



CrossRoads Notes:

Title: Attitude of Gratitude

Theme: Expression of Biblical Gratitude

Series: Full Measure of Thanksgiving

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17)

Introduction: *In this wonderful verse of Scripture, Paul is not giving a suggestion, but a command. Man owes a debt of obligation to God for anything that turns him from his inability to know God's love and enables him to enjoy the Lord's love which, in turn, equips him to express love to the Lord.*

Proposition: *I would like to propose to you that if any nation ought to be thankful to God and grateful for His goodness, it ought to be America. If any people in America should be thankful to God and grateful for His goodness, it ought to be Christians, who are able to meet freely and fellowship together as Body of Christ.*

Interrogative Sentence: *Should gratitude always be expressed, and expansive, and is it expected?*

Transitional Sentence: *Trials, accidents, death of family members and friends, and negative consequences of sin are going to fall upon Christians and non-Christians alike. In this sin-trodden world, the Lord through His loving grace and mercy will speak forth His blessings as He has done in the past.*

Please note: We are to give thanks in all circumstances, not for the circumstance, but that in Christ, there is victory, triumph and guidance to be found through all circumstances. No matter how terrible a situation may be, there is a God who says, “Never will I leave you nor forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)

No obedient Christian has ever been made to drink the cup of affliction without drops of mercy being intermingled. Every calamity in some way in His time works out for the glory of God. We need to remember that trials are but only a temporary part of a larger plan for our spiritual well-being. Through this perspective we can always discern a cause for thanks to God.

Transitional Sentence: *The first thing we want to consider today is, should gratitude always be expressed? Romans 1:21 says; “For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him.” That is why I say gratitude is always to be expressed! We are to give thanks always!*

Scripture speaks of two obligations of man to God, praising and obeying Him. Man is created for worship and if he refuses to let God have the place of true honor, which rightly belongs to Him, then mankind will put something or someone in God's place. True victories in life are won by Christians who are joyful, prayerful and thankful.

David wrote, “Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens.” (Psalms 68:19) (2 Corinthians 9:15) (1 Thessalonians 2:13) Psalms 54: 6 - 7 says, “I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you; I will praise your Name, O Lord, for it is good. For He has delivered me out of all my troubles...”

For application’s sake: Have you ever thanked God for the person who planted the seeds of the gospel into your life? Have you thanked Him for the prayer intercessors He raised up in your behalf? Have you ever thanked God for those who feed the Word of God to you and to those who are putting God’s Word out in the world? Have ever thanked God for your parents who have been given Biblical oversight over you? When was the last time you thanked God for your helpmate or for your husband? When was the last time you thanked God for His provision?

Transitional Sentence: Gratitude is to be expressed always and it is to be expansive. The Holy Spirit of Christ moved the Apostle Paul to write, “...give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17)

The two words “all circumstances” makes this exhortation from the Lord very difficult. If we were told in “most things” or “in good things,” we would find it much easier to accept and obey. The Apostle Paul lived what he preached and this so clearly seen in Acts 16: 16-34. Expansive praise will usher in the presence of God’s Holy Spirit and great things can happen.

Those who are mature in spiritual matters know that Paul’s and Silas’ imprisonment was an attack from the enemy working through unsaved mankind. Jesus taught that there are times when physical infirmities are from Satan keeping people bound. (Luke 13:11-16) Being bound by mankind because of faithful service to the Lord or being bound by an infirmity from Satan are opportunities for expansive praise. Our expansive praises are heard by others.

For application’s sake: Do people around you know that regardless of your circumstances, good or bad, you live a life of praise to God? Christians who are Holy Spirit led in all circumstances obey the exhortation of Philippians 2:14-16a, “Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life...”

Transitional Sentence: Our praises are to be expansive and gratitude is expected. The heartbeat of an attitude of gratitude is the foundation of today’s key text. “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17) The great Communitarian Matthew Henry writes, “Here we have short exhortations that will not burden our memories, but will be of great use to direct the motions of our hearts and lives. This is a duty of great importance.” These series of brief, staccato commands indicate the heartbeat of Christian living. (The New Bible Commentary; The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit when he wrote “give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” If there is not a wellspring of thanksgiving boiling up out of your heart, then you are out of the will of God.

Gratitude is the mark of a growing Christian. We express gratitude by becoming a giving Christian. When a Christian matures he takes his eyes off himself before he can notice the needs of others. Then he can sacrificially serve others as he meets their needs.

James tells us that the religion God the father accepts as pure and faultless is this, those who look after the needy. (James 1: 27) Jesus makes a great promise to those who would just give a cup of water to any disciple of His. (Matthew 10: 42)

We show gratitude to God and for the things He has done for us by helping others in the Name of Christ. James tells us that every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father. (James 1: 17) A thankful Christian will be a giving Christian.

It has been well said, “Thanksgiving is just thanks, then giving.” You can give without being thankful, but you cannot be thankful without giving. When you give, you are not only acknowledging that everything you have has been given to you by the Lord, but you are expressing your gratitude to Him.

A true “Attitude of Gratitude” will change your life. It will shield you from becoming over critical. It will draw you close to the Lord and it will make you more aware of His presence.

In Closing: *Walter B. Knight wrote about the “Ceaseless Praise of a Leper.”* He writes;

“David was a Negro preacher, a leper, and a patient in the National Hospital for Lepers in Carville, Louisiana.

He was crippled, deformed and blind. Yet he was cheerful and thankful. He sang hymns of praise and greatly inspired all the other lepers who suffered the same health problems that he did. A note of thanksgiving was always dominant in His prayers.

An old-fashioned radio brought joy to him. He turned it on and off with his lips, for his fingers were useless.

It was told of Pastor David, ‘He brought the joy of the Lord to all who heard his praises and saw the life he lived.’”

Pastor David, the black preacher who was bound in a Louisiana Hospital for lepers, expressed a true “Attitude of Gratitude.” No matter what our circumstances are, we can always have a testimony that glorifies the God who created us, the Christ who died for us and testifies of the Holy Spirit of Christ who enables us. A clear witness of the true church expresses continued gratitude, makes it expansive, and realizes it is expected.