

Thankfulness

INTRODUCTION:

1. This time of year, especially with the Thanksgiving holiday just passing, we should be given cause to ponder the many blessings we enjoy and our thankfulness to God.
 - A. When I consider just how blessed we are in this country I feel that I, and maybe most of us, could be more thankful to God in our prayers, thoughts, and actions!
 - B. Most every one of us have far more than we need, with the potential of getting much more!
2. With this being our reality, we need to be aware of how important it is for us to be thankful to God for what we have received from His hand and to express that properly to Him and to others.

BODY:

I. All the good we experience comes from God!

- A. The work of God to bless His creation is evident in nature.
 1. It is seen in God's work in nature in that God does us good in providing the sun and rain in our seasons (Matt. 5:44-45 – “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your **Father** in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”).
 2. Paul said that nature's blessings are God's witness of His presence in the world (Acts 14:15-17 – “...the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,¹⁶ who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.¹⁷ Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that **He did good**, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”).
 3. James reminds us that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (Jas. 1:17).
- B. It is this rain, sun, and the seasons that are the reason we have food to live and the abundance we enjoy!
 1. I know we grow accustomed to, even take for granted, being able to go to stores that are packed with all sorts of food and goods that we can freely purchase.
 - a. But as people of God we must keep in mind that it is the work of God that makes this possible!
 - b. Rather than being truly humbled and thankful for these blessings, we have become a society that expects it, believing we deserve it—that this is how it is supposed to be.
 - c. These attitudes are so contrary to the truth. We must understand that it is only by God's grace that we have what we have, and God will not excuse such ingratitude.
 2. I am convinced that the emptiness in people's lives today exists because we have forgotten that it is God who satisfies (Psa. 107:8-9 – “Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness, And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!⁹ **For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness.**”).

II. God's people must be expressive of their thankfulness.

- A. For, we are the direct recipients of God's grace, mercy, and love in their fullest sense!
 1. By God's work in Christ, we *sinners*, deserving of rejection and condemnation, are given the right to be God's children (John 1:12-13 – “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”).
 2. We are qualified through Christ to receive God's inheritance (Col. 1:12-14 – “giving thanks to the Father **who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.**¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”).
 - a. These are blessings far beyond the value of any earthly temporal gift.
 - b. These are gifts that make us acceptable to God, acceptable to receive eternal life!

3. Our faith in Christ results in eternal salvation (1 Pet. 1:8-9 – “whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, **receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls**”).
 4. We have a special peace bestowed on us from God (Phil. 4:6-7 – “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, **with thanksgiving**, let your requests be made known to God; **7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**”).
 5. We have brethren that love and care for us (2 Thess. 1:3-4 – “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, **and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other**, ⁴ so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure”).
- B. So, brethren, as God’s people who better than us to sing His praises to the world!
1. The Psalmists of old understood this to be the responsibility of God’s people.
 - a. We are called to thank God and to tell others of His great deeds (Psalm 105:1 – “Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples!”)
 - b. We are called to praise and thank God for His character (Psalm 100:4 – “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, *And* into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, *and* bless His name. ⁵ For the LORD *is* good; His mercy *is* everlasting, And His truth *endures* to all generations.”).
 - c. In Psalms 107 there are four general calls from the Psalmist to give thanks to God saying, “Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness, And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!”
 - d. In Psalms 136 there are four calls to give thanks to the Lord, who is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the God of heaven, for *He is good and His mercy endures forever*.
 2. As Christians we are exhorted to live our lives in thanksgiving.
 - a. Col. 2:6-7 – “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, **abounding in it with thanksgiving.**”
 - b. 1 Thess. 5:16-18 – “Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ **in everything give thanks**; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”
 3. I wonder if we do not affect the world the way we should because we take for granted the wonderful blessings of God and neglect giving thanks before others as we should.
 4. People just don’t know that God is the source of the great blessings in ours and their lives often because we are not telling them.

CONCLUSION:

1. I hope that you will not squander this time of year, but will use it to consider and be thankful for what God has done for you in Christ for this life and the one to come.
2. For, ingratitude, whether intentionally or by neglect, is a characteristic unbecoming of those who serve God (Rom. 1:29-21 – “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, **they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful**, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”).
3. Instead, be thankful and diffuse that knowledge of God’s blessings to all (2 Cor. 2:14 – “Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.”).
4. God has loved you and shown His grace to you in Christ.
 - A. Will you express that thankfulness by obeying the gospel today, putting your faith in Christ, repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in the risen Christ, and being baptized into Christ.
 - B. The blessings of God await you!