

“Give Thanks”

1 Thessalonians 5:14-18 NIV

14 And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. **15** Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

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

- Thankfulness is the Manifestation of a heart of Gratitude mixed with Faith.

Thankfulness bonds families

...Strengthens Friendships

...Unites Churches and Communities

Thankfulness defends against materialism

...is the enemy of entitlement

...is the cure for self-pity

Thankfulness is Given by the Spirit

... was modeled by Jesus

... honors our Heavenly Father

Thankfulness is born from a Humble Heart

... sustains faithfulness

... is a prerequisite for joy

... and leads to Generosity

Thankfulness is a Command of God

... an attitude of Faith

... a condition of the Heart

... a fundamental part of our walk with Jesus

Vs. 16

“Rejoice always”

We are challenged to not only rejoice in good things, but also in less than ideal circumstances. The Christian can **rejoice always** because their joy isn't based on circumstances, but in God. Circumstances change, but God doesn't.

“I am bound to mention among the curiosities of the churches, that I have known many deeply spiritual Christian people who have been afraid to rejoice... Some take such a view of religion that it is to them a sacred duty to be gloomy.” (Spurgeon)

“Turn this book over and see if there be any precept that the Lord has given you in which he has said, ‘Groan in the Lord always, and again I say groan.’ You may groan if you like. You have Christian liberty for that; but, at the same time, do believe that you have larger liberty to rejoice.” (Spurgeon)

Vs. 17

“pray continually”

- How important is it for us to be a praying people? What if our hope for joy, ability to rejoice and give thanks is connected to our time with God in prayer?
- Christians are to pray continually. Prayer is communication with God, and we can live each minute of the day in a constant flowing in conversation with God.
- Prayer is considered a Christian Discipline, but once we get past the initial effort we find it is the most beneficial conversation we will have all day. There is something special about shutting ourselves in with God, away from distractions in a prayer closet. (Matthew 6:6)

Vs. 18

“give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

- We don’t give thanks for everything, but in everything. We recognize God’s sovereign hand in everything. It is not left to blind fate or chance.
- The thought isn’t “this is God’s will, so you must do it.”
- The thought is “this is God’s will, so you can do it.”
- It isn’t easy to **rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances**, but we can do it, because it is God’s will, and makes room for him to turn every situation around for the good.

Colossians 3:15-17 NIV

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16** Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. **17** And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1. Thankfulness is an Offering

Vs. 15

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.”

- The Apostle Paul’s ministry is characterized with suffering and difficulties. Jesus even said to Ananias about Paul in **Acts 9:16** “I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

- Paul in 2 Corinthians 11 commits a large portion of scripture to detail his sufferings for the Lord. Yet Paul is faithful to the end
- I don't think there is anyone, in the NT, more qualified to teach on Thankfulness than Paul.
- When Paul writes Colossians, he is in prison... For what Grand Theft Auto? Bank Robbery? No for Preaching the Gospel...
- It is out of Paul's imprisonment that he teaches "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts... and be thankful."
- Peace and Thankfulness go hand in hand...
- Being Thankful and giving Thanks isn't always easy.
- At times it might even feel like a Sacrifice of Praise or an Offering to God.

A Thank Offering is actually a Sacrifice that was offered to God in the OT.

5 Different Offerings mentioned in the OT

1. Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1)

- Only offering to be totally consumed on the altar with nothing left for man. It was for the purpose of atoning for sin and turning away the wrath of God.

2. Grain Offering (Leviticus 2)

- Only offering made without the shedding of blood. It symbolized devotion to God.

3. Sin Offering (Leviticus 4)

- A mandatory offering required to atone for sins committed in ignorance.

4. Trespass (Guilt) Offering (Leviticus 5)

- A mandatory offering used to make restitution for deliberate sins.

5. **Peace (Thank) Offering** (Leviticus 3)

- An offering made as an act of thanksgiving. A voluntary offering given out of gratitude or to fulfill a vow. It symbolized fellowship and communion with God.

Thank Offering

- Offering given out of gratitude or to fulfill a vow
- Voluntary, and a sweet savor to the Lord.
- Indicates fellowship and communion with God.

Leviticus 22:29 NIV

"When you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted."

- Have you ever meet someone who seemed to have little reason to be thankful, but they were... How much did you see God in that?
- Have ever meet someone who had every reason to be Thankful, but they weren't... How much did you see God in that?

Can I encourage you today, If Jesus has forgive all your sins, written your name in the Lambs Book of Life and given you his Precious Holy Spirit, you have every reason to be Thankful...

