



## **THANKSGIVING -- THE ESSENCE OF A CHRISTIAN HEART!**

### **Introduction:**

- A. Question: "What Is The Main Focus Of Your Mind Today?"
  - 1. If a piece of technology could project on the PowerPoint screen what your main focus or concern is this morning, what word or phrase would be there in bright neon letters?
  - 2. Would it be:
    - a. Alan's week -- getting ready for Youth Rally; dad's medical issues in the middle of all of that planning?
    - b. Getting the kids ready to be here and finally, "Whew, we are here!"?
    - c. Illness -- personally or of a family member?
    - d. Plans?
    - e. Thanksgiving meal this week?
    - f. Today's lunch?
- B. **(Slide #2)** Thanksgiving Is An Attitude Of Heart That Every Christian Should Comprehend, Cultivate, And Cherish!
- C. **(►)** Thanksgiving Should Be At The Core Of Who We Are!
  - 1. Ps. 116:17 "I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, And will call upon the name of the LORD."
  - 2. I Thess. 5:18 "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
- D. Jesus Is Our Example Of Having A Heart Of Thanksgiving!
  - 1. He was thankful for His Mission -- not matter how difficult it was and how much it demanded of Him!
    - a. Lk. 19:10 "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

- b. Jn. 17:4 “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.
- 2. He was thankful for the plan that They designed; it was for the humble of heart!
  - a. Mt. 11:25 “At that time Jesus answered and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.’”
    - 1. In this chapter Jesus talks about those who had rejected God’s Message through John and now through Him. 18
    - 2. They accused John of having a demon; they accused Jesus of being a glutton, a winebibber, and a friend of tax collectors and sinners! 19
    - 3. He gave stern and severe condemnation to Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum -- they had heard the Messiah preach; they had seen His miracles; yet they rejected Him!!!
  - b. I Cor. 1:26 “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.”

E. (►) Thanksgiving Demands Proper Esteem And Proper Awareness.

- 1. Esteem for the Givers of all of our blessings!
- 2. Constant awareness of all of our blessings!
  - a. This requires a pondering, thoughtful, appreciative heart!
  - b. We have to **“Count Your Many Blessings”**

Verse 1:

“When upon life’s billows you are tempest tossed,  
 When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,  
 Count your many blessings, name them one by one,  
 And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

*Refrain*

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
 Count your blessings, see what God hath done!  
 Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
 And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

Verse 2:

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?  
 Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?  
 Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,  
 And you will keep singing as the days go by.

*Refrain*

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
Count your blessings, see what God hath done!  
Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

Verse 3:

When you look at others with their lands and gold,  
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;  
Count your many blessings. Wealth can never buy  
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high.

*Refrain*

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
Count your blessings, see what God hath done!  
Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

Verse 4:

So, amid the conflict whether great or small,  
Do not be disheartened, God is over all;  
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,  
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.

*Refrain*

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
Count your blessings, see what God hath done!  
Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done."*

Words by Johnson Oatman, Jr (in Songs For Young People by Edwin  
Excell -- Chicago, IL: 1897)  
Music by Edwin O. Excell

- c. The words of **"Thank You Lord"** remind us of the essence of a Christian heart!

**"For all that You've done, I will thank You  
For all the You're going to do  
For all that You've promised**

And all that You are  
Is all that has carried me through  
Jesus I thank You

And I thank You  
Thank You Lord  
And I thank You  
Thank You Lord.

Thank You for loving and setting me free  
Thank You for giving Your life just for me  
How I thank You  
Jesus, I thank You  
Gracefully thank You  
Thank You.”

Lyrics by Dennis Jernigan

- d. These two songs give an important insight: “Thanksgiving will give you an ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT!”

**I. (Slide #3) The Essence Of A Christian Heart -- Thanksgiving For PAST Blessings.**

**A. Life Itself!**

1. We as humans have been created in the image of the Godhead! Gen. 1:26,27
2. For this wonderful earth in which we live! Gen. 1
3. That we have the privilege to live here and to see the glorious creation!

**B. For The Home!**

1. Thank God for the home as God designed it!
2. Thank God for parents who truly tried to do it right!
3. Thank God for those who have been blessed with Christian parents!
4. Thank God for your mate, for children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren!
5. Thank God for the security, stability, and love it can provide!

- C. For All God's Providential Blessings!
  - 1. That this world is designed for life.
  - 2. That He gives us the sun and rain (Mt. 5:45), the seasons and the rain cycles (Ac. 14:17) -- He does so much good for us!
- D. For Salvation Made Available Through Jesus!
  - 1. For His Grace:
    - a. I Cor. 1:4 "I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,"
    - b. Phil. 1:3-5 "thank my God upon every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup>always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, <sup>5</sup>for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,"
    - c. Col. 1:3-6 "We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, <sup>4</sup>since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; <sup>5</sup>because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,"
    - d. II Cor. 9:15 "Thanks *be* to God for His indescribable gift!"
  - 2. For all that Jesus did and that He endured that salvation might be made available!
  - 3. When we as Christians partake the Lord's Supper keep in mind what it is -- a memorial of thanksgiving!!!!
- E. For Victories:
  - 1. Over those seeking to destroy us:
    - a. Ex. 15:1-19 (1-6) "Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: 'I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! <sup>2</sup>The LORD *is* my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He *is* my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him. <sup>3</sup>The LORD *is* a man of war; The LORD *is* His name. <sup>4</sup>Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. <sup>5</sup>The depths have covered them; They sank to the bottom like a stone. <sup>6</sup>Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces."
    - b. Ex. 15:21 Miriam "And Miriam answered them: 'Sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!'"
  - 2. For victories over temptation and sin!

