

Theme: Believers are called to be thankful, establishing practices of gratitude in all circumstances.

I. Intro - Thanksgiving

- A. Advent begins next week; stand alone teaching
- B. Thanksgiving is Thursday - a great holiday
- C. But almost totally overlooked today
- D. Consumerism can't have us being thankful & content
- E. Gratitude & thankfulness is a critical attitude/character

II. The Biblical Practice of Gratitude

- A. We are to called to be thankful for many things
Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18
 - 1. For God's goodness and covenant love
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever. Psalms 136:1
 - a. This exact phrase occurs 5 times in the Psalms!
 - b. We give thanks for God's character - He is good
 - c. We give thanks for God's covenant, unfailing love
 - 2. For the specific ways God has helped us
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever...⁸ Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men... Psalms 107:1, 8
 - a. God's goodness & covenant love flow into His works
 - b. We give thanks for God's specific help for us

- c. Psalm 107 lists many ways God helps people
- d. Remember 10 lepers healed - only 1 thanked God!
- 3. For the food we eat
Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. Matthew 15:36
 - a. Even Jesus the Son of God gave thanks for His food
 - b. Paul did same thing in Acts 27:35 in a deadly storm
 - c. We should never eat without giving thanks
 - d. God is the One Who provides our daily bread
 - e. Lets us practice thankfulness several times a day
- 4. For being heard in prayer
So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me." John 11:41
 - a. Even Jesus thanks the Father for hearing His prayer
 - b. It is no small thing that we have access to God
 - c. We should regularly thank God for hearing us
- 5. For answered prayer
Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. 2 Corinthians 1:11
 - a. Many prayed for Paul - and God answered!
 - b. This resulted in many giving thanks for the answer
 - c. We should regularly thank God for answering us

- d. Again - remember the story of the ten lepers!
- e. It is the depth of ingratitude to not specifically thank God for answered prayer

6. For other believers

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. Romans 1:8

- a. Paul thanked God for other believers
- b. He begins almost every letter this way
- c. He had not even been to Rome - but was grateful!
- d. When we pray for others, thank God for them

7. For the spiritual gifts we have been given

I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 1 Corinthians 14:18

- a. Paul thanked God for the gift of tongues
- b. The great apostle was grateful for every spiritual gift
- c. Every believer has been given spiritual gifts, and we should thank God for the ones we have been given.
- d. Paul was also grateful for the gifts given to others, and we should be too - for this is how Christ builds His body.

8. Our inheritance in the kingdom of light

... giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. Colossians 1:12

- a. God has brought us out of darkness into the light
- b. We are not only in His kingdom - we are His heirs!
- c. We should thank God for our great inheritance

9. Others receiving the word of God

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe. 1 Thessalonians 2:13

- a. Paul thanked God the Thessalonians had received God's word as God's Word
- b. It is a miracle when someone hears, believes, and receives the Word of God, and we should always thank God when this occurs.
- c. I thank God for BRCC receiving the Word of God
- d. Thanks God for our children receiving and believing the Word of God - do not take this for granted!

10. For Christ's redemptive work - the Eucharist

After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." Luke 22:17-19

- a. In the Eucharist ("the Thanksgiving") we give thanks to God for the redemptive work of Christ. Where would we be without Christ's atoning work?
- b. We should give thanks for the redemptive work of Christ every day, for it has secured all of God's blessings for us, both now and for eternity.

11. For God's rule

We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign. Revelation 11:17

- a. We should give thanks to God for ruling the universe so wisely and righteously
- b. This is important, for no matter how confusing things may look to us, we must remember and give thanks that God is ruling all things for His glory and our good.

B. We are called to give thanks at all times & circumstances

give thanks **in all circumstances**, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

1. We give thanks in everything - circumstances do not change our posture of gratitude.
2. We do this because we know that God is ruling all things, and He does this for His glory and our good. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28
3. Circumstances change constantly, but God's character and covenant love are unchanging - and so we give thanks no matter the circumstance.

C. We give thanks - because it is God's will for us give thanks in all circumstances, **for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18**

1. Many seek the will of God today in all kinds of crazy ways - but His will is clear!
2. God's will - always be joyful; pray without ceasing; give thanks in all circumstances
3. We think that if God will only bless and change our circumstances we can be filled with joy, pray, and give thanks - but God calls us to joy, prayer, and thanksgiving no matter the circumstance.

4. The will of God is to change the way we are as people, regardless of our circumstances.
5. Circumstances and situations may change, but our character should be Christlike and filled with the fruit of the Spirit - and thus unaffected by circumstances.
6. This type of character is developed as we practice praying and giving thanks. The practice is prior to the change in character.

III. Applying the Word - Building A Thankful Life

A. Developing a lifestyle of thankfulness

1. Thank God at every meal for His provision for you
2. As you pray, spend time giving thanks to God
 - a. For the person you are praying for
 - b. For God's Sovereign rule
 - c. For God hearing your prayer
 - d. Remember the list of things above
3. Each week gather in worship to give thanks to God
4. Thanksgiving - give thanks to God; **DO NOT SHOP** - just give thanks and be content for 24 hours
5. Thanksgiving - verbally give thanks together
6. Speak your gratitude verbally to God & others regularly

B. Eucharist - come to the Table and give thanks!

Thankful

1 Thessalonians 5:18

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Eucharist

Psalm 134:3

Teaching keywords: Gratitude and thanksgiving; God's will and guidance

May the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion.

Psalms 134:3

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:18