

**Colossians 3: 12-17; “Giving Thanks to God” (Part 2), A Thanksgiving Sermon
prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall, Delivered on November 23rd, 2014,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

We have been seeing, from our sermon this morning, that there are definite connections between our becoming obedient in all areas of our life, with our being thankful to God. If we are thankful to God for His having given us grace to bring us our salvation, through our having believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; then as the Elect of God we will seek to put on all the graces that He gives to us. We will be those who definitely and deliberately put on tender mercies towards people around us; believer and unbeliever alike. We will, if we are thankful, show kindness, be humble, not be self-assertive and impatient. We will be those who are thoughtful. We will bear with one another and forgive one another; even as Christ has forgiven us. We will put on love which is called “the bond of perfection” in verse 14. And we will let the peace of God rule in our hearts. We come to know, over time, that we will either let this peace rule in our hearts, or we will be agitated by sins of various sorts in our hearts. And the Christian need not let this happen. If he or she is thankful, it means that they can be satisfied, and they can rest satisfied with Christ. They clothe themselves with Christ's grace and wait upon Him in faith for every good thing. Then they can begin to look outside of themselves to see how they might help others to understand this dynamic life-changing truth. They truly have the strength to help others around them.

You need to know, that your faith and having everything necessary to sustain your heart, does not rest upon what other people around you are doing. It does not rest upon whether they are treating you right or treating you wrong. You have a strength of grace, residing in your heart, that does not come from what other people do, or what other people say. Yours is the strength and encouragement of Christ's presence with you. Your faith and the good things that Christ can do for you are enough to keep you spiritually alive. His grace is enough to keep you moving forward in obedience, if you are thankful to God. But even though this is true, this does not mean that you do not need to keep taking precautions to deal with the discouragements that might come to you when others around you are disappointing your hopes. Your thankfulness must be on-going. And this is what we want to look at this afternoon. So let us continue on, now, to look at the other two ways that God will know if we are truly thankful people. I said to you in the first sermon, the 1st way that God will know if you are truly thankful is when you clothe yourself with the graces of His Spirit. The 2nd way is when you will let the peace of God rule in your heart.

And now, the 3rd way that God will know if you are truly thankful is if you will let His Word richly dwell in your heart. (Verse 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.” Now Paul is exhorting all believers to a duty which they should perform, out of a thankful heart, each and every day in relation to Him. He is saying, that in cultivating your own acts of devotion to God, by having Christ's word dwelling in your heart richly, you will also be taking into account other believers in the body of Christ. It is out of a thankful heart that you should let the Word of Christ, the Word concerning Christ, dwell in you richly. It is when you let the Word concerning your Savior and Lord dwell richly in you in all wisdom, that you will also then begin to have the opportunity and the ability to build up and strengthen other believers. To let this Word of Christ dwell richly in you is to think upon Christ's words and His example, as they are recorded in the gospels. You think deeply about the way that He lived His life when He walked here upon the earth, and you will find that by faith Christ will be living and speaking to you in your soul,

through His Word, each and every day. This mediation upon the word, and this storing of the word in your heart will help you over time, to draw closer to other believers so that you can begin to admonish them in the good and right way. As you do this, you will find that by the Holy Spirit's power and working, that you will begin to lovingly build up other believers in their faith as well. To admonish means to instruct or to encourage; to warn or to reprove. In the context of the particular verse that we are studying (Verse 16) it is most likely that Paul means the first two of these definitions of admonition, without excluding the others. He is primarily speaking of instruction and encouragement.

Now; it is interesting how the Apostle Paul tells the believers in Colosse to admonish one another. He tells them to admonish one another in their public worship in the psalms and the hymns and the spiritual songs that they sing. Not everyone is called to be a preacher, but all Christians can teach and admonish one another in this way without ever having the gift of teaching. They are to sing the songs of Zion with grace working in their hearts. This is very interesting indeed. I believe that this means that it is a very important thing; the kind of music that a church promotes. Does the kind of music that is played, and the singing that is taking place, not only bring glory and praise to God, but does it instruct and encourage in the sense of the promotion of the spiritual truth of Christ and the Scriptures, between believers? I do not believe that this verse is only referring to our singing in the public worship of God. It is also referring to our being able to sing and communicate instruction to others in our families, and in our friendships with other believers. Are we truly thankful to God for the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs which we sing here on Sunday; the songs which are so full of the holy truth about God and Christ? Are these songs and hymns and spiritual songs so richly dwelling in your heart, that you are not only pleasing God with the private meditation of songs in your heart, but you are also letting these songs overflow into your interaction with family members and friends? Are you instructing (admonishing) other believers by the songs of your life? Are you instructing the people who you are regularly with; on any given day of your life; as to what the song of your life really is? It is Christ. The verse says that you do this by the music that you sing in your heart; in the music that you sing to others, and with others. Is Christ your song? This is a matter of practical godliness.