## **II. (Slide #4) The Essence Of A Christian Heart -- Thanksgiving For PRESENT Blessings.**

### **A. Interestingly There Are Ties Between Our Past Blessings And Our Present Blessings!**

1. I have known many of you for almost 30 years.
2. Your faith is as rock solid today as it was then; it will be that way until you die!
3. What a blessing!

### **B. You See People In The Past Continually Giving God Glory For Their Present Blessings.**

1. The shepherds who were told by the Angel "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord," Lk. 2:11, who came and saw the baby, and who then rejoiced that the Messiah had been born; "Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them." Lk. 2:20
2. Those who were healed! The paralytic who was carried by his four friends to the house where Jesus was, who was let down in front of Jesus, and whom Jesus healed: "Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God." Lk. 5:25

### **C. If You Do Not "Count Your Many Present Blessings" You Will Have NO IDEA Of Just How Blessed You Are!**

### **D. No Wonder You See:**

1. Jesus praying before He ate!
  - a. When he fed the 5,000 men plus women and children!
  - b. Jn. 6:11 "And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted."
2. Jesus praying as He instituting the Lord's Supper -- Mt. 26:27 "Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you."
3. Jesus thanking the Father as He was about to raise Lazarus -- Jn. 11:41 "Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, 'Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.'"

4. Paul thanking God for the food that the terrified seafaring people were about to eat before they were ship-wrecked!
  - a. Ac. 27:35 “And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat.”
  - b. This was after 14 days of not eating when they had been in the horrendous storm on the Mediterranean Sea; it was just before they were ship-wrecked.

E. For Others Coming To Faith

1. Rom. 1:8 “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”
2. Phil. 1:12-14 “But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, <sup>13</sup>so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; <sup>14</sup>and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”
3. II Thess. 1:3 “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,”
4. I Thess. 2:13 “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”

F. Give Thanks Even For Life’s Burdens, Troubles, Trials, And Heartaches!

1. God’s people can be filled with thanksgiving even In the Midst Of Great Difficulty!
  - a. Daniel Dn. 2:23 “I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king's demand.”
  - b. Paul as he neared Rome and imprisonment: Ac 28:15 “And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.”
  - c. Paul in prison. Phil. 4:6,7 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup>and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

2. The Christian, with Paul, can say: “For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.” Phil. 1:21

G. **(Slide #5) Give Thanks To Him Always For Everything!**

1. Eph. 1:16 “do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:”
2. Eph. 5:20 “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,”
3. I Thess. 1:2 “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,”
4. I Thess. 5:18 “in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

**III. (Slide #6) The Essence Of A Christian Heart -- Thanksgiving For FUTURE Blessings.**

A. We Have NO IDEA How Long We Will Live; However, We Know That We Will Be Blessed As Long As We Live!!!

B. For Future Forgiveness!

1. I Jn. 1:7 “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.:
2. I Jn. 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

C. I Cor. 15:57 “But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**IV. (Slide #7) The Results Of A Thankful Heart!**

A. (►) You Give Him The Praise He Rightfully Deserves!

1. Ps. 50:14 Psalm of Asaph “Offer to God thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High.”
2. He is SO Good!
  - a. Ps. 106:1 “Praise the LORD! Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good! For His mercy *endures* forever.”



- b. Ps. 107:1 “Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good! For His mercy *endures* forever.”
- B. (►) Worship Is A VITAL Part Of The Christian’s Life!
  - 1. Ps. 95:2 “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with Psalms.”
  - 2. Ps. 100:4 “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, *And* into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, *and* bless His name.”
- C. (►) You Learn Trust In And Reliance Upon God; You Let Go Of Worry; You Find True Peace!
  - 1. Phil. 4:6 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;”
  - 2. I Pet. 5:7 “casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”
  - 3. Pr. 3:5,6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.”
  - 4. Heb. 13:6 “So we may boldly say: *‘The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’*”

### Conclusion:

- A. (Slide #8) For The Christian To Have The True Essence Of A Christian Heart, Thanksgiving, It Requires (►) Memory Of The Past!
- B. For The Christian To Have The True Essence Of A Christian Heart, Thanksgiving, It Requires (►) Awareness Of The Present!
- C. For The Christian To Have The True Essence Of A Christian Heart, Thanksgiving, It Requires (►) Trust In God And Confidence In The Future!
- D. Question: Back To My First Question: When You Arrived Today, What Was The MAIN FOCUS Of Your Mind?
  - 1. Was it important? YES!
  - 2. Yet when we see our blessings (past, present, and future), our neon focused priority on the screen may begin to diminish as we focus on those blessings!