

Giving Thanks

Ephesians 5:20

INTRO:

How can you tell if someone is really a Christian and is under the influence of the Holy Spirit? The Apostle Paul tells us explicitly in **Ephesians 5:18-21**. ***“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”*** He told us the will of God is that we are filled, that is under the control and influence of the Holy Spirit. If we are filled with the Holy Spirit there are several outward evidences of that filling. They are the five participles (*ing words*) which complete the thought. They are: speaking songs and hymns to one another, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, giving thanks, and submitting to one another.

We want to examine just the fourth one today. An outworking of our actively yielding ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit is that we will at all times and under all circumstances be thankful to God.

I. The Importance of Being Thankful

II. The Root of our Thankfulness

I. The Importance of Being Thankful

A. Thanksgiving is an important mark of our being in right relationship with the living God. We see this importance through several examples we find in the Scriptures. First, let us consider the negative example, In **Romans 1:21**, we find the unbeliever’s response to God. ***“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.”***

They were unthankful because they did not realize all that God had done for them.

B. The heart which belongs to God is always a thankful heart. God commands us to thank Him often. We find many folks in Scripture who give us examples of how we should be thankful and bless God for all the blessings He sends our way.

1. For example in **Psalm 30:11-12** we read;
“You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.”

2. Another example is **Psalm 100:4**;

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.”

C. Let me give you some examples of some who gave thanks in the midst of their difficulties.

1. Do you remember when Paul and Silas went to Philippi in **Acts 16:22-25**?

“Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”

Why were Paul and Silas thankful? It wasn't because they knew what would come next. They were thankful because they knew God had a reason for their trouble.

2. A second example is Job. Do you remember Job's response to the terrible, horrible, very bad day he had experienced? (**Job 1:20-22**)

“Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, ‘Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.’ In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.”

II. The Root of our Thankfulness

A. How can we do this? How can Paul tell us that a heart submitted to the leading of the Holy Spirit will give thanks to God at all times and for all things? There are some things a heart anchored on Christ and submissive to the Holy Spirit must learn if we are going to do this.

B. First, a person who can give thanks to God through the name of Lord Jesus Christ must know the Lord Jesus as His Savior and He must know that God is the blessed controller of all things. We have already discovered that someone who is not a child of God does not have a grateful heart.

C. Second, he must believe that there are many blessings which come our ways, which we never see. Do you remember Elisha and his servant? (**2 Kings 6:15-17**)

“When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, ‘Alas, my master! What shall we do?’ He said, ‘Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ Then Elisha prayed and said, ‘O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see.’ So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”

I know Elisha was a prophet, but do you not think that God surrounds us with His angels? Hebrews says angels are ministering spirits given to the heirs of salvation. How often has God delivered us or helped us and we have never known. Should we not be thankful for the little miracles we don't even know about?

D. Wait a minute! Everything that has happened to me is not good. I have had very bad things occur to me. I know what you mean. Do you believe in God's promise in **Romans 8:28**?

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

The promise is not that everything that pushes into our lives is good in itself. Many bad things can and do come into our lives. However, nothing comes into our lives God does not work together for our good. I am convinced that one reason we will praise Him in eternity is because we will see how everything will work together for good.

E. The essence of our thankfulness is because we understand the principle of God's grace. If we recognize that we deserve nothing because we are sinners, but that God has given us a Savior and a life because He is gracious to us, we cannot help being thankful to Him.