

“A Proper Attitude About Thanksgiving” Delivered by E A Terry 11/19/17
Psalm 100; Luke 17: 11 – 17; 2nd Corinthians 9: 6 – 15; 1st Thessalonians 5: 16 - 18 (Sermon)

Next Thursday is Thanksgiving Day in The United States.

In 1789 President George Washington set aside one day each year when we as a nation are to take a break from our busy schedules to pray and to give thanks to Almighty God.

A copy of President George Washington’s Thanksgiving Proclamation was included in our November Newsletter.

The Newsletter is on the church’s website so I challenge all of us to go home and read it.

If any nation ought to be thankful to God and grateful for God’s goodness, it ought to be America.

God has blessed this country with freedom, opportunity, and abundance.

People from all over the world come to America seeking to improve their quality of life.

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

While it is nice to have a special day of prayer and thanksgiving the Bible clearly tells us that giving thanks and praying should be a continuous daily attitude.

1st Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Notice the three operative words in this verse; always, continually, and in all circumstances.

Christians are commanded to be thankful people.

In order to be thankful in all circumstances, we need a proper perspective of our circumstances and we need to have a personal relationship with The Lord.

Only then will we be able to give thanks to The Lord in all circumstances.

There are at least three attitudes that that keep us from being thankful.

The first is our pride.

Our pride says, "Nobody ever gave me anything, I worked hard for everything I have." "For years you studied hard getting my degree and now it is finally paying off".

With this kind of self centered prideful attitude, we feel no need to thank anyone but ourselves.

But Deuteronomy 8:18 reminds us that it is The Lord who give you the ability and the opportunity to earn wealth.

The second attitude that keeps us from being thankful is a critical complaining spirit.

The Israelites grumbled because they had no food so God miraculously provided manna to feed them.

Then the Israelites grumbled because it was the same thing every day.

The Israelites experienced a visible miracle from God every day but these Israelites were never satisfied; they kept wanting more.

And the third attitude that keeps us from being a thankful person is neglect.

If the stars only came out once a year we would stay out all night to watch them.

But since the stars are visible every night we neglect to thank God for the beauty of the stars and for our God given ability to see the stars.

Pride, neglect and / or a critical spirit will prevent us from being truly thankful for all that God has given us.

The Bible teaches three basic truths about being thankful.

First we need to express our thanksgiving to God and to other people.

Psalm 100 says;

Psalm 107 says;

A thankful heart lifts up and it glorifies The Lord.

Giving thank draws us closer to God.

An ungrateful heart pulls us away from God.

Romans 1:21 tells us;

You say thank you to God when you spend quality time with The Lord, when you forgive someone, and when you serve The Lord in His church.

You say thank you to God when you share the good news of Jesus with a person, when you reach out to a needy person, and / or befriend a lonely person.Y

ou say thank to God when you give God the best of your time, your talents, and your treasure.

You say thank you to God when you praise Him enthusiastically.

We need to continuously express our thanks to God and to other people.

Secondly our thanksgiving should be all inclusive.

We need to thank The Lord for His blessings as well as for our trials and tribulations.

This is a tough one.

Remember 1st Thessalonians 5:18 says, and Ephesians 5:20 says,

You may think this was easy for The Apostle Paul to write.

But it wasn't.

Paul suffered from some very difficult problems that he called (2nd Corinthians 12:7)

Paul was also run out of town, beaten, whipped, imprisoned, betrayed by friends, stripped naked, cold, hungry, shipwrecked, and stoned because of his faith.

Yet, Paul never stopped giving thanks to God.

Paul had the proper perspective of the burdens of life.

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in us..." (Romans 8:18)

"That is why for Christ's sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecution, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong..." (2nd Corinthians 12:10)

"Now I want you to know brothers that what has happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel..." (Philippians 1:12)

In our weakness God can make us strong.

When we are struggling God is able to work in our lives.

God helps us through times that we could have never faced on our own.

We need to have the proper eternal perspective on life so we can give thanks in all circumstances.

Please notice The Apostle Paul did not say that we are to be thankful for our problems but rather in all circumstances.

We can always thank God that He loves us and that God is always with us.

We can always thank God that our God is in control of our situation and for God's promise that He causes all things to work together for good for those who love The Lord (Romans 8:28).

You see being thankful in difficult circumstances allows God to use those circumstances for His greater good.

Remember the Philippian Jailer came to know Christ because Paul and Silas were joyously singing and praising God even though they had been beaten and were in chains in a dark prison cell.

Other people can come to Christ because of your thankful attitude especially in the midst of your difficult times.

We all have difficult times.

But, if we really look at all the benefits of life, I think we will find that it is a blessing to be alive.

