

A Proper Perspective on Thanksgiving **I Thessalonians 5:16-18**

INTRODUCTION:

All Stand and Read Scripture

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NASB)

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

Prayer

The following proclamation was made by Governor Bradford in 1623, 3 years after the Pilgrims settled at Plymouth;

To all ye Pilgrims,

Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, squashes and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as He has protected us from the raids of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience; now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and ye little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the day time, on Thursday November ye 29th of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty three, and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Plymouth rock, there to listen to ye pastor and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings.

This Thursday is Thanksgiving. One day in which we like those early Pilgrims set aside time in our busy schedules to give thanks to God. Now, there is nothing wrong with that, but the word of God tells us that this should be a continual, daily attitude.

Colossians 3:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Paul's main subject in this passage and the opening scripture is PRAISE and THANKSGIVING. Notice, also, the other important words in these passages; ALWAYS, CONTINUALLY, and IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. He is talking about a continual attitude of thankfulness to God.

But how, you may wonder, can we have this attitude continually, especially "in all circumstances?"

I believe the answer lies in our **Perspective of Thanksgiving**. We need the proper perspective.

ILLUSTRATION:

One young lady wrote home from college,

"Dear Mom:

Sorry I haven't written sooner. My arm really has been broken. I broke it, and my left leg, when I jumped from the second floor of my dormitory...when we had the fire. We were lucky! A young service station attendant saw the blaze and called the Fire Department. They were there in minutes. I was in the hospital for a few days. Paul, the service station attendant, came to see me every day. And because it was taking so long to get our dormitory livable again, I moved in with him. He has been so nice. I must admit that I am pregnant. Paul and I plan to get married just as soon as he can get a divorce. I hope things are fine at home. I'm doing fine, and will write more when I get the chance.

Your daughter,
Susie

P.S. None of the above is true. But I did get a "C" in Sociology and flunked Chemistry. I just wanted you to receive **this** news in its "**Proper Perspective!**"

To be thankful in all circumstances, we need a proper perspective of our circumstances and of our God. Only then we will be able to give thanks to the Lord always.

When Susie's mom weighed the "C" in Sociology and the flunking of Chemistry against the possibility of a **wounded pregnant daughter living with a married man**, all does not seem quite as bad.

If any nation ought to be thankful to God and grateful for his goodness, it ought to be America. If any people in America ought to be thankful to God and grateful for his goodness, it ought to be Christians.

This morning I would like to share with you three things we learn about thanksgiving from the Bible.

BODY:

I. Thanksgiving Should be Expressed

We sing the Doxology every Sunday. In it we "**Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow.**"

Mindy sang this morning "**To God be the Glory, Great Things He has Done!**"

When you heard and sang these songs, was your heart **PRAISING GOD?**

In **Luke 17** we read about ten men who were healed by Jesus of their leprosy. Out of those ten men only one came back to give thanks and Jesus said, "Where are the other nine?" He

was the only one willing to take time to go back and say "**thank you.**" Because of that Jesus said to him, "**Rise and go; your faith has made you well.**"

Have you ever wondered why Jesus said that? I mean like the others, the man was already healed of his leprosy from the time they went to show themselves to the priest. But when Jesus says to this one man, "**Your faith has made you well,**" he wasn't just talking about a **physical healing**, he was talking about a **spiritual one, a mental one**. He was made whole.

A thankful heart will endear others to us and us to others. For you see thanksgiving is **not only good for the giver but also good for the receiver**.

God appreciates our thanksgiving. It lifts Him up and it glorifies Him. And thanksgiving endears him to us. It draws us closer. If we are not grateful, if we do not express our thanksgiving, then it can have the **opposite effect**.

Paul says,

Romans 1:20-21 (NASB)

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.

This passage seems to imply that people who are ungrateful to God will soon fall away - their hearts will become hardened. Here, we see pride keeping people from worshipping God and being thankful.

Before we leave this point that thanksgiving should be expressed let me list a few ways that we can **express our thanks** to God.

- When you spend time with Him in constant thought, prayer, and reading His Word.
- When you forgive others.
- When you reach out to people in need.
- When you give God the best of your Time, Talent and Treasures.
- When you praise Him enthusiastically from the heart.
- When you serve in His church.
- When you share the Gospel to others.

Through these times with God, we are actually expressing our thanks to God for His blessings by being obedient to Him.

II. Our Thanksgiving Should be Continuous.

Our thankfulness to God, must not be based upon our circumstances in life.

