

INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **Colossians 3:12-17**.

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

B. Our scripture text mentions two things that are to be done in the name of the Lord:

1. Everything in word.
2. Everything in deed.

C. Both of these are to be done with gratitude. That's "*thanksgiving!*"

I. "THANKSLIVING" -- IN WORD.

A. **First, this means living without a ready excuse.**

Some excuses that have been tried, and have failed are:

1. "I'm not talented enough" (Ex. 4:10). That's not *thanksgiving!* You have gifts and talents from God that are to be used (Rom. 12:6; 1Cor. 12:22-23).

(Ex 4:10) Then Moses said to the LORD, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since Thou hast spoken to Thy servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

(Rom 12:6) And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: ...

(1Cor 12:22-23) On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness,

2. "I don't have enough training or education." That's not *thanksgiving!* Peter and John had no formal training or education, they had "just been with Jesus" (Ac. 4:13).

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

3. "I don't have enough money to get the job done." That's not *thanksgiving!* There are only two questions to be asked when it comes to spending money; is it scriptural, and is it needed? God will provide the rest (Phil. 4:19).

And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

4. "I've never done that before." That's not *thanksgiving!* Jesus said to take up your cross daily and follow Him (Lk. 9:23). Do what you have never done before!

B. **Second, this means living without complaining.**

1. As a whole, we do a better job of griping and complaining than we do of evangelism and edification. The Bible does not say that when we are sinned against that we are to complain about it. If sin is involved--go to that person(s) and work it out (Mt. 18:15).
2. We are real good at being petty and majoring in minors, while the whole world is on its way to hell. We have become so self-centered, so jealous, and ungrateful that we get upset over a computer crash, a automobile cruise control that doesn't work, a temperamental microwave, rather than acknowledge the fact that we have these things to use and enjoy.
3. We have mentally trained ourselves to be negative. What do you see? Not a black spot--but a while sheet of paper (that just happens to have a black spot on it).
4. The Bible says:
 - a. Do all things without griping or complaining (Phi. 2:14).

Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

- b. Give thanks always for all the brethren (1Th. 1:2).
We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers;
 - c. Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth (Eph. 4:29).
Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.
- C. **Third, this means living with a positive attitude.**
- 1. Too many Xians “act they have been baptized in vinegar and weaned on a sour pickle.”
 - 2. That’s not *thanksgiving*! “It is time for a check up from the neck up!” (Zig Zeigler).
 - a. We are to have changed attitude in X (Phil. 2:5).
Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
 - b. Jesus came to bring us joy (Jn. 15:11).
“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.
 - 3. Jesus changed some lives the better, and their lives were that of *thanksgiving*:
 - a. Matthew, the tax-collector.
 - b. Peter, the uneducated, untrained fisherman.
 - c. Simon, the Zealot.
 - d. Saul, the persecutor of Tarsus.

II. “THANKSLIVING” -- IN DEED.

- A. **First, this means not living on the edge of sin.**
- 1. Living like the world, or as close to the world as we can get is not *thanksgiving*.
We are to shun the appearances of evil (1Th. 5:22).
abstain from every form of evil.
 - 2. Talking about sinful things (Eph. 5:3). That’s not *thanksgiving*.
But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints;
 - 3. Joking about things not proper (Eph. 5:4). That’s not *thanksgiving*.
and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.
 - 4. Have you ever seen the little sign posted that says, “Don’t even THINK about parking here.” For Xians that should say, “Don’t even THINK about committing sin.”
- B. **Second, this means living on the edge of greatness.**
- 1. How do you view life?
 - a. How do you view the glass--half full or half empty?
 - b. Are problems symptoms of defeat, or opportunities for victory?
 - c. Do we view suffering as punishment or discipline for becoming more mature?
 - 2. Thanksgiving says that each day I have a choice, because with God I’m on the edge of greatness!
 - 3. A mustard seed of faith says we can do the impossible--it also means *thanksgiving* (Mt. 17:14-21).
When they came to the crowd, a man came up to Jesus, falling on his knees before Him and saying, **15** “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. **16** I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him.” **17** And Jesus answered and said, “You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me.” **18** And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once.
19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not drive it out?” **20** And He said to them, “Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. **21** [But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.]”
The power was at work in them, but it was because of the littleness of their faith (no prayer, no fasting) they could not drive out the demons.
 - 4. Want to know what makes a church great? It is not the Elders, deacons, preachers, buildings, programs, or budgets. Great churches have people living in such a way that they reveal the great Christ that saved them. Great churches practice *thanksgiving*.

- C. **Third, this means living as one who is more than a conqueror.**
1. Read Romans, chapter 8, and you can practice *thanksgiving*.
 2. Christians are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:37). But why is that true?
 - a. (8:31) If God is for us, who is against us? Let's practice *thanksgiving*!
 - b. (8:32) God will freely give us all things. Let's practice *thanksgiving*!
 - c. (8:33) No one can bring a charge against you. Let's practice *thanksgiving*!
 - d. (8:34) No one can condemn you. Let's practice *thanksgiving*!
 - e. (8:35) Nothing can separate you from God's love. Let's practice *thanksgiving*!
- Now with these 5 things in mind--you are more than a conqueror! Let's practice *thanksgiving*!

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. When I get to heaven there's a lot things that I want to do and people I want to see. But for the first 10,000 years I want to go to God and just say "thank you."
- B. And you see, I hope I've already started that. I've been a Xian for 28 years (only 9,972 yrs. to go!), and hopefully I been *thanksgiving* all that time.
- C. Are you practicing *thanksgiving*?
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.