

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

November 25, 2020

Gratitude

“...pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

In the last few days, several members of my family were driving or flying to be here for Thanksgiving. I don't think I ever fail to pray for their safe travel and arrival. However, it occurred to me that I often fail to thank God after they arrive.

Apparently, long ago, a preacher used a clever device to call this common failure to church members' attention. On the first page of the church bulletin, the headline read: **“9 lost at sea!”** That caused panic in the church because 11 members had taken a cruise and asked for prayers for a safe trip. However, only two asked the church to thank God for their safe return. *“The others must have been lost,”* the report said.

We are much better at praying *for* safe travel than thanking God after we safely arrive. It is easier, when we are fearful, to ask God to keep us from harm than to thank God for keeping us from harm after the danger has passed. In fact, we are better at asking for things than we are at thanking God *for* things. Yet, in thanks, it is always better to give than to receive. Not only is gratitude good and honorable, it also has several benefits. For example:

1. You are doing something most people appreciate. So many people never express their thanks.
2. Thanking people gets your mind off of you and onto the other person. That's always good.
3. Thanking God reminds you of your dependence on God. You have to pray to thank him.
4. An attitude of gratitude keeps you smiling & optimistic. It really works.
5. An attitude of gratitude heads off discouragement. It's hard to stay sad or depressed when you are counting your blessings.

6. And... an attitude of gratitude makes you more fit to live with. Entitled people are not much fun to be around.

When you show some kindness to someone but that person never responds with thanks, it makes you less inclined to help them again. Yes, I know. We should *“do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return...”* (Luke 6:35). But subconsciously, that's a lot harder to do if the person you're helping can't find it in their heart to say, “thank you.” Regardless of how we feel toward those who do not express their gratitude, those who *do* are beloved.

Of course, giving thanks to God is most important. And, as the verse above says, thanks is not circumstantial: *“...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”* In the past, I've shared a couple of classic illustrations. Here they are again, for you to ponder as we approach Thanksgiving Day:

Matthew Henry was once attacked by thieves and robbed. He wrote in his diary: “Let me be thankful. First, that I was never robbed before. Second, although they took my purse, they didn't take my life. Third, although they took my all, it was not much. Fourth, let me be thankful because it was I who was robbed and not I who did the robbing.”

During the 30 years war, in 1636 a preacher named Martin Rinkert, in a single year, buried 5,000 people on the church building grounds — about *15 a day*. In the middle of all that, he wrote a children's table hymn: “Now thank we all our God/ With hearts and hands and voices/ Who wondrous things has done/ In whom the world rejoices.”

Now, go ye and be thankful.

News Update

We received a message from Nita this morning that Al Sellgren's surgery went well and that he is home, recuperating. Pray he heals quickly.

As of about 1 PM today (Wednesday) we have no further word on Dan Singleton or Dennis McAdams condition. Continue to pray for both of them.

We will not be meeting in the building this Sunday so please livestream the service at 10:30 AM. The elders are in the process of considering our options, as we look at the situation from various perspectives. We'll keep you posted as things develop.

Correction: in the article on the Christian who is in space, I mistakenly referred to him as “Warren” Glover for some reason. His name is *Victor* Glover. My apologies.