT OF FAITH)****III. God wants Christians to be thankful "in everything."****A. Vs. 18- in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.****B. It's easy to thank God for blessings received.**

1. When a loved one is healed.
2. When you just landed that dream job.
3. When you been delivered from peril.

C. “everything” includes difficult circumstances.

1. The brethren at Thessalonica experienced great difficulties.
 - a. **I Thess. 2: 14-** For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews,
 - b. **I Thess. 4: 13, 18** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ... **18** Therefore comfort one another with these words.
 - c. Vs. **18-** in everything give thanks (*It's hard to be thankful when one has ...*)
2. **Acts 5** ... When arrested and beaten, the Apostles rejoiced that they were worthy.
3. **Acts 16** ... Paul maintained his joy even in prison. (Cf. ... **II Cor. 6: 1-10**)
4. These words are a command, established doctrine, NOT idle conversation.

Eph. 5: 19-20 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; **20** always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

D. Even when things are not what he wants, the Christian knows that God is in it.

1. God will use even the most horrible circumstances to the Christian's eternal good.

Rom. 8: 28- And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
2. Once one realizes God is in control he can be totally at peace.

Phil. 4: 6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (*what happens then*) **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

IV. The place that God wants you to be thankful is “in Christ Jesus.”

- A. Vs. **18-** in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- B. It is only in Christ Jesus that it is possible to be thankful in everything.
 1. **Read ... Rom. 5: 1-10**

2. This passage contains three (3) “exults” :
 - a. Vs. 1-2 ... Exult in hope ... in anticipation of eternity with God.
 - b. Vs. 10-11 ... Exult in God through Jesus Christ – why – reconciled.
 - c. Vs. 3 ... Exult in tribulation.
3. Vs. 4 ... When your character is proven, God can entrust you with tribulation.
4. Having stood through tribulation gives you confidence in God and in your faith.

CONCLUSION :

- A. *This is the time when we pay special attention to renewing our awareness of the divine in everything and expressing our gratitude for His generous presence. However, in doing so it behooves us to be careful to keep our perspective clear. Look around you. All that you can see will pass away and cease to exist with only two exceptions ... man and God's word. Therefore, it is but logical for the focus of one's life to be upon the things which cannot be seen with the human eye, upon that which is eternal. The one who created this world and gave man this life, is the same one who went to prepare the next world and who will give to man the next life. Knowing this, the wise man will concentrate on his relationship with the creator, not on the created.*
- B. It is God who created all and who distributes what He has created.
 1. Matt. 6 ... Jesus taught us to trust God to provide and serve Him.
 2. I Tim. 6 ... Godliness with contentment is great gain.
 We'll go out of this world exactly as we came in.
 If we have food and covering we should want no more.
- C. I Thes. 5:16-18 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

INVITATION :

Text :

I Thes. 5: 12-22 (NASV)

12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, **13** and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. **14** We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. **15** See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. **16** Rejoice always; **17** pray without ceasing; **18** in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. **19** Do not quench the Spirit; **20** do not despise prophetic utterances. **21** But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good; **22** abstain from every form of evil.

Our lesson will come from ... Verses 16-18

(**New American Standard Version**)

16 Rejoice always; **17** pray without ceasing; **18** in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

(**New King James Version**)

16 Rejoice always, **17** pray without ceasing, **18** in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

(**New International Version**)

16 Be joyful always; **17** pray continually; **18** give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.