

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Luke 17:11-19.**
- B. Every day should be a day of thanksgiving on the Christian's calendar.
 - 1. We are taught by command to be grateful (Col. 2:7; 3:15; 4:2; Eph. 5:20).
It is the will of God that we be thankful (1Th. 5:18). Thus, gratitude is not optional.
To be an ingrate, is to be disobedient; and, to be disobedient is to be lost.
(Col 2:7) ...having been firmly rooted *and now* being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, *and overflowing* with gratitude.
(Col 3:15) And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.
(Col 4:2) Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of* thanksgiving;
(Eph 5:20) ...always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;
(1Th 5:18) ...in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
 - 2. We are taught by example to be thankful.
Jesus was thankful (Mt. 11:25; 26:27; Mk. 8:6; Jn. 11:41); and, He is our example. David (1Chr. 16:7-36; Psa. 100), Daniel (Dan. 6:10), Anna (Lk. 2:38) and Paul (Phil. 4:6) all had thankful hearts. Yea, the angelic host gives thanks (Rev. 7:11-12).
 - 3. These points obtaining, surely our hearts are deeply concerned with how to overcome ingratitude; or, to state it more positively, how can we develop the attitude of gratitude?

I. DO NOT MAJOR ON YOUR TROUBLES.

- A. Count your blessings, not your bruises.
Yet, how often do we major on our blights rather than our blessings. We even date matters from a given tragedy. "That happened the year of the tornado," or, "the year I had rheumatic fever." If we are not careful while we walk the pathway of life we will never pluck a rose, but will pluck many thorns and wear them in our hearts.
- B. In fact, we should be grateful even for our troubles and so-called inconveniences.
Matthew Henry wrote in his diary upon his house being robbed, "Let me be thankful first, because he:
 - 1. Never robbed me before; second, because although he took my purse.
 - 2. He did not take my life; third, because although he took all I possessed.
 - 3. It was not much; and fourth, because,
 - 4. It was I who was robbed, not I who robbed."But, how can a Christian come to be thankful even for his troubles? He must firmly believe that "**all things work together for good to them that love God**" (Rom. 8:28).
- C. Ingratitude is detestable.
"**Neither were thankful**" (Rom. 1:21) is one of the many sins on the black and vicious list of sins characteristic of the Gentile world. In describing the perilous times of the last days, Paul says men will be "**unthankful**" (2Tim. 3:1-5).

II. THINK HOW MUCH BETTER OFF YOU ARE THAN SO MANY.

- A. What would happen if we were reduced to the same level of many people in the world? In the book *The Great Assent*, Robert L. Heilbroner describes what would happen to a family with an American annual income if they were reduced to the annual income category in which more than one billion people in the world find themselves.
- B. Here are the results:
 - 1. Take away the furniture, saving a few old blankets, kitchen table and one chair.
 - 2. Take away all the clothing except for the oldest dress or suit, a shirt or blouse and one pair of

shoes for the head of the family.

3. Empty the cupboards of food with the exception of a small bag of flour, some sugar and salt, a few molded potatoes and a handful of onions and a dish of fried beans.
4. Dismantle the bathroom, shut off the water and remove the electrical wiring.
5. Take away the house itself and move the family into a tool shed.
6. Cancel all subscriptions to newspapers, magazines and book clubs.
7. Put the nearest clinic or hospital ten miles away and put a midwife in charge instead of a doctor.
8. Discard the bank book, stock certificates, pension plan, insurance policies and leave the family \$5.00 in cash.
9. Give the head of the family three tenant acres to cultivate on which he will make \$300 in cash crops, one-third of which going to the landlord and one-tenth going to the moneylender.
10. Cut off 25 to 30 years life expectancy for every member of the family.

Indeed, all of us by the world's standards are wealthy!

III. COUNT THE BLESSINGS YOU DO HAVE.

- A. "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1Tim. 6:8). "Be content with such things as ye have" (Heb. 13:5). Yet, so often we fail to remember the things with which we are so remarkably blessed. How often we sing, but how seldom we practice, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done."
- B. We should try and count our spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3).
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,
There is God's son, the incomparable church, the Holy Bible, the exceeding great and precious promises, the sustaining hope of heaven, our conversion, and on and on.
- C. We should try and count our physical blessings.
There are our families, health, food, shelter and clothing, freedom, and on and on.
- D. We will come to see that these blessings are innumerable.

IV. EXPRESS YOUR GRATITUDE.

- A. Express your gratitude verbally.
We are instructed to "give" thanks; not "feel" or "think" thanks (1Th. 5:18; Eph. 5:20). "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good... Let the redeemed of the Lord say so..." (Psa. 107:1-2). How we must wound the great heart of our Father through our ingratitude or unexpressed gratitude.
- B. Express your gratitude by your life as well as by your lips.
Thanks-saying is not necessarily thanks giving, but thanks-living is. In response to David's question, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" (Psa. 116:12), let us resolve that we will give unto God our love, our time, talents, money, lives; our all.
- C. Instead of remaining continually grateful for their deliverance from Egypt, how soon did Israel start to murmur and complain (see Ex. 15:24; 17:3; Num. 14:2). Let us avoid duplicating this spirit (1Cor. 10:10). Though he was in prison at the time, Paul stilled penned, "Giving thanks always for all things" (Eph. 5:20), and "Do all things without murmurings and disputing" (Phil. 2:14).

V. NEVER FORGET THE GIVER IN THE GIFT.

- A. All that we have, we have received of God (Jas. 1:17).
Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.
Paul was so deeply conscious of this (1Cor. 15:10; Rom. 1:5), whereas the rich farmer failed to realize the same. (Lk. 12:16-21).
(Rom 1:5) ...through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake,
(1Cor 15:10) But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I

labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

B. Now, let us never forget the giver in the gift.

A child, who has been pampered by an over-indulgent uncle bringing him candy each day, will cry the day the uncle forgets the candy. Why? The child is more interested in the gift than in the giver. It is possible for us to have the same attitude toward God. Accordingly, let us never separate God from his gifts.

C. We must come to understand that "a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses" (Lk. 12:15).

D. We must be thankful for, and put the emphasis on, the spiritual things (Eph. 1:3).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

An aged Christian was called upon by the tax assessor to determine the amount of taxes that should be paid. When asked what property he had, the aged Christian stated, "I am a very wealthy man."

Whereupon the tax assessor asked him to list his possessions. The aged man did:

1. I have remission of my sins (Ac. 2:38).
2. I have a mansion in heaven (Jn. 14:2).
3. I have a peace that passes understanding (Phil. 4:7).
4. I have a joy unspeakable (1Pet. 1:8).
5. I have a divine love that never fades (1Cor. 13:8).
6. I have a faithful, pious wife (Prov. 31:10).
7. I have devoted children (Ex. 20:12).
8. I have true, loyal friends (Prov. 18:24).
9. I have songs in the night (Psa. 42:8).
10. I have a crown of life (Jas. 1:12).
11. I have a Savior, Jesus Christ, who supplies all my needs freely (Phil. 4:19).

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. George Herbert prayed, "Our Father, Thou hast given us so much. Do, please, give us one more thing... a grateful heart!"
- B. A thankful heart is an obedient heart.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.