

THANKFUL OR UNTHANKFUL

WE read in Romans 1:20-21: “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

Please notice a phrase in verse 21: “...*neither were thankful...*” The Apostle Paul is talking about people, who don't give thanks or show any gratitude to God for all He is, and for all He has done on their behalf.

This verse tells us that one of the marks of the unconverted is that they're unthankful. Lost people don't give thanks unto God. They should, and have a lot of reasons to give Him thanks, but they don't.

In II Timothy chapter 3, we are given some of the characteristics of the last days, together with some of the marks that will be present in society and in

our churches during this time. Verses 1 and 2 say, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy." One of the signs of the last days is that people will be unthankful towards God.

Verse 13 of that same chapter states, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." The Bible is clear, the closer we get to the coming of the Lord Jesus, men are going to become worse and worse – more and more wicked. The more wicked men become in these last days, the more thankless they will become towards God. We live in a thankless time and a thankless society. Many live their whole lives existing on the blessings of God – enjoying the benefits without ever pausing to acknowledge or thank God for them.

Luke 17:11-19 says, "And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted

up their voices, and said Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.”

This passage tells about ten men who were lepers and how the Lord Jesus in mercy, cleansed every one of them of that dreaded disease. To have leprosy during that time meant being a social outcast. It rendered you socially, religiously, and ceremoniously unclean and cut-off from friends and family. It would have isolated you only with others who also had the disease. To have Jesus come by, cleanse, and make you perfectly whole, you would think that every one of them would have fallen at His feet – thanking the One, who did

this wonderful thing on their behalf – giving Him thanks for cleansing and healing. But the Bible tells us that only one turned back to give God the glory. This story teaches an important fact about men's hearts. The reason why men don't give God thanks is not because of a lack of blessings in their life or that God has not been good to them. It's because their hearts are wicked.

America ought to be a nation filled with people, who daily give God thanks, especially in light of His many blessings down through the years. I know of no other nation that has so many blessings because of the goodness and mercy of God. Yet what God has done for America means nothing to so many people. They live their life with such ingratitude. We can understand why this is so when it comes to the lost, because they have a wicked heart and don't know the Lord Jesus. But it should not be true of those that know the Lord. Does it really matter? Whether we think it's important or not, God says it is.

I Thessalonians 5:18 says, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." The Bible tells us that giving

God thanks is part of God's will for our lives. Notice how the Bible says we ought to give God thanks – “in every thing”. That goes way beyond just giving Him thanks for the good things that happen to us. That's a broad command and takes in everything that comes in our lives.

When it comes to giving God thanks, do we really treat it as seriously as other areas concerning His will for our lives? Or do we look at this matter of giving God thanks as something that's not important. God wants us to give Him thanks for EVERY THING.

I Timothy 4:4-5 says, “For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” Here the Bible is instructing us that we ought to give God thanks, because every creature of this world can be received as food that can be a blessing to our bodies, if we receive it with thanksgiving and sanctify it with prayer.

Some say, that if you pray at every meal you're putting yourself in bondage and are a legalist. That's not being a legalist. That's being Biblical.

Giving God thanks at every meal, keeps us from taking His goodness for granted. This is what a lot of people do every day of their lives "... *and fared sumptuously every day.*" (Luke 16:19a). They eat sumptuously every day, without thanking the One that gives them all the food. We ought to be thankful that God feeds us, our children, and grandchildren every day. This while, three-fourths of the world goes to bed hungry every night. Don't be embarrassed to drop your head in front of people at a meal and thank God.

I Corinthians 14:14-16 states, "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at the giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" Paul is talking about worship services. When they were coming together, they were praying, speaking, blessing, and giving thanks in the spirit. When Paul is talking about

doing it in the spirit – he is talking about doing it in an unknown tongue. Paul is saying, when you're gathering for worship, and you're doing that in an unknown tongue, how shall those that are there be blessed when they don't understand what you're saying? How can they say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, if they can't understand what you're saying?

It's also important to note that "...*the giving of thanks...*" was part of their regular worship service as a church. Not only did they meet to pray, to speak, to teach, and to fellowship, they met to give God thanks.

I wonder in how many of our churches today is giving God thanks a regular part of the worship service. Yet the Bible tells us to "*Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise...*" (Psalm 100:4). We, the people of God, ought to be coming into His house, and at some point, giving Him thanks for what He has done for us, as His children.

Our children need to be raised in a place where they aren't ashamed to give God thanks. The

heathen have no gratitude. When you went to church with these Corinthians, one thing you heard in the service was people standing and giving thanks unto God.

I Corinthians 14:17 goes on to say, "*For thou verily givest thanks well...*" Paul said that what they were doing was right, but not in the right way. We ought to give God thanks in a proper way that people can understand.

Giving thanks not only brings glory to God, it also helps His people. It edifies, encourages, and strengthens them. Isn't it much better to attend a church where people have the habit of giving thanks, than going to church week-in and week-out, where everybody is acting like God is dead, and no one has a reason to give Him thanks? If we know the Lord, our children need to hear us, as parents, giving God thanks in their presence.

II Corinthians 4:15 says, "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." In the early part of this chapter, it tells what Paul went through to bring the gospel to the church

at Corinth. He says that he didn't do this to build a name for himself. He didn't necessarily like going through trials and tribulations. He wasn't trying to work his way into heaven; Paul did it for their sakes. He did it because he knew that when the marvelous grace of God that "...*is able to save them to the uttermost...*" would come to them, it would change their lives forever.

