

BE YE THANKFUL

Int.

1. Aim: To show the wisdom of being thankful
2. Col. 3:14-15 Notice the association thanksgiving keeps “And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”
 - a. Charity, or love, the bond of perfectness
 - b. The peace of God that can rule in our hearts
 - c. And BE YE THANKFUL...
 - d. Thankfulness is advised here to those who have bound together all the virtues of following Christ by Love, and have learned the joy of the peace that comes by living in HIM.
 - e. Those spiritually mature are always thankful..
3. I Thess. 5:18 “In every thing give thanks: For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”
 - a. Thanksgivings to God are a natural outgrowth of activity of Christians when they do good for one another and help one another - II Cor. 9:10-12
 - b. Thanksgiving is a part of our spiritual service as priests unto God (Heb. 13:15-16) We are expected to offer praise, the fruit of our lips unto God.
 - c. We want to think, for a little while, about being thankful.
4. A little boy defined salt this way: “Salt is what always spoils the potatoes when it is left out.” Using the same negative approach we can say: “Ingratitude is what always spoils life when it is left out.”

DISCUSSION

I. SOME THINGS WE HAVE TO BE THANKFUL FOR.

A. For special people...

1. For our Families
 - a. Our parents
 - b. Our brothers and sisters
 - c. Spouse - Husband/Wife - our children, our grandchildren
 - d. For all our extended family
 - e. We can even have reason to be thankful for those who have been a trial to us--they have made us grow
 - f. I Tim. 3:4-5 - Raising children will make a man grow to the experience he needs to be an elder. "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"
2. **For the people who taught us the gospel of Christ...**
 - a. Someone cared enough for us to teach us the truth about the church, the plan of salvation and how we are to live.
 - b. That person/persons loved us enough to take time to tell us about the good news of the gospel which has delivered us from sin. Usually more than one person involved in some way.
 - c. I imagine what their teaching has meant to us ! Salvation !!!!

3. **For the good people we come in contact with in our lives.**
 - a. "Good people" are not necessarily Christians, but those who are doing good things -- like Cornelius, Lydia, or Eunuch
 - b. There are people who only know the greedy, selfish, cruel, dishonest, ungodly, fierce, destructive people.
 - c. Aren't you glad you know people that show good in their lives, even those who are not Christians.

4. **For the people of God, the members of the church...**
 - a. For what we mean to each other (I Thess. 5:11-15) v. 11 "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."
 - (1) Encouragement, understanding, love, forgiveness
 - (2) Sympathy in sorrow and pain, help in tragedy (Rom.12:15)
 - b. For what they mean to the truth
 - (1) Phil.1:27-28 To "become" the gospel--to adorn it "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ:..."
 - (2) Phil.2:14-15 To shine in the midst of an evil world
 - (3) Rom 16:3-4 Many like Priscilla and Aquila "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."
 - c. For what they should mean to everyone
 - (1) Rom 13:7-10 Love to all, tribute to powers
 - (2) Matt 5:13 - The salt of the earth

5. **For those who preach the gospel.**

- a. They often make sacrifices so that the gospel goes forth
- b. Many have chosen to leave lucrative jobs to barely make ends meet, so that the gospel could be preached
- c. There are heartaches associated with preaching (I I Cor 11:27- 30)
- d. There is no better work to be done in this world!
- e. Rom. 10:15 "...how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

6. **For the most special of all, for GOD'S SON** We should be thankful to Christ for..

- a. He died for our sins Heb. 2:9
- b. He took our place so we could have forgiveness of our sins
- c. Phil 2:8 "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

B. How do we show gratitude to these special people in our lives:

1. Families

- a. Tell them - call them, write them
- b. Let them know in some way that they are special to you and you are grateful for them and what they have done for you

2. Person who taught us the gospel

- a. Call, letter
- b. By teaching others - passing on the good news and then telling them

3. Good people
 - a. This is an opportunity to teach
 - b. If they are good people they have a good honest heart then these are prospects that we may be able to reach with the truth
 - c. Many friends have been taught the truth.
 4. For the people of the church
 - a. Express brotherly love and kindness and appreciation to one another
 - b. Help each other / encourage one another
 5. For those who preach the gospel
 - a. Express gratitude for their work
 - b. Help them in any way
 6. For Christ
 - a. The way we show gratitude to Christ is to love Him
 - b. John 14:15
 - c. Obeying the truth, walking in the truth is the best way to express our love and gratitude to Christ who died for us
- C. We should also be thankful For ordinary things...
1. We will always take for granted things we have unless we are suddenly without them. We really appreciate the water after the well runs dry. CONSIDER:
 - a. People are hungry today, but we are not going hungry.
 - b. People are ill, but we are not ill, despite our complaints sometimes to the contrary.