A good hymnbook is a friend to holiness. But a good hymnbook is also the way to promote spiritual growth in others, if the truth is richly dwelling in your heart. This means that it is not only important that you should meditate upon the Word of God day and night as it says in Psalm 1, verse 2. "But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law he meditates day and night." In order to have the Word concerning Christ richly dwell in your heart, you must reflect upon it, ponder over it, pray over it, and sing it. Even as you have consciously brought the truth of Christ into your heart, you must learn to sing it out. Christ must become the song of your life. This song should be speaking to you in your heart, and you should want to speak it out to others. The way that you do this, is that we should attempt to commit verses of the Bible and the hymns that you sing to memory, as it says in Joshua 1: 8. "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate upon it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it." "For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." For the words of God's word "not to depart from your mouth." This will probably mean that you will be repeating them to yourself over and over again. Your lips will be moving as your minds think over the exact wording of the Scriptures, or a Scripture song. Your mind and your hearts will be meditating upon the truth as you commit the verse to memory. And after a while the truth itself finds a place to reside in your heart. Your mind and heart are also thinking about who you could share this truth with; who would benefit from it.

It "richly dwells" in you when you give the word concerning Christ the highest place in your thoughts; not some place in the closet of your mind. You consciously meet with your Lord Jesus

Christ in the living room, the dining room, the kitchen and the bedroom of your heart house. You have His Word richly dwelling there; ready at hand, for its being thought of, and considered, in relation to everything that you do and say. Are you thankful to God that He has saved you and given you grace? Are you thankful that the Holy Spirit is helping you on, to live the Christian life? Then bring the Word of Christ; the precious, powerful, beautiful, convicting, cleansing, and encouraging Word of Christ into your conscious consideration and meditation every day. Don't fill you heart continually with worldly songs and worldly messages. Fill it with the word concerning Christ. Then when Christ's words richly dwell within in you, you will be thankful for how God is working in your life and in your relationships with other believers around you. And that thankfulness will motivate you to think more about what you can practically do for your Lord to serve Him. It has this good effect; that your heart and mind become a storehouse for others. You will grow wise in your experience of the truth, and you will be able to teach and help others into the truth of how they should live. You can do this by your words of admonition and you can do this by your songs. You will be able to do it out of love for them as persons, and out of your love for Christ and His truth. Oh, how I plead with you to learn this way of glorifying God by singing with grace in your hearts, not only here in church, but also singing the hymns of Zion in your family devotions, and in your personal devotion, to God during the day. Fill your mind and heart with the good word of God. Teach others of the precious and powerful grace of God at work in your soul through what you sing to the Lord. This is how the Lord and others will know that you are a truly thankful person.

And then 4th – God will know that you are a truly thankful person if you will give thanks in whatever you do in word or deed. (Verse 17)

“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Giving thanks is here shown to be the right and appropriate thing to do in whatever situation that you are in. Giving thanks brings glory to God because it declares back to Him in prayer, how good He has been in the way that He has led you, and how much He has assisted you. In all the situations that you find yourself in, in whatever you are doing, in whatever you are saying, your focus ought to be two-fold. You ought to be doing whatever you are doing, in the name of the Lord Jesus. And, you ought to be giving thanks that He is One who gives you the grace to do or say anything right; anything of lasting value, anything that is glorifying to Him, and edifying and helpful to others. In Ephesians 4: 20 it is worded in this way. “...giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”. Every Christian ought to be giving thanks in everything and for everything that they are experiencing, as well as being thankful continually in the attitude of their mind. This can only happen when you are consciously thinking about the name of the Lord Jesus, who is your helper in everything. Listen to the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 1: 12. “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enable me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” “And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”

Ask yourself this afternoon if you see all the good things that you say and do for Christ, as depending upon His grace entirely? Do you see your very faith, your very love as something which comes from His grace? Do you see the Lord Jesus as the One who “enables you”? The Apostle Paul did and He gave thanks. It is in the name of the Lord Jesus that we frame all of our prayers. We often end our prayers with the phrase, “In Jesus name”. And this is right because all that you pray for and all that you ask for, in your requests, must come through Jesus to the Father; and it all must be in line with His word and His will. Our verse 17 in our text tells us that whatever we do in word or deed should be done, “in the name of the Lord Jesus”. This tells us that to speak our words and to do our deeds to the glory of God, both require Christ's

prayer. And this should lead us to the conscious desire and prayer on our part, that what we are doing and saying would be pleasing to Him, first of all. That whatever things we say and do, they would honor God, and bring glory to Him. If we learn the duty of giving thanks in whatever we say and do, it will truly be a help to us in living righteously in the sight of God and men. It will keep us humble. It will keep us hopeful.

People who are thankful to God in this way become more holy people as time goes by. Unbelieving people who have known the way of the truth and yet did not act upon it are described for us in this way in Romans chapter 1, verse 21: “Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were they thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened.” “Professing to be wise, they became fools.” This is what I pray would never happen to any of us. The knowledge of God, and the knowledge of His Word, and the knowledge of what Christ has done for us, and what the Spirit is doing for us who believe, ought to lead us to be thankful; thankful in everything and for everything so that God would be glorified in us and by us. Let us apply this to ourselves in closing by asking this question: Am I thankful? And the ask yourself further: Do I thank the Father, every day, for giving me His dear and only Son? And then this will be followed with this prayer: Then Lord, let me serve you in every word that I speak and every good deed that I will do. Amen.