When God's grace saves a person, it changes them, so that they begin to give thanks for the grace and salvation they received from the Lord. They're grateful and thankful for what God's grace has done in their lives. I wouldn't give you a dime for a man, woman, or child who says that he is saved, yet has no thanksgiving in his heart for God.

II Corinthians 9:11 states, "Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God". Paul is saying that you give, not only to supply the needs of others and the needs of the saints, but because giving to others will help your life. God is going to bless us bountifully for our giving. We can't out-give God. What we give for the glory of God to help others, He is going to repay us back in

multiples. “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom...” (Luke 6:38a).

Another thing that giving does, it causes thanksgiving to be offered up to God. That’s a good reason to keep on giving. It causes people to thank God for meeting their needs. Paul says we’re to give because it ultimately brings thanksgiving to God. The money we give to people to meet their needs – and to carry on the work of the Lord – will cause them to bow before God to thank Him for taking care of them through us. God will get some thanks and that’s a good thing for us to be involved in.

Ephesians 5:20 reads, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...” In the context of this passage, it’s talking about being filled with the Spirit, and then this verse says we ought to constantly be giving thanks unto God. Not just giving thanks for all things, but giving thanks constantly. One of the characteristics of a Spirit-filled believer is that they aren’t going around

complaining. Those that constantly complain don't know much about the Spirit-filled life. When we're walking in the Spirit, we'll be characterized by thanksgiving unto God.

Philippians 4:6 says, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Don't worry, fret, or be anxious. You may say that's not easy to do. I know, but God said we're not to do it.

God says that when you come to pray, you should offer up your supplications and petitions with thanksgiving. Yet the only time people thank God is when He answers their prayers. We ought to do that, but here the Bible says we also ought to offer up our thanksgiving, even as we pray to God. Instead of waiting for the answers to come, we ought to be thanking God. Why should you thank Him before He has done anything? You ought to thank God that He is a God of all power, might, and wisdom. How would you like to pray to Buddha or some statue of a religious person as the heathen do? Are you thankful that you can pray to the true God – that when you make your petitions

and requests, you're offering them up – to the One that has all power in heaven and earth?

Colossians 2:6-7 reads, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” The Bible not only teaches that we should be giving God thanks. It teaches that we should be overflowing with thanksgiving for all God has done, and is going to do.

There is something wrong with us, when we can go for days, weeks, and even months without giving God thanks. Imagine, never giving God thanks when we pray over food, when we come to His house, or when we kneel in prayer. The Bible teaches just the opposite. It says we ought to give thanks to God for everything – always giving God thanks, constantly giving God thanks, and living in a spirit of thanksgiving. As His people, we ought to be abounding with thanksgiving to God.

Colossians 3:15 states, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” Paul is saying,

let the peace of God rule in your hearts. Don't let fear, worry, or anxiety rule in your hearts. If you let it, it will.

In a day when so many people are stressed, fearful, and worrying, if the peace of God is ruling in your heart, you above all people ought to thank God. Be thankful that you're not worrying yourself into an early grave – that you don't have to live on nerve pills – that there is such a thing as the peace of God “...*which passeth all understanding*” (Phil. 4:7). Be thankful that there is a better way to live as God's child than to worry about things you can't control.

“...Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called...” Let God's peace rule in your heart – know that you're also called to peace in the body – “...*and be ye thankful.*” Can you do that no matter where you are, no matter what you're facing? Can you be thankful? There is a connection between the peace of God ruling in your heart and being thankful. Can you say that by faith you thank God, though it's hard and at times unbearable? Can you say that you're thankful that God promised in His Word “...*that all things work*

together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose?" (Rom. 8:28). I'm convinced that if we will practice what the Bible says – and learn how to give God thanks for everything – there would be more peace in our hearts.

Colossians 3:17 reads, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Repeatedly, we find verse after verse that says to give thanks to God. Do you think God is trying to make a point with all these verses? Do you think it's critical? Do you think it's something we ought to be concerned about and practicing as God's people? I think so.

Colossians 4:1 reads, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." This verse is about how we are to treat people. We ought to treat them with understanding, because the way we treat them, is how we're going to be treated. Treat all people with fairness and without partiality.

Verse 2 goes on to say, “*Continue in prayer ...*” Be faithful in prayer. It’s one thing to pray every now and then. It’s another to pray and continue in it. Some people pray sporadically. That’s not the kind of praying that Paul is talking about. He is talking about praying continually – living a life of prayer, being a prayer warrior – and being a man or woman of prayer. You’ll not make it as a Christian, if you don’t learn how to pray – not just on Sunday morning, but Sunday morning and night, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc., etc., etc. – morning, noon, and night. Devote time to prayer.

Then that verse goes on to say, “*...and watch in the same with thanksgiving;*” Be just as careful to give God thanks, as you are to pray and treat people equally. Some of us wouldn’t dare think about going a day without prayer, or mistreating other people in this world. But I wonder, when it comes to the matter of giving God thanks, are we just as careful?

I’ve been asked by people, if I can tell them what the will of God is for their lives. I tell them some things that are spelled out in the Bible. That *God*

wants His people to give Him thanks – personally, publically in His house, before meal times – when they have the peace of God in their heart.

Give God thanks. We ought to be “...*abounding therein with thanksgiving*”.