

Gratitude: The Way to Experience and Sustain Love

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Complaining is based on a feeling that we deserve to be treated better by God or people. It emphasizes *what we do not have* rather than *what we have*—especially *what we have in Christ*.
¹⁴Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵that you may become blameless...
(Phil. 2:14-15)
- B. Gratitude is a mindset based on seeing that Jesus has given us much more than what we deserve. Gratitude flows from seeing the truth about Jesus' leadership—it is wise, generous, and kind.
⁷But we speak...the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, ⁸which none of the rulers of this age knew...⁹“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1 Cor. 2:7-9)
- C. We are accepted by God. The *indwelling Spirit* enables us to commune with God as honored members of His family. We are sons of God and the Bride of Christ who partner with Him forever. He delights in His people and enjoys His relationship with them. What we do now has continuity in the resurrection. Our small deeds so move Him that He rewards them (Mt. 10:42).
- D. Gratitude gives expression to the truth about Jesus and His leadership. This mindset results in God's people experiencing more of His love, presence, and liberty. Gratitude is the root system from which love grows and is sustained in this age and in the age to come.
⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” (Lk. 7:47, NIV)
- E. The Lord promises peace to any who will cultivate a spirit of gratitude in their life (Phil. 4:4-7).
⁴Rejoice in the Lord always...⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything...with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God...will guard your hearts...
(Phil. 4:4-7)
- F. We experience wholeness by gratitude. The Greek word *sozo* is translated “made you well.” *Sozo* means salvation or wholeness. The leper only received *sozo* as he gave thanks.
¹²...there met Him ten...lepers...¹³And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”...¹⁵One of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned ...¹⁶and fell down...at His feet, giving Him thanks...¹⁷Jesus answered and said, “...where are the nine?...¹⁹He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.” (Lk. 17:12-19)

II. GROWING IN A SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE

- A. The testimony of the seraphim is that the whole earth is filled with God's glory (Isa. 6:3).
³And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy...the whole earth is full of His glory!" (Isa. 6:3)
- B. The Lord sees His glory in His people even though much of it is hidden from us in this age.
³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Col. 3:3-4)
- C. Gratitude is so attractive to God and it adorns or beautifies God's people (1 Pet. 3:4).
¹For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful. (Ps. 147:1)
⁴...the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. (1 Pet. 3:4)
- D. The root of Adam's sin in the garden of Eden was connected to his ingratitude. In a similar way, our ability to experience the fullness of our salvation is related to gratitude. Adam did not see the magnitude of what God gave him.
- E. The damaging results of the fall continue to be perpetuated by ingratitude.
²¹...although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Rom. 1:21)
- F. Ingratitude is the result of taking lightly the wealth of God's goodness given to us.
⁴Or do you despise [take lightly] the riches of His goodness... not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance (Rom. 2:4)
- G. The call to rejoice, give thanks, praise or bless the Lord or to be grateful are in essence the same exhortation. This is one of the most important activities that equips us to renew our relationship with God and others and to resist the work of the enemy in our heart and relationships.
¹I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. ²My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; the humble shall hear of it and be glad. ³Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together... ⁵They looked to Him and were radiant... (Ps. 34:1-5)

- H. The book of Psalms exhorts us over 150 times to praise the Lord. This shows us the significance of gratitude in sustaining our life in the Holy Spirit and in having healthy relationships.