“IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS”
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Introduction:

1. Paul’s closing admonitions in his epistles often contain overlooked gems.
   “Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:16-18).

2. There are many things which separate men from animals:
   a. The ability to reason.
   b. The appreciation of beautiful things.
   c. A sense of humor.
   d. A spirit of gratitude.

3. Many are not thankful for their blessings.
   a. Every good gift comes from God (James 1:17).
   b. All of us owe much to parents and grandparents, teachers, elders, preachers, role models and good friends and neighbors.
   c. How often do we take time to say “thank you?”

Discussion:

I. THE BIBLE COMMANDS THE GIVING OF THANKS,

   A. Levites were appointed to give thanks (1 Chron. 16:4; 23:27-30).

   B. The Psalms are filled with admonitions to be thankful.
      “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations” (Psa. 100:4,5).

      “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Oh, give thanks to the God of gods! For His mercy endures forever. Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! for His mercy endures forever” (Psa. 136:1-3).

   C. The New Testament also abounds in admonitions to be thankful.
“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6).

“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” (Heb. 13:15).

II. INGRATITUDE IS A MARK OF REBELLION AGAINST GOD.

A. Ingratitude was a mark of the Gentiles’ decline into depravity:

“...because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened...” (Rom. 1:21).

B. Ingratitude is a mark of the apostasy of the last days:

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy...” (2 Tim. 3:1,2).

C. The healing of the ten lepers shows the tendency of man to be ungrateful (Luke 17:11-19).

III. WE TEND TO COMPLAIN MORE THAN WE GIVE THANKS.

A. We complain about our nation and its government.

1. We are unhappy with our president and our Congress, but “we the people” elected them and have the right to change them.
2. Few nations in history have enjoyed the freedom and prosperity we have had.
3. A radio commentator used to say, “Pick a better country.”
4. Millions continue to come, legally and illegally.
5. There is a reason millions come and few leave.
6. The United States is one of the few nations that has a national holiday to thank God for His blessings.

B. We complain about the church.

1. Members often spend more time in criticizing than in being thankful.
2. Can you find a church that is more:
a. Bible oriented?
b. Christ centered?
c. Generous in giving?
d. Gracious and loving in a true sense?

C. We complain about our job.
   1. Millions are out of work and would love to have any job.
   2. Our poverty level is the wealth level in two thirds of the world.

D. We complain about our possessions and want more.
   1. Our homes have electricity, running water, central heat and air conditioning.
   2. Most of us have at least two late model cars or trucks.
   3. Millions do not know where their next meal is coming from.
   4. Millions are homeless, without any hope of any improvement.

E. We complain about our families, but what if we had no family?

F. It is time for us to count our blessings and give thanks to God!!

Conclusion:
   1. A poet wrote:
      Count your gains instead of your losses;
      Count your blessings instead of your crosses.

      Count your joys instead of your woes;
      Count your friends instead of your foes.

      Count your smiles instead of your tears;
      Count your courage instead of your fears.

      Count your full years instead of your lean;
      Count the kind deeds instead of the mean.

      Count your health instead of your wealth;
      Count on God instead of yourself!

   2. God has abundantly blessed His people and will abundantly bless them,

   3. How wonderful to have what we have and the promise of Heaven as well!!

   4. Are you thankful to God for what He has given to you?