

Thankful in all Things

1 Thessalonians 5:18

This is the week that has been set aside to celebrate Thanksgiving. I'm sure most of us will celebrate with friends and family Thursday, and maybe at other times as well. So, what exactly is thanksgiving? It should be what its name reveals – thanks giving, lifting of praise and honor unto the Lord for His many benefits.

Thanksgiving always brings to mind precious memories. I remember the joy of being at grandmother's, the food – turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie, the family gathered in for fellowship, and football games. Those were joyful times that have since passed.

These are joyful times, but I hope that isn't all it means to us. Thanksgiving should be more than a single day of the year. It ought to be an attitude, a way of life. God doesn't meet my needs just once a year and I shouldn't deprive Him of the praise He is due by rendering thanks just once a year. I want to discuss the [lessons](#) in this powerful verse as we consider: [Thankful in all Things](#).

I. The Reason for Thanksgiving – [In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you](#). Often, we read a verse or passage of Scripture and never get to the depths of what God has to say. In order to fully appreciate our text, we must understand to whom it was written. Paul had written this letter to the church in Thessalonica. He was writing to a local body of believers who were part of the bride of Christ.

- They were a people of hope, a people of faith. Consider verses 9 and 10 – [For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, ^{\[10\]} Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him](#). This was a difficult time for the church. Paul was reminding them of their position in Christ. Regardless of what a new day brought forth, they had reason to rejoice!
- We have met today as a local body of believers; we are part of His bride. The church has reason to rejoice! If anyone should offer up praise, we should. Consider what we have in the Lord. We have been redeemed; our souls are secure for all of eternity.
- Our world is becoming less tolerant of the church. They would like for us to shut down and remain silent. Let me encourage you to rejoice in your soul. All of the world and hell itself may rage against us, friends may turn their backs, but there is a brighter day ahead! That alone is reason enough to offer thanksgiving! Genuine thanksgiving belongs to the church. The world can only be thankful for temporal things; we can rejoice in eternal things!

II. The Requirement in Thanksgiving – In every thing give thanks. Thankfulness on the part of believers is expected of God. The word give implies an obligation not an option. This isn't a simple request, but a requirement! What if the only blessings we enjoyed today were the things we thanked God for yesterday?

- When I stop to think of all that Christ has done for me, I am compelled to offer Him praise. He did for me what no other could. He gave me what I could never deserve. Is He not worthy of our praise? It is often easy to enjoy and expect God's benefits without expressing our gratitude for them!
- Do you remember the healing of the ten lepers? All were healed, but all were not thankful. **Jesus said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? They are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.** Only one gave praise. Have we not been as the nine? How often do we ask for more without being thankful for what we've already received? I pray we will live as the one who brought praise.
- Let us offer praise with a proper attitude. Have you ever opened a gift and been disappointed? Let us be thankful for what the Lord gives, even if it isn't what we desired. Has He not given far more than we deserve? Let's praise Him for who He is, not just what He gives!

III. The Realm of Thanksgiving – In every thing give thanks That simply means what it says – every thing! That request is simple enough, but often difficult to fulfill. If we were told to give thanks in "some things", "most things", or even "good things", we could handle that. God says give thanks in everything! Does that mean the trials and valleys we face? Yes! What about those things that try our patience or we don't enjoy? Those too!

- One might think, well that is easy for Paul to say, he was an apostle. Paul knew first-hand the difficulty of being thankful in all things. He had been run out of this very city, with his life threatened. He had been beaten with rods, whipped, shipwrecked, thrown in prison, stoned, and left for dead. In light of all that, he still says, Give Thanks in Every Thing!
- Preacher that is easier said than done. I realize that, but consider this: (Illus. shipwrecked man, hut burned, and smoke signal). **Rom.8:28 – And we know all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.** Have you ever considered a trial can become a blessing? (Illustrate my Romans 8:28.) God may want to use your valley to speak to someone else.
- Consider the impact of a grateful heart, while in the valley, to a lost and dying world! **Ps.118:24 – This is the day which the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.** (Dirty dishes poem

– *Thank God for dirty dishes; They have a tale to tell. While others may go hungry, We're eating very well. With home, health, and happiness, I shouldn't want to fuss; By the stack of evidence, God's been very good to us.*)

IV. The Reality of Thanksgiving (18b) – *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* Being thankful in all things is far more important than we realize; it is the will of God for our lives. We should desire to live according to God's will.

- We shouldn't question or debate God, simply accept His sovereign will. Do we actually think He is unaware of our situation? Once we learn to be thankful in all things, our relationship with Christ will grow and become dearer to us. Let me explain how this attitude affects our lives. Giving thanks in everything:

A. Displays our Confidence – We are, in fact, saying to the world and our Lord that we have complete confidence in Him. It declares that we trust the Lord to know what is best, to lead where it's best, and to accomplish what is best for our lives. When we get to the place where we can praise God for everything, we display absolute confidence in Him.

- But, how do we give thanks when sickness or disease has invaded our lives? We can rejoice that our Lord has the power to heal and provide. In times of great weakness, He draws near to those in suffering. I have had conversations with those who have dealt with cancer, and they rejoiced for the experience, because in that moment they experienced the Lord and His presence in ways they never had. How can we be thankful when dealing with the loss of a loved one in death? While this is quite difficult, we can be thankful that our Lord conquered death as He rose from the grave in triumphant life. Death is a part of life, and those who are in Christ enter His presence when they depart this life. We serve one who has defeated death, and even then, we can offer thanksgiving to Him!

B. Reveals our Commitment – With our confidence comes commitment. We are telling God that we want what He wants instead of what we desire. We want God above anything else. A thankful heart desires to walk with God above having our own way!

- Paul said, *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.* I don't know about you, but I want Jesus, enjoying close fellowship with Him, above anything else. Being thankful in all things will help achieve that! I pray if we haven't developed that attitude, we will.

Conclusion: Thanksgiving is quickly approaching. Surely, we all have reason to be thankful unto the Lord. He has already blessed me more than I could ever deserve. If I lived the rest of my life without another blessing, I would still have to admit that God has been good in my life.

How is it with you today? Are you able to give thanks in all things or do you question God and His provision in your life? We ought to praise the Lord for His blessings. If you are saved, that alone is reason to rejoice. If you don't know Christ as your personal Savior, then you really don't know how to be thankful. Why not come and seek the Lord today?