

Putting Thanksgiving to Work

Colossians 3:15-17; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; November 20, 2016

Greatness and Gratitude

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. – Colossians 3:15-17

There is an argument to be made that greatness and gratefulness are necessarily linked! Gratitude has been a part of the greatness of our country.

Fighting with Thanksgiving

1. Paul is writing to a church in Colossae.
2. This church was likely a small church in a minor city in modern Turkey.
3. This church was being threatened by a (early Gnostic?) heresy that was leading believers away from faith in the sufficiency of Christ alone for salvation and life.
4. The heresy argued that what believers had in Christ was not all they needed.
5. Paul argues for the supremacy of Christ and the completion and riches we already have through faith in Christ.
6. This must be why thanksgiving plays so important a role in fighting this heresy!

Colossians 1:2-4; 1:10-12; 2:6-8; 4:2

The Bible emphasizes the importance of gratitude in many ways. – Romans 1:21

Notice in Colossians 3 that Paul refers to thanksgiving three times in three verses!

- Be thankful (15)
- Singing with thankfulness (16)
- Giving thanks through Him (17)

Ask yourself these questions:

- Is there anyone here in this body that you are not thankful for? Could your distance from others be because you are not thankful for them?
- Are you trying to worship this morning with a complaining heart? Could it be that you aren't worshipping well this morning because you aren't very thankful?
- Have you lived this week going about your business without thanking God first? What have you done this week without giving thanks?

What is gratitude?

It is the faith that sees our unworthiness, the gift of grace, and the heart of the Giver and responds from the heart with giving thanks in word and deed.

Biblical gratitude is not the ‘debtor’s ethic.’

1. Be thankful for where God has you.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. – Colossians 3:15

We must be thankful to God for those God has put in our lives in order to love them!

Joseph: ‘You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.’ – Genesis 50:15-21

Ephesians: ‘Give thanks for all things’ – Ephesians 5:15-21

2. Be thankful for what God has done and is doing and will do for you.

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. – Colossians 3:16

We must be thankful to God for the gospel in order to be able to worship Him.

The Command to Praise and Give Thanks – Psalm 100:1-5

Paul: ‘He who did not spare His own Son ...’ – Romans 8:32

3. Be thankful for the power/resources available to you.

Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. – Colossians 3:17

We must be thankful to God for all He has provided for us in order to pursue holiness.

Complaining of the Israelites for Lack of Provision or Inadequate Provision – Numbers 21:4-9 (see John 3:14-16)

Paul: ‘I can do all things through Him who strengthens me’ – Philippians 4:11-13

Peter: ‘all we need for life and godliness’ – 2 Peter 1:2-3

Lord Jesus: ‘Sufficient Grace’ – 2 Corinthians 12:9-10