Our opening scripture:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NASB)

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

What should we be thankful for?

As a Christian we have **many, many** things!

A. Thankful for Material Blessings.

Luke 12:29-31 (NASB)

²⁹ And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying.
³⁰ For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. ³¹ But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

How hard we struggle to "earn a living"! If we could just trust in the Lord. He will supply our every need. We have our eyesight, hearing, voice, touch, and life itself! But, it never seems to be enough.

Someone once said that if the stars only came out once a year, we would stay out all night to watch them. But they are there every night and we have grown accustomed to them.

The Israelites grumbled because they had no food so God miraculously sent manna (a crust-like bread) to cover the ground each day except the Sabbath day. Then they started to grumble because it was the same thing every day.

They had a miracle straight from God every day but were no longer satisfied.

We must be careful not to let the everyday blessings from God be overlooked.

B. Thankful for Spiritual Blessings.

Ephesians 1:3 (NASB)

³ Blessed *be* (or *Praise be to* or *Deep Thanks to*) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed (Favored) us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,

Verse 1. "Blessed" when referring to God has the meaning of "**Praise be to**" or "**Deep Thanks**".

Verse 1. "Blessed" when referring to man has the meaning of "**Favored**".

We have MANY spiritual blessings.

- God the Father, who supplies our needs.
- Jesus, who redeemed us.
- The Holy Spirit, who indwells us.
- Adoption as a Child of God.
- God's Word to Enlighten us.
- Freedom from worldly cares.
- Hope of eternal life with God.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

DOXOLOGY

"Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow, Praise Him all Creatures here Below."

Then Notice, it says:

"Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Revelation 4:8-11 (NASB)

⁸ And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,

"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME."

⁹ And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

¹¹ "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

If the angels in heaven can continuously give God the glory, shouldn't we EVEN MORE because of the material and spiritual blessings that we continuously receive from God!

C. Thankful for the Tough Times.

This is a tough one. **I Thess. 5:18** says, "Give thanks in ALL circumstances."

Eph. 5:20 says, "always giving thanks."

You may think, surely Paul made a mistake or even that this was easy for him to say. But it wasn't. Paul suffered from a very difficult problem that he called a "thorn in the flesh". He also had been run out of town, beaten, whipped, imprisoned, betrayed by friends, naked, cold, hungry shipwrecked, and stoned because of his faith. Yet, Paul never stopped giving thanks.

Paul could have had a real pity party for himself many times. One example was his imprisonment. He was an apostle who had been commanded to spread the Gospel to the world, and instead, he was sitting in prison. Instead of questioning God on why He would allow this to happen when there are so many souls to win, he found the positive. When we like Paul have the proper perspective we to can give thanks in all circumstances.

ILLUSTRATION:

- Rhea Thompkins
- 35 yr old -
- just finished college -
- mother of 3 boys 4/15/18 -
- had a new job -

- developed lupus -
- husband leaves
- her - oldest son in jail for dealing drugs -
- lost wt. couldn't hold her head up or get in and out of bath tub by herself

She was able to overlook her problems and focus on the blessings. She said that all this was really a blessing. It had allowed her to spend more time with the Lord. When she was in the hospital she shared the Gospel with people God put in front of her.

In our weakness God can make us strong. When we are struggling God is able to work in our lives. He helps us through times that we could have never faced on our own.

III. Our Thanksgiving is Expected.

Paul says we are to "give thanks in all circumstances BECAUSE this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." This is God's will for us. And he knows, if we will do it, that our lives will be changed.

As we mature in Christ, we realize more and more the blessings we receive. When we realize how much God has done for us and how much he continues to do, we should be more than happy to give something back to him. This comes through our **time** and also our **financial giving**.

Someone has said that for Thanksgiving to be a real Thanksgiving, "There must be **"Thanks"** and there must be **"Giving"**."

When we go to a restaurant, we are more than happy to give a good waitress a 15% tip, but for some reason, many have a problem with giving God 10% of all the good gifts he has given us. We need to ask ourselves if we are truly thankful.

Remember God loves a cheerful giver!

CONCLUSION:

Thanksgiving is a wonderful time of the year to be thankful.

Remember: Thankfulness should be a continuous attitude in our life.

Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

I encourage you to allow Christ to make you righteous before God by stepping forward this morning during our invitation hymn.

God Be with You till We Meet Again

God be with you till we meet again, By His counsels guide uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you, God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet...Till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet...Till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.