

November 22, 2016-

Ephesians 5:17-21

"An Attitude of Gratitude"

Introduction:

Joseph Kipling was a great writer and poet whose writings many have enjoyed. Such books have been made into movies and musicals like "*Captains Courageous*" & *The Jungle Book*. Well, unlike many old writers, Kipling was one of the few who had opportunity to enjoy his success while he was alive. He also made a great deal of money at his trade. Once a newspaper reporter came up to him and said, "Mr. Kipling, I just read that it has been calculated that the money you make from your writings amounts to over a hundred dollars per word; Mr. Kipling raised his eyebrows and said, "Really, I certainly wasn't aware of that."

The reporter cynically reached down into his pocket and pulled out a one hundred dollar bill and gave it to Mr. Kipling and said, "Here's a hundred dollar bill, Mr. Kipling. Now, give me one of your hundred dollar words." Mr. Kipling looked at that hundred-dollar bill for a moment, took it and folded it up and put it in his pocket and said, "Thanks."

That is a great word - maybe we should call it the million-dollar word for it is used so rarely in a way that is meaningful and genuine. We can take being thankful for granted because we have so much, and keep gaining more in possession. We always seem to want more. Jesus **said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.** --- Luke 12:15

The biggest Thanksgiving killer is the days and weeks after Thanksgiving when Christmas shopping becomes so fervent that we stop thinking about what we have and start thinking about what we want. So instead of looking at the Christmas catalogues focusing on what we want we should be rejoicing in what we have. Today, I want to share with you for a few minutes concerning an attitude of gratitude. Too many people today have an attitude of ingratitude and an entitlement mentality. We are living in a nation where the populace has forgotten God who has blessed us with this great land and prosperity. Americans are forsaking God and the humanist is making it hard for others to publicly give thanks.

Today's' sermons contain four properties in regards to an attitude of gratitude. Each property begins with the letter P. It is Proper; It is Perpetual; It is Persistent; It is Profitable.

I It is Proper- It is God's will Vv17-19

1. A good attitude toward life begins with gratitude toward God. Thankfulness is foundational to the Christian life and response to the God, the source of all our blessings. The word "*understanding*" suggests using our minds to discover and do God's will. Too many believers have the idea that finding the will of God is some mystical experience that rules out systematic thinking. However, God gave us each a mind, and if we are to recognize His will, we must use that mind. How can we know the will of God? First, His general will is clearly revealed in the Bible, and as we are obedient to that general will, which applies to all believers, then He will begin to reveal His specific will. This specific will is at least to some

degree different for all believers. What is the general will of God, according to these references, clearly God desires we be thankful people; especially for our salvation.

For every creature of God [is] good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: I Tim 4;4
Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. – Phillipians 4:6

2. Ephesians 5:18 contain both a negative and a positive command. The negative, *be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess*, warns us not to over indulge in drink. God has designed a way for us to deal with life's issues. It is found in the filling of the Holy Spirit, not the emptying of a bottle. When we feel drained mentally, physically, and spiritually, we can find replenishment in the Spirit-not in spirits. Beware not to over indulge in food or drink.

3. Singing: vs.19...singing is the expression of joy...singing praises to God for the acts that He has performed is the highest expression of human worship if done in spirit & truth. How could David help but sing praises unto the God that saved him, supplied his needs, protected him and promised an eternal inheritance to him?

Prosperity can lead to self-centeredness, and thereby self-destruction. Without proper thanksgiving to God one elevates self to the place prominence. Those who take things for granted are really carnal Christians or unsaved people. Generally, the case with these people is prosperity has produced self-indulgence. The means of happiness for such people is having more all the time. The tendency of prosperity is all too often to forget God.

A man who will not "Thank God" has set himself up as God and is a primary candidate for a hard fall. (**Proverbs16:18-19**) You see the gifts of God, mercy of God, Grace of God, Blessings of God, are remembered more when they are taken away. Once you lose something precious, you'll never take it for granted again. We need to show God an attitude. –**Romans 1:21**

II It is Perpetual V20

1. We should always give thanks because God is always giving blessing anew every-day.

"Perpetual means continuous, forever "always. So, be thankful on a daily basis because God's provisions are given anew every single day. That's the attitude of gratitude.

Psalms 68:19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation.

It is **proper** meaning it is God's will. It is **perpetual** meaning we should always give thanks because God is always giving blessing anew every-day.

III It is Persistent v20: meaning "in everything".

1. It is good to give thanks in everything. The word "everything" can be rendered every circumstance. You see God desires us to live with a spirit of gratitude even in our adversity. (**Thess. 5: 18**) **In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.**

Paul suffered from some very difficult problem that he called a thorn in the flesh. He also had been run out of town, beaten, whipped, imprisoned, betrayed by friends, naked, cold, hungry shipwrecked, and stoned because of his faith. Yet, Paul never stopped giving thanks. We are to

give ... thanks always for ALL THINGS unto God.... There may be times when we may be thankful for God's help in the midst of a terrible situation, even when we find it impossible to thank God for the situation, because it is obviously not His doing.

2. Paul is talking about a continual attitude for Christians - an attitude of the heart. How we are to be to each other. But how, you may wonder, can we have this attitude continually, especially "in all circumstances?" I believe the answer lies in our perspective of thanksgiving. We need the proper perspective. In fact all life trials and situations need proper perspective.

An experiment was done in New York's Central Park where an advertising firm dressed a man up as a blind man and gave him a cup to collect money. One day they put a sign around his neck that read, "I'm Blind." On that day he collected about \$40.00. The next day they dressed him the same way, placed him in the same place but changed the sign to read, "It's Spring and I'm Blind." That day he collected nearly \$400.00. That day, those people realized how blessed they were by the beautiful flowers, birds, the sunrise and sunset.

Wally Amos said, "I have learned to be thankful for all my experiences and see them as blessing. Some of my most challenging experience losing a company, being sued, and more have produced my greatest growth. 2) It is easy to be thankful when the times are good- but an attitude of gratitude is to be thankful in the hard times too. Have you thanks God yet?...

IV. It is Profitable - unto God and us v20 and 21.

1. Psychologists today tell us that sincere gratitude, thanksgiving, is the healthiest of all human emotions. Hans Selye, who is considered the father of stress studies, has said that gratitude produces more positive emotional energy than any other attitude in life. We too are made whole by our thanksgiving. Therefore thanksgiving it is profitable to us.

2. And a thankful heart will endear others to us and us to others. For you see thanksgiving is not only good for the giver but also good for the receiver. God appreciates our thanksgiving. It lifts Him up and it glorifies Him. And thanksgiving endears him to us. It draws us closer. God is glorified when we praise and thank Him.

Psalm 50:23 "Whoso offerth praise glorifieth me, & Psalm 50:14-15 who so offerth praise glorifieth me.

Finally, when we are filled with the Spirit, we will submit ourselves ...one to another in the fear of God (Eph. 5:21). The word fear in this phrase means "reverence." Knowing that the great desire of the heart of God is unity, believers submit themselves to one another for the sake of the oneness of the church and the purpose of God.

Conclusion:

We have a tendency to forget the good things and remember the bad. What is God saying to you? Is yours an attitude of gratitude? If you have ingratitude it can lead to bitterness and much more. The psalmist reminds us, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psa 103:2)