2. Your Thankfulness Blesses the Lord...

Luke 17 NIV

11 Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. **12** As he was going into a village, ten

men who had leprosy met him. **They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice**, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”

14 When he saw them, he said, **“Go, show yourselves to the priests.”** And as they went, they were cleansed.

15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. **16 He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him**—and he was a Samaritan.

17 Jesus asked, **“Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?”**

18 **Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?”**

19 Then he said to him, **“Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”**

- It is Good to give Thanks to God.
- Only the one who came back and gave thanks got to be close to Jesus. **Vs. 12,13** says the ten stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice. But the one who came back **Vs. 16** He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him.
- The other nine got a miracle. But the one who showed thanks, got to come close to Jesus.

Deuteronomy 26 NIV

“When you have entered the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, 2 take some of the first-fruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the Lord your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name.”

- One of the ten lepers returned to Jesus as a type of First Fruits Offering.
- When we give back to God the First Fruits, it is a Thank Offering to God. Like the one leper it **“returns to give praise to God”**

2 Corinthians 9:7 “For God loves a Cheerful Giver”

3. Your Thankfulness looks like God

- It's possible to think that Thankfulness isn't a big deal...
- This whole thing of Thankfulness is overrated and not that important...
- I'm hear to tell you its a bigger deal than we think...

2 Timothy 3 NIV

1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. **2** People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, **ungrateful**, unholy, **3** without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, **4** treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— **5** having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

NIV; Ungrateful: **KJV**; Unthankful:

Exodus 34:6

“And the LORD passed by before Moses, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and **gracious**, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,”

Numbers 6:25

“The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be **gracious** unto thee:”

God is Gracious towards us, It is his Character.

- The Word of God warns in the last days people will become ungrateful.
- This is the opposite of God's nature and opposite of His Holy Spirit inside of every believer in Christ.

- As Born Again Believers we are given a new nature. Like Paul, this new nature is a powerful witness to a lost world and one that for centuries has caused Christians to uniquely stand out.

1 Peter 2:9 NKJV

But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special (peculiar) people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

- The Letter to Diognetus was believed to be written in the 2nd Century to provide a clear and thoughtful explanation of what Christians believe and how they worship God in the midst of a pagan world.

In the 5th Chapter of the letter to Diognetus

“Christians are indistinguishable from other men either by nationality, language or customs. They do not inhabit separate cities of their own, or speak a strange dialect, or follow some outlandish way of life. Their teaching is not based upon reveries inspired by the curiosity of men. Unlike some other people, they champion no purely human doctrine. With regard to dress, food and manner of life in general, they follow the customs of whatever city they happen to be living in, whether it is Greek or foreign.

And yet there is something extraordinary about their lives. They live in their own countries as though they were only passing through. They play their full role as citizens, but labor under all the disabilities of aliens. Any country can be their homeland, but for them their homeland, wherever it may be, is a foreign country. Like others, they marry and have children, but they do not expose them. They share their meals, but not their wives.

They live in the flesh, but they are not governed by the desires of the flesh. They pass their days upon earth, but they are citizens of heaven. Obedient to the laws, yet they live on a level that transcends the law. Christians love all men, but all men persecute them. Condemned because they are not understood,

they are put to death, but raised to life again. They live in poverty, but enrich many; they are totally destitute, but possess an abundance of everything. They suffer dishonor, but that is their glory. They are defamed, but vindicated. A blessing is their answer to abuse, deference their response to insult. For the good they do they receive the punishment of malefactors, **but even then they, rejoice, as though receiving the gift of life.** They are attacked by the Jews as aliens, they are persecuted by the Greeks, yet no one can explain the reason for this hatred.

To speak in general terms, we may say that the Christian is to the world what the soul is to the body. As the soul is present in every part of the body, while remaining distinct from it, so Christians are found in all the cities of the world, but cannot be identified with the world.”

Closing:

- This Thanksgiving I want to encourage to be Thankful!
- Even in challenging areas, Praise God he is with you. Trust he has given you what you need and instead of looking at what you don't have. Consider what you do have.
- Tell someone how much you love them and how Thankful you are for them.
- Don't let Thanksgiving be just about Turkey and Dressing.
- Thankfulness is something we should be pretty good at as Christians.

We Have Much to be Thankful For, Don't we?

I Thank God for my beautiful wife

For my Children, that they love Jesus and work hard

I Thank God for my health at the grand old age of 50

I'm Thankful for America and our Freedom

I'm Thankful for Colorado and my little house on the prairie.

I Thank God for all of you. I Love this Church!

I Thank God for His unwavering love and faithfulness.

I Thank God for the opportunity to Serve God

We have a lot to be Thankful for?
Be thankful in every circumstance.
God Loves a Grateful Heart...