

Sermon Outlines

Thanksgiving

2 Corinthians 9:15 - "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

The Christian life has been called "a life of continual thanksgiving" ~ not simply thanksgiving at certain times but "continual" ~ "giving thanks always" (Eph. 5:20). In order for this we must realize what we have. St. Paul emphasizes thanksgiving throughout his writings and uses the phrase in our text, "Thanks be to God" four times (1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14; 8:16; 9:15). All are veritable outbursts of gratitude. Even in Ephesians, where he was dealing with contradiction and opposition at their height, Paul had time and inclination to praise. Let us, therefore, look at *what* and *why*, so that we, too, may live this life of "continual thanksgiving."

I. The Divine Gift

1. *What?* Cf. John 4:10, "the gift of God"; Hebrews 6:4, "the heavenly gift"; with "his unspeakable gift" here.
 - (a) Christ ~ Eph. 4:7; Rom. 5:15, 17.
 - (b) The Holy Spirit ~ Acts 2:38.
 - (c) Both are to be received and possessed.
2. *What kind?* "His" ~ "unspeakable"
 - a) Divine ~ nothing less ~ Jn. 3:16; 2 Cor. 8:9.
 - b) Inexpressible ~ indescribable related to no other experience or possession.

II. Gifts in the Divine Gift

1. *Loyalty*
 - a) Surrender ~ 2 Cor. 2:14, R.V. ~ "leadeth us in triumph" ~ thought is of captives led in triumphal procession.
 - b) Service ~ Rom. 6:17 ~ "ye have obeyed."
2. *Love*
 - a) Thought ~ 2 Cor. 8:16, ~ consideration of others.
 - b) Action ~ 2 Cor. 8:17 ~ sympathetic cooperation with others.
 - Cf. whole chapter, especially verse 9 ~ God's doing.
3. *Life*
 - a) Present Power ~ from dominion of sin (Rom. 7:25).
 - b) Future Victory ~ from death (1 Cor. 15:57).
4. *Labour - 1 Timothy 1:12*
 - a) Equipped
 - b) Recognized
 - c) Authorized

Conclusion:

1. *The Spirit of a Thankful Life*
 - a) Thankfulness in heart
 - b) Thanksgiving in words
 - c) Thanks-living in actions
2. *The Strength of a Thankful Life*
 - a) Maintains fellowship ~ by the sweetening of prayer and the quickening of love.
 - b) Preserves consistency ~ against murmuring and against pride.
 - c) Energizes sympathy ~ freely received, so freely given.

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3. *The Splendour of a Thankful Life*
 - a) God's command obeyed (1 Thess. 5:18)
 - b) God's gift recognized (Col. 1:12)
 - c) God's glory maintained (2 Cor. 4:15)

To “thank” we must “receive”. Have we received Christ?

. . . . W.H. Griffith Thomas, D.D.