

BE YE THANKFUL

Jon Macon

Colossian 3:15 says, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; *and be ye thankful.*” Christians certainly *should* have thankful hearts. And from the abundance of our thankful hearts should come thankful words (Matt 12:34; Luke 6:45). Ephesians 4:29 says, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” Our mouths should not produce “filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: *but rather giving of thanks*” (Eph 5:4). Philippians 4:6 says, “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving* let your requests be made known unto God.” How thankful should we be? Ephesians 5:20 says, “*Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*” and 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, “*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*”

The ten lepers

Sadly, not all men are thankful like they should be. And not all *Christians* are as thankful as they should be. We read in Luke 17:11-19 about ten lepers, who had enough faith in Christ to beg him for mercy, and they were then miraculously healed. But were they thankful for the great blessing they received? “And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. *And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.* And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.” The only one of the ten lepers who returned with thanksgiving was not even a Jew! We must avoid falling into the same trap of being unthankful. When 2 Timothy 3:1-2 warns of the “perilous times” that do come, one of the characteristics of such times is that men become “unthankful.” Romans 1:18-22 says ungodly and unrighteous men, who *know* they have a Creator they should seek and serve, decide not to glorify God as God and “*neither were thankful.*” Knowing “that the Lord he is God,” that “it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves,” that “we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture,” is the basis of our serving Him with gladness and entering into His gates with thanksgiving (Psalm 100). Psalm 95:1-3 says, “O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. *Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.*”

BE YE THANKFUL

(continued)

Counting our blessings

Without question, Christians should be the most thankful people on earth. Acts 17:25 reminds us that it is our God who “*giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.*” In 1 Corinthians 4:7, we are asked what we have that we did not receive. The answer is *nothing*. Our life, our health, our abilities, our opportunities to serve God and do good works, everything we have we received from God. James 1:17 says, “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*” The sacrifice of Christ for our sins, and the opportunity to obey God and be freed from sin, and have hope of eternal life is something to be thankful for! Romans 6:17-18 says, “*But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*” Verse 23 adds, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Ephesians 1:3 says, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*” All spiritual blessings! And God provides Christians with so many opportunities and also the means to be able to do good works for His glory, which is cause for much thanksgiving. “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (as it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God” (2 Cor 9:8-12). And, ultimately, we are able to triumph over sin through Christ: “*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Cor 15:57).

Encouragement from God’s word to be thankful

Take the time to survey through the following references in the Book of Psalms to encourage us to be more thankful: Psalms 69:30; 75:1; 79:13; 92:1-2; 105:1-2; 106:1; 107:1,21-22; 118:1,29; 136:1-3,26; 140:13. And there are many others not referenced here. In the New Testament, Hebrews 13:15 says, “*By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*” Colossians 2:6-7 says, “*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*” And chapter 3:17 of the same book says, “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*”