



CrossRoads Notes:

Title: How to Say Thanks

Theme: Expressing Thankfulness to the Body of Christ

Series: Full Measure of Thanksgiving

Introduction: *Appreciation raises value.* William James said, "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated." The Apostle Paul was led of the Holy Spirit of Christ to express thankfulness and he was a master at it. He expressed appreciation to God and to others as well. Paul wrote most of the New Testament and it is normal to read phrases like, "I always thank God for you...", (1 Corinthians 1:4) "Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...", (2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3) "I thank God every time I remember you...", (Philippians 1:3) "We always thank God...", (Colossians 1:3) "We always thank God for all of you..." (1 Thessalonians) "We ought to always thank God for you...", (2 Thessalonians 1:3) "I thank Jesus our Lord...", (1 Timothy 1:12) "I thank God...", (2 Timothy 1:3) and lastly, "I always thank God for you as I remember you in my prayers..." (Philemon 1:4)

Through the Lord's faithful servant, Paul, an Apostle who exemplified a life of gratitude to God, Christ, and submission to the Holy Spirit we have our key text. Colossians 2:7, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

Proposition: *I would propose to you the Word of God teaches clearly how we can say thanks to God, Christ and be enabled by the Holy Spirit to express gratitude to the blood purchased Body of Christ.*

Interrogative Sentence: *To whom are we to be thankful and how can we say thanks through Christ-centered humility?*

Transitional Sentence: *The key to having speech which matches up with a life that expresses thanks is an understanding that thankfulness must be first given to God.* Psalm 9:1-2 says, "I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High." (Psalm 9:1-2)

The whole of Scripture teaches us, God expects suitable returns of praise from those for whom He has done marvelous works. (Luke 17:11-17)

We are joyful not because of good health, but because the Great Physician has given it to us. We are not joyful because of our nice homes, but because the Lord who provides has given us our homes, cars, jobs, ability to make money, and our success. If we are being afflicted in any way, we are not joyful because of the affliction, but through the affliction we are given the opportunity to express trust and enabled to live a life of praise to Him, no matter what may come our way.

The child of God who knows how to say thanks has the heart of David which is reflected in Psalm 57:7-11, “My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music. Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn. I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.”

Transitional Sentence: *Once the child of God grasps the joy of just praising God because of who He is, he then says thanks for Christ. 2 Corinthians 9:15, “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.”*

Paul points to the Person who makes the way for us to enjoy the grace gifts that enable us to minister to the needs of others. 2 Corinthians 9:15 tells us to thank God for Jesus Christ. (A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testament; Matthew Henry’s Commentary; Barrett, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians; The Expositors Bible Commentary; Barnes Notes; The Preacher’s Outline & Sermon Bible) The reference is rather to the inexpressible gift which God had granted to them in bestowing His Son to die for them; and this is one of the most striking instances which occurs in the New Testament, showing that the mind of Paul was full of this subject and that wherever he began in his teachings, [Paul’s aim was to point people to Christ] our Redeemer. (Barnes Notes)

The Greek word “indescribable” (*anekdiegetos*) is only used here in the New Testament and it means that words cannot fully explain the greatness of Christ, His giving His own life sacrificially for us on the Cross. No words can describe the greatness of this cost as seen from God’s perspective. (Barnes Notes; The Complete Word Study Dictionary; Analytical Lexicon of the Greek; Word Meanings in the New Testament; Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Greek New Testament; Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon)

Romans 12:1-2 gives us clear instructions on a practical way to say thanks to our Lord for the sacrifice He made for us. “...in view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Saying thanks in this way comes with a promise of His revelation to us, “Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing, and perfect will.”

Transitional Sentence: *Knowing how to live a life of thanks to Christ enables you to be Holy Spirit illuminated with the same heart as the Apostle Paul. He knew how to say thanks to God and to those who were in partnership with him in the Lord’s work. Philippians 1:3-11 says, “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of*

Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God.

The Apostle Paul presents to us the heartbeat of a mature Christian. These passages of Scripture present concisely and clearly the expressions of thanksgiving that are so desperately needed in the Body of Christ. Therefore we need to be concise in presenting the truths found in these Scriptures.

Those involved in the work of the Lord are not alone. There is the whole Body of Christ with different spiritual gifts and committed to their work for the Lord. Those who are illuminated with this truth are just like the Apostle who wrote, "...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) Whether you are with a certain group of Christians or you are just remembering the labors and faithfulness of others, there can be a wonderful joy that floods your heart as you thank God for calling you into Kingdom service.

Another expression of thanksgiving is prayer. What can we pray for? Colossians 1:9-12 tells how we can pray in step with the Holy Spirit of Christ, "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light."

We can say thanks by praying and we can express thanksgiving by showing forth Biblical joy. We can express thanksgiving by allowing Divine joy, a joy based on Christ, to be placed within us by the Holy Spirit of Christ, (John 15:11; Acts 13:52; Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22; 1 Thessalonians 1:2) This joy (*chars*) springs from faith, (Romans 15:13; Philippians 1:25) overrides all matters of life and death. This joy enables believers to rest in future rewards and keeps active soldiers of Christ keeping on. (Matthew 25:21-23)

We say thanks to God by partaking in the abundant resources available to us. They include having fellowship with God and His Son and (1 John 1:3-4) trusting that Jesus' victory over death and hell, (John 14:28; 16:20-22) a heart of true repentance (Luke 15:1-10) hope in God's glory (1 Peter 4:13) and knowing God's Word – the revelations, commandments, and promises bring Divine joy. (John 15:11)

We can say thanks by allowing the Lord to bring us into true Biblical fellowship. Acts 2:4 says, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings and to fellowship..." True Christian "fellowship," (*koingnia*) is brought forth by the Holy Spirit and means a whole lot more than association with secular groups such as civic clubs and community bodies. There is a vast difference between community participation with people calling themselves Christians and true spiritual participation. (The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible)

Christians not only devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings, but united in the work of spreading the gospel. Christians in true service are united in feelings, interests, dangers, conflicts, opinions and the hope of blessedness that comes in serving Jesus Christ. They have a joined life in sharing blessings and gifts, bearing each others burdens, sharing in the conflicts that come and the victories that are won in fulfilling the Great Commission. They exercise their spiritual gifts for the good of one another and all of mankind. (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:1; Romans 12:15; Revelation 7:9)

True Christian fellowship enables us to say thanks through partnership. It did not matter whether Paul was under arrest or free. Paul's friends shared with him in his time of great need, but more importantly they were concerned with the spread of the gospel. Enjoying God's grace means having the benefits of being saved and being adopted into the family of God through Christ, but it also means suffering for the sake of the gospel at times. (The Bible Knowledge Commentary; A Commentary Critical and Explanatory; The New American Commentary; The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible)

Transitional Sentence: *How do we say thanks? By thanking God for the Body of Christ, remaining constant in prayer, receiving and expressing God's joy, sharing Biblical fellowship, being a true partner in ministry and by bearing with one another.* Colossians 3:12-13 says, "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Offenses are sure to come. You and I are surely going to be overcome by the flesh, the world's view and even the lies of the devil. God's way of dealing with offenses is simple and yet sobering, "Forgive as the Lord forgave you!" (Colossians 3:13)

In Closing: *How do we say thanks? By being thankful for who God is, thanking God for Christ, thanking God for those who are in partnership with us and lastly, forgiving others as the Lord has forgiven us.* We are called to get and keep the proper perspective! Be surrendered to God's will! Learn how to say "Thanks!"