Not only should our thanks be given in all situations but The Bible tells us that, God expects us to give Him thanks.

1st Thessalonians 5:18 says we are to "give thanks in all circumstances because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Being a thankful is God's will for each of us because God knows if we will give thanks our lives will be transformed.

When we realize how much God has blessed us and we express that gratitude to God we are a growing Christian.

There is an old saying; "for thanksgiving to be genuine thanksgiving, there must be "thanks" and there must be "giving."

As God has blessed us we should we bless God's work by our giving.

James 1:17 reminds us that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the father of lights."

When we go to a restaurant, many Christians are quick to give a good waitress a 15% tip for a few minutes of service.

However, for some reason, these same Christians have a problem with giving The Lord 10% of all the good gifts He has given them.

We all need to ask ourselves if we are truly thankful.

Remember God loves a cheerful giver. (2nd Corinthians 9:7).

If you are thankful to God then the glory of The Lord will radiate from you.

When you are going through a difficult time you will not be broken but rather the love, the joy, the peace, and the hope of Jesus will shine through you.

1.

The Psalmist said (Psalm 92:1)

A thankful spirit is one of the key distinguishing marks of a Christian. It sets us apart from the world, it makes us different.

Psalm 118:1 says,

Now let's look at a few benefits of being a thankful person.

Being a thankful person will increase your personal happiness.

The world teaches that happiness is dependent on how well things go for us.

But our happiness really is determined by our perspective in life not by our circumstances.

The Apostle Paul wrote these words from prison.

"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say it rejoice." (Philippians 4:4).

If we are thankful in spite of our circumstances it will greatly improve our happiness.

Being a thankful person will improve your witness for Jesus The Christ.

What is sad is that some Christians are the most negative, mean spirited, and ungrateful people in the world.

They act like they were baptized in vinegar not in the Holy Spirit.

When we are thankful, joyful, upbeat people we attract the lost because the world is depressing and ungrateful.

We have something unsaved people don't.

1.

Living a life of thanksgiving will attract the lost people you are around.

Being a thankful person will enhance your relationships with other people and most importantly your relationship with The Lord.

Husbands and wives; imagine how much your marriage would improve if you told your spouse how thankful you are for them and that you are thankful for all they do for you.

Imagine how much better our church relationships would be if we expressed our thanks for each other instead of stressing what isn't done around here.

The Apostle Paul began most of his letters to the churches with thanksgiving.

To the church in Rome he wrote. (Romans 1:8)

To the church in Corinth; ” (1 Corinthians 1:4).

To the church in Ephesus, (Ephesians 1:16).

To the church in Philippi, (Philippians 1:3).

To the church in Colossi, (Colossians 1:3).

Imagine how much better our church and our relationships with others would be if we routinely expressed our thanks for each other.

Being a thankful person will solidify your relationship with The Lord.

Someone once said that God lives in two places.

He lives in heaven and in a humble thankful heart.

Hebrews 12:25 says;

There is something inside of each of us that needs to give thanks to God.

When you spend time giving thanks to God for all you have you will feel closer to Him.

That is exactly why, 1st Thessalonians 5:18 says,

It is God's plan; it is God's will for us to give thanks to Him.

In Luke 17 we read about ten men who Jesus healed of leprosy.

But there was only one man who took the time and made the effort to go back to Jesus and say

Because of that Jesus said to him,

This man was healed of his leprosy from the time the 10 went to show themselves to the priest.

However, when Jesus said to the one man that returned to thank Jesus;

Jesus was not talking about a physical healing; Jesus was talking about a spiritual healing and an emotional healing.

The leper who came back and thanked Jesus was made whole.

And we too are made whole by our thanksgiving to God.

James 1:17 clearly tells us that God is the One who gives us every good and perfect gift.

Therefore God is the One who deserves our thanks.

When we take God out of the equation of thanksgiving, as many do in today's unchristian culture, we are left with Thanksgiving Day just being another holiday without any meaning or purpose.

In order for us to develop "A Proper Attitude About Thanksgiving" we need to give thanks to God every day all through the day.

We can always find something that we need to be thankful for and we need to express our thanks to God.

Ephesians 5:19 says, "Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything."

Always is the key word.

Not just on Thanksgiving Day but each and every day all through the day.

When you think about it, we Christians who live in America, have more to be thankful for than anyone else!

Not only do we have the benefit of freedom, opportunity, a comfortable life style, and a personal relationship with The Lord, but we also have the assurance of spending eternity in heaven with our Lord!

It seems to me that the very least we can do is to practice saying thank you to God and giving ourselves to The Lord each and every day of our lives!

The question for each of us this morning is; Do I have a proper attitude about giving thanks to God in all circumstances?

AMEN