

November 22, 2015

Give Thanks in All Things

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

Psalm 107:1

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God that transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:4-7

"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you."

I Thessalonians 5:16-18

One of the most common themes in Scripture is thanksgiving. Not the American holiday, but a constant act that acknowledges God as the source of the good things in our lives. Countless times as the story of the Bible unfolds God's people expressed their thanksgiving to the Lord.

One beautiful example of this expression of thanksgiving is found in Exodus 15 when Moses and his sister, Miriam, led the people of Israel in praise and thanksgiving to God for his deliverance at the Red Sea. In this song of praise they acknowledge that God, in his mighty power, has delivered them from the armies of Egypt. ***"The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation."*** They sing, ***"He is my God and I will praise him..."***

Another wonderful example of thanksgiving is found in Luke 1:46-55 where Mary glorifies God for what he has chosen to do through her. ***"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,"*** she says, ***"for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant."***

As the Apostle Paul commanded the believers at Philippi, thanksgiving should be a regular part of our interaction with God. ***"Do not be anxious about anything,"*** he commands, ***"but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."***



Why is a constant attitude of thanksgiving so essential to our existence as believers? There are probably lots of reasons, but here are two that I believe, help us to understand the importance of thanksgiving:

- Being thankful reminds us that we are dependent. If I rely only on myself as many claim they do, then I need not thank anyone for anything. But the truth is I cannot live totally independent of others. I depend on others for nearly every aspect of my existence. I drive on roads maintained by others. When my power goes out someone I don't even know gets it

back on. I depend on the servants who bring my mail and newspaper and pick up my trash. I depend on the truckers who deliver my groceries and on the clerks who check me out. I am always dependent on someone for something. Thanksgiving reminds me of this truth and of course, I am most dependent on God who gives me life and hope, two things I cannot secure for myself.

- Thankfulness reminds us that God does work in our lives. We are probably all guilty of praying for God's intervention in some aspect of our lives and then attributing what happens to deliver us to luck or some other non-existent force. Asking God for the things we need in our lives from the clothes we wear to the food we eat without thanking him means we believe these things just happen. They don't. I am constantly dependent on God. Thanksgiving reminds me of his necessary presence in my life every day.

Having an attitude of thankfulness is not something we can squeeze into one day. Thankfulness should be a constant part of our day-to-day existence. We need to thank others for their service and especially we need to thank our Lord for his constant provision.