- c. People are dying, but we are blessed with life.
 - d. People are out in the cold with no shelter, but we have adequate homes to live in.
 - e. People are cold and poorly clothed, but we are well-dressed and warm enough.
 - f. People are lonely and depressed, but we have every reason to rejoice.
 - g. There are people who have lost everything they have, including their families -- And we can't say that
 - h. With all our problems, we are not among the blind, the lame, the abused, the hated, the misused, the battered...
2. Which of us does not have cause to bow our knees and humble our hearts to God in sincere, heartfelt thanksgiving for these simple things?
 3. 1 Tim. 6:6-8 "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."

D. For the blessings we enjoy in Christ.

1. Contrast what being In Christ and Out of Christ really means.
 - a. To our hope (Eph 2:11-18)
 - b. To our life (Eph 2:1-6)
 - c. To our prospects for the future (I Tim. 4:8) Promise
2. All spiritual blessings are In Him (Eph. 1:3)
 - a. To be heard in prayer (I Jn 5:13-15)
 - b. To be cleansed from sin (I Jn 1:7)
 - c. To be adopted into God's family (Rom 8:15-17)

II. THANKSGIVING IMPROVES OUR ATTITUDES TOWARD:

A. Ourselves

1. When we say thank you, we are saying, in effect, that we are not self-sufficient.
 - a. Giving thanks curbs our ego and brings us down to size.
 - b. It is a reminder that while capable and responsible, we are needy and dependent.
2. We are reminded that we need God and the people of God.
3. 1 Thes. 1:2-3 "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;"

B. Our Possessions

1. When we say thank you we are remembering that we did not get all we have by ourselves.
 - a. We are not self-made people. No one is.
 - b. We are stewards - 1 Cor. 4:2 - "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."
2. Thanksgiving helps our perspective about our things in at least two ways.
 - a. First, it causes us to count our blessings and realize how much we have and enjoy and what responsibilities we have toward it (Eph. 1:3, 1 Pet. 4:9-10).
 - b. Second, having counted our blessings, expressing thanks for them helps to keep us from developing an insatiable desire for more and more, in which we are covetous instead of content.

(1) To thank the Lord for all we have is to remember the rich and rare blessings that we enjoy-- the things money cannot buy

(2) Lk. 12:15

C. God

1. When we give thanks for what we have, we are forced to think about God the great giver of the greatest gifts (Jas. 1:17).
2. Scripture lays out for us what God has done and reminds us to be thankful for it (Col. 1:12, Rom. 6:17-18, - 1 Cor. 15:57, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.")
3. Our anxiety is addressed by giving thanks.
4. When we thank God for all He has done and given to us, we focus our attention on His grace and power - Phil. 4:6-7 "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

III. THE BENEFITS OF BEING THANKFUL

- A. We obey God (I Thess 5:18) "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."
- B. We learn to appreciate that which we took for granted
- C. We tend to get things back into perspective
 1. Material things aren't as important (I Tim 6:17-19)
 2. Our selfish needs and wants aren't as valid (Jam 4:1-4)

3. We come to think positively about life and about our role in it--to help, not complain (Phil 4:8-9)

D. We grow closer to God (Jam 4:7-10) Draw nigh to Him, He will draw nigh to you--humble yourself before Him--acknowledge dependence

Conclusion

1. God has commanded us, "be ye thankful" Col. 3:15
2. Song: Count your blessings - name them one by one
3. We benefit when we obey God in being thankful --it helps us as well as it helps others when our hearts are full of thanksgiving.
4. The word 'thank' and the word 'think' are from the same root word, and this is no accident. The two words have much in common.
 - a. Thankfulness grows out of thoughtfulness.
 - b. Our focus on giving thanks should cause each of us to think carefully about all God has done for us, and doesn't that move you to come to Him?
5. Are you being as thankful as you should?
6. Would you obey the Lord now so that you can enjoy blessings in Christ that we can already be thankful for, but that you still as yet have no claim to?