

Giving Thanks

Colossians 1:12-14

Introduction:

- The Bible says, “O give thanks unto the LORD, for [he is] good: for his mercy [endureth] for ever.”
- Many people today are displaying the empty theology of our day by expressing thanks, but not specifying to whom. This is ultimately ingratitude towards God, and really a form of idolatry
- Don’t let progressives hijack the Christian heritage of our nation- Pilgrims seeking to preserve godly living and religious freedom came over on the Mayflower, and only one person died on the voyage- a miracle in those days.
- The Pilgrims were blown off course, which forced them to pen the immortal words of the Mayflower Compact, which they wrote in the cabin of the ship. If everything had gone as scheduled, if they had landed where they had intended, they likely would have not written that document, which was the first step toward the US constitution. Free people creating their own free government under God—spelling out representative government.
- God allowed Squanto, a Native American who actually learned English to come and help them survive a harsh New England winter.
- Thanksgiving used negatively: Romans 1:21, II Tim 3:1-2
- God is a gracious God- “...for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”
- Thanksgiving should be in the context of two things:
 - Creator- He has given us life, and purpose for living- what He does
 - Relationship- Who He is! He is our savior!
 - Strictly speaking, the church is not in a covenant with God- but we are able to enjoy a relationship with God!

- The basis of this relationship is why we should be thankful- He is not just God, but our God! He is faithful to us- past, present, and future!

I. **THINK IT**

- a. “Gratitude increases mental strength. For years, research has shown gratitude not only reduces stress, but it may also play a major role in overcoming trauma. A 2006 study published in Behavior Research and Therapy found that Vietnam War Veterans with higher levels of gratitude experienced lower rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. A 2003 study published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology found that gratitude was a major contributor to resilience following the terrorist attacks on September 11. Recognizing all you have to be thankful for – even during the worst times of your life – fosters resilience.” Amy Morin, Psychotherapist
- b. Gratitude helps you sleep better, feel better, and live better!
- c. Perspective/ focus
 - i. Illustr green lens
 - ii. How is your worldview? Is it biblical?
 - iii. “See” through eyes of faith. In the Bible, believing precedes seeing John 11: 40, “Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”- illustr lady on the plane
 - iv. James 1:17- Everything good in our lives is from God
 - v. Trusting God precedes thanksgiving; conversely you will not be properly thankful if you are not trusting Him!
- d. Attitude of gratitude
 - i. Prov 23:7- For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...
 - ii. "Thanksgiving" is the expression of joy Godward, and is therefore the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22); believers are encouraged to abound in it (e.g., Col 2:7
 - iii. The focus of our thanks is God!

- iv. Here in Colossians 1, Giving thanks to the Father: In the divine administration, the Father is mentioned in connection with His plan of redemption
- v. To be partakers of the inheritance of the saints: It is the Father who qualifies us, not our own works. We gain this as an inheritance, instead of earning it as a wage. Our thanks is a response to God making the first move in our lives!
- vi. We have been delivered from the sinister forces of evil
- vii. We have been translated- When one empire conquered another, the custom was to take the population of the defeated empire and transfer it completely to the conqueror's land. It is in this sense that Paul says we have been translated into God's kingdom. Everything we have and everything we are now belongs to Him.
- viii. In whom we have redemption through His blood: Redemption has the idea of release by a legal ransom. The price for our release was paid by the blood of Jesus.
- ix. Forgiveness- literally our sin was "Sent away"
- x. Our salvation is the best reason to be thankful!
- e. Remembrance is an important part of giving thanks- Samuel's Ebenezer, Joshua's 12 stones, etc.
- f. A great help in being thankful, is being content! Jesus satisfies our greatest needs in life
- g. Considering our secured future helps us be thankful

II. **SAY IT- HEBREWS 13:15-16**

- a. People just don't say thank you anymore
- b. Prayer- Col 4:2, Philippians 4:6
 - i. Get in the habit of verbalizing thanks and praise
 - ii. Even Jesus gave thanks, John 6:11, John 11:41 (prayer for Lazarus)
- c. Praise- Colossians 3:15-17

- i. Includes prayer, songs, really every aspect of our lives!
- ii. I Thessalonians 5:18- in all circumstances of our lives!

III. **SHOW IT**

- a. Worship- is not just an hour on Sundays, it is a lifestyle
 - i. Luke 17:12-19- right response
 - ii. Col. 3- every part of our life should be to bring glory to God!
- b. Eph 5:3-4- Thanksgiving is a lifestyle for the people of God
 - i. The rebuttal to this list of sins is to be thankful!
 - ii. Our lips should not be used for sinful selfish reasons, but rather to praise and give thanks to God!
 - iii. Anti-idol argument (Eph. 5:20)
 - iv. This contrast between vices and thanksgiving reveals that thanksgiving is what should characterize God's holy people (Rom. 1:21)
- c. Sacrifice- Psalm 116:17-18
 - i. The Bible often describes giving thanks in the context of sacrificial offerings
 - ii. David here gives in the presence of all his people; nor for ostentation, but to show that he was not ashamed of the service of God, and that others might be invited to join with him.
 - iii. Things like our money- Thanksgiving Offering to help pay down our loan
 - iv. Church attendance, devotional life, serving in the church- are a correlation of our thankfulness
 - v. The other sacrifice was the was a thanksgiving offering, called a peace offering, freely given to the Lord. It was offered because the person making the sacrifice wanted to show that he was grateful to the Lord for God's provision for him. It was an act of faith and showing that one understood that all he had came from God.

Conclusion:

- An important principle in our giving: "Transactional giving" is about me; "Transformational giving" is typically about God's purpose. One is about me; the other about something external. And sometimes it's not so much about the ministry as it is about what God wants to do in my own heart, regardless of what happens with what I have given.
- May God help us to give in such a way that it transforms us into what He wants us to become!