

THE DUTY OF THANKFULNESS

Colossians 3:15

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also you are called in one body; and be ye thankful." Colossians 3:15.

Paul's ideals are revealed in his advice given in this chapter. He urged them to put off certain things that vitiate the Christian life. He wanted them to disrobe themselves of their sinful past. He told them to put on the elements of the finest character; then, to let the peace of God dwell in their hearts. That peace is the result of harmony with God. Then, he said, "And be ye thankful." The peace of God can never dwell in an unthankful heart.

Yes, it is good mathematics to become efficient in the high and holy art of counting your blessings. Gratitude is one of the most beautiful and fragrant flowers that grows and blooms in the soil of the soul. The Psalmist reminds us of the Lord's goodness, urging us to "forget not all His benefits."

I. Why Give Thanks?

1. It is a privilege.
Illustrated by expressing thanks for a gift from a friend. One wants to do it.
2. It is right.
"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord." Psalm 92:1.
 - (1) For ourselves.
 - (2) For others
It dispels gloom.
 - (3) For the Lord.
It shows Him we appreciate what He has done for us.
3. It is a duty.
It is an imperative duty. Anything done for us that we could not do for ourselves ought to awaken in us a sense of gratitude.
4. It pleases the Lord.
"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." I Thessalonians 5:18. It glorifies Him.
5. It enriches the life.
An appreciative spirit is always helpful to a larger and fuller life.
6. It enlarges the blessing received.
Gratitude is microscopic and magnifies the insignificant.

II. For What Shall We Give Thanks?

1. Land into which I was born and the parents who gave me birth. The memory of a home in which God was honored, and training was given that the intervening years have not dissipated or destroyed.
2. Age in which we live.
This is an age of tremendous outward development, vast activities, multiplied discoveries, annihilated distances, and general education.
3. Food and raiment.
We have ample food and respectable clothing. Many are not as fortunate as we are.
4. Good Health.

5. Employment.
Idleness is a sore trial.
6. Educational advantages.
A boy may climb from the foot to the top of the ladder.
7. Comforts and conveniences of life.
Electricity, means of transportation, radio and television.
8. The Word of God.
From it we have learned how to be saved and how to live a victorious life.
9. The gift of Christ.
He was and is God's crowning gift to a lost and sinning world. He should be the center and circumference of our thoughts and thanksgiving. Thank God for His virgin birth, virtuous life, vicarious death, victorious resurrection, and the hope of His visible return.
10. The church.
It is the friend of childhood, the inspirer of youth, the strengthener of middle life, and the comforter of old age. It reaches about God and His program.
11. The simple plan of salvation.
"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."
(1) It was an unspeakable love that thought it.
(2) It was an unspeakable life that brought it.
(3) It was an unspeakable death that wrought it.
(4) It is an unspeakable joy when taught it.

It will take all of eternity for me to praise God for the grace that sought me and bought me and brought me to His fold. Personally, I appreciate the fact that He has given me the privilege of leading people to Christ, of building them up in Christ, and of training them in service for Him.
12. Christian fellowship.
On the Saturday night of life, when you and I sit down to list earth's choicest blessings, we shall be compelled to put near the head of the list the Christian friends who stood by us in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, whose warm handclasp, friendly smile, and encouraging word have fortified us to face life with new courage and confidence.
13. The privilege of service.
Service is the natural sequence of salvation. We are God's fellow-laborers. Life's greatest blessing is service; life's greatest blight is selfishness. "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister" was the motto of the greatest Life that ever trod the dusty roads of this world. As we follow Him, our daily lives will be those of continual thanksgiving.
14. The assurance of a home in heaven.

III. How Shall We Give Thanks?

1. With words.
 - (1) At our meals.
 - (2) In our prayers.
 - (3) In our praises.
"Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men." Psalm 107:8.
"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord." Psalm 150:6.

(4) In the name of Christ.

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:20.

2. With works.

(1) Giving ourselves.

(2) Giving our talents.

(3) Giving our money.

(4) Giving our time.

Let us serve Him with gladness and testify of His goodness.

"When I survey the wondrous cross"

"Forbid it, Lord that I should boast"

"See, from His head, His hands, His feet"

"Were the whole realm of nature mine"

"AND BE YE THANKFUL."