

**Sermon Title: The Principle of Thanksgiving in Prayer**

**Sermon Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to practice a life of Thanksgiving in prayer, reflecting holy living.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 3 motivating factors in thankful prayer.**

**Introduction:** No aspect of prayer is more essential than thanksgiving. Having received God's forgiving grace and sustaining strength, Christians owe Him a deep sense of gratefulness. Ingratitude lies at the heart of rebellion against God (**Rom. 1:21**); (**1 Cor. 10**). In arrogant pride people ignore God choosing rather to credit themselves for the blessings of life. This ungrateful attitude has no place among believers. Thanksgiving is an attitude for all the seasons, circumstances, and situations of life. Hard times are as much an occasion for gratitude as good times (**1 Thess. 5:18**; **Eph. 5:20**). Even experiences that normally cause tension are to be faced with thankful prayer anticipating inward peace (**Phil. 4:6-7**). Knowing that God is in control and will use this hardship to promote spiritual growth is sufficient reason to pray thankfully.

**1. Christ's example of Thanksgiving (Matt. 11:25)**

**Matthew 26:27** Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

**John 11:41** Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying<sup>1</sup>. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

**2. The heavenly host engage in thanksgiving (Rev. 4:9; 7:11-12; 11:16-17)**

**3. The command to offer thanksgiving (Ps. 50:14; Phil. 4:6)**

**4. Thanksgiving should be offered to:**

a. **To God (Ps. 50:14; 92:1)**

b. **To Christ**

**1 Timothy 1:12** And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry,

c. **Through Christ (Rom. 1:8; col. 3:17)**

**Hebrews 13:15** Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.

d. **In the name of Christ (Eph. 5:20)**

e. **On behalf of ministers (2 Cor. 1:11)**

f. **In private worship**

**Daniel 6:10** Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

g. **In public worship**

**Psalms 35:18** I will give You thanks in the great assembly; I will praise You among many people.

h. **In and for everything (2 Cor. 9:11; Eph. 5:20; 1 Thess. 5:18)**

i. **Upon completion of great undertakings**

**Nehemiah 12:31** So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs. *One* went to the right hand on the wall toward the Refuse Gate.

**Nehemiah 12:40** So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God, likewise I and the half of the rulers with me;

j. **Before taking food (John 6:11; Acts 27:35)**

k. **At the remembrance of God's holiness (Ps. 30:4)**

**Psalms 97:12** Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name<sup>1</sup>.

l. **For the goodness and mercy of God (Ps. 106:1; 107:1; 136:1-3)**

m. **For the gift of Christ**

**2 Corinthians 9:15** Thanks *be* to God for His indescribable gift!

n. **For Christ's power and reign (Rev. 11:7)**

- o. **For the working of God's word in others**  
**1 Thessalonians 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.
- p. **For deliverance through Christ from indwelling sin**  
**Romans 7:23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. **24** O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? **25** I thank God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.
- q. **For victory over death and the grave (1 Cor. 15:57)**
- r. **For wisdom and might (Dan. 2:23)**
- s. **For triumph of the gospel**  
**2 Corinthians 2:14** Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.
- t. **For the conversion of others**  
**Romans 6:17** But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.
- u. **For the maturity and growth of others**  
**Romans 1:8** First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.  
**2 Thessalonians 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,

**I. The attribute of thankful prayer is rejoicing. V.16**

- A. The attribute of rejoicing comes from God the Father. (Ps. 50:14; 30:4)
- B. The attribute of rejoicing comes through Jesus Christ. (John 13-17)  
**John 15:11** "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full.
- C. The attribute of rejoicing comes by the Holy Spirit.  
**Galatians 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
**Romans 14:17** for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- D. The attribute of rejoicing comes in the Scriptures.  
**Colossians 3:16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
- E. The attribute of rejoicing comes with the trials.  
**James 1:1** James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.**2** My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,  
**1 Peter 1:6** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,  
**Colossians 1:24** I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,

## II. The aptitude of thankful prayer is persisting. V.17

This does not mean pray repetitiously or continuously without a break (**Matthew 6:7** "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. **8** "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.), but rather pray persistently (**Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8**) and regularly (**Ephesians 5:18** And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, **Philippians 4:6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; **Colossians 4:2** Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; . . . **12** Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete<sup>1</sup> in all the will of God.). Continual prayer is not prayer that prevails without interruption, but prayer that continues whenever possible. The adverb for continually (adialeptos) is used in the Greek of a hackey cough.

## III. The attitude of thankful prayer is trusting. V.18

The two previous commands deal with one's time ("always" and "continually"); this one deals with his circumstances. Christians are to give thanks to God in every circumstance of life (**Romans 8:28** And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.). God's will means joy, prayer, and thanksgiving for those who are in Christ Jesus.