**Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**1 Thessalonians 5:14-22**

**Sunday Morning**

**November 27, 2022**

**1 Thessalonians 5:14-22**

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. 15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. 16 Rejoice always,

17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.

Saints, Gratitude comes easily when everything is going our way, but how about when the opposite happens?

**“In Everything Give Thanks”**

Saints, this includes both good and hard times. But when we don’t understand why God allows us to go through suffering and trials, we may let our situation extinguish a grateful spirit.

Instead of rejoicing and praising God for who He is and what He’s done for us, we focus on our pain and confusion and begin to doubt the Lord and His Word. However, when we choose to be thankful in every situation, despite our feelings, we’ll reap many benefits.

There are two prominent passages that speak about gratitude in the believer’s life.

**1 Thessalonians 5:18**

“In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Saints, the Lord desires that we have a grateful spirit no matter what our circumstances. Even in the midst of pain or hardship, we can always thank Him for our salvation, His presence, and His work in our lives.

**Ephesians 5:20**

“Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.”

Although we are told to thank the Lord

**“For All Things”**

this never includes anything that is contrary to God’s nature or His commands. However, we can thank Him for whatever He allows in our lives that is according to His sovereign will, knowing that He promises to work everything for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

**Romans 8:28**

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose”

Saints, we won’t always see the good immediately or even during our lifetime, but in heaven, it will all make sense. Until then, gratitude demonstrates our trust in the Lord.

**Why Should we be Grateful to God in Everything?**

**1. It keeps us continually aware that we are Walking in His Presence, which contributes to a Godly Life**

Saints, as believers, we will never walk alone because the Holy Spirit lives within us. Gratitude reminds us of His presence and motivates us to respond in a godly manner by seeking to view our pain and trouble from His perspective, perceive how He is working through the situation, and rely upon His promises.

No matter what happens throughout the day, we can thank Him, knowing that our all-loving, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient God is helping us walk through it.

**Omnipresent**

God Fills All Space. He’s Everywhere at Once

**Omnipotent**

God is All Powerful. He’s All Mighty

**Omniscient**

God is All Knowing. His Thoughts Are Higher Than Ours

**2. Gratitude motivates us to look for the Lord’s purpose in everything that happens**

Saints, unexpected trials or suffering may cause us to question God

or feel as though He’s forgotten us, but He has promised to bring good from even our worst experiences.

Whether we understand or not, we can rely on His trustworthiness and thank Him for the good He’s promised to produce in our lives according to His will.

**1 Timothy 1:15-16**

15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

**Psalm 125:1**

“Those who trust in the LORD Are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever.”

**3. Being Grateful brings us into Submission to God’s will when we’re Suffering Pain and Heartache.**

Saints, in the midst of emotional or physical pain, we may not feel grateful to God, but that’s when we should start to express it verbally. As we keep thanking Him, eventually our feelings will begin to match our words.

God knows the weakness of human emotions and understands that our thanks may just be words in the beginning, but He honors our obedience in choosing to express gratitude. Look at Paul and Silas’ reward for Praising God during severe trials!

**Acts 16:16-34**

16 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."

18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. 19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

20 And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; 21 and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." 22 Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods.

23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.

28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." 29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.

34 Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

**4. Being Thankful reminds us of our Continual Dependence Upon the Lord**

Saints, God despises a spirit of independence that denies our need of Him, exalts self-sufficiency, and leads to ingratitude. In reality, we are all dependent upon Him for every breath we take, but may not realize it until we face a situation that we are powerless to overcome or change.

Adversity shows us our weakness and drives us to the Lord. A mature believer lives in absolute dependence upon God every day and rejoices in his heart with a grateful and trusting spirit.

**Psalm 37:39-40**

39 But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; He is their strength in the time of trouble. 40 And the LORD shall help them and deliver them; He shall deliver them from the wicked, And save them, Because they trust in Him.

**5. Gratitude helps us Trust the Lord when we don’t Understand Why**

Saints, although God hasn’t promised to explain why we go through pain or hardship, He has promised to be with us and enable us to face it.

Thanksgiving reminds us that we don’t have to understand the situation; we just have to be obedient in the process.

**6. Thanksgiving is essential for rejoicing in the midst of our suffering**

Saints, there’s no way we can “rejoice always” without giving thanks in everything. Although the pain may be so penetrating that we cannot feel joy at the moment, we can choose to express gratitude with our lips until it becomes a reality in our hearts.

**1 Thessalonians 5:16, 18**

16 “Rejoice always” 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

God hears and understands the depth of our agony just as He understood Jesus’ pain when He cried out…

**Matthew 27:46**

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

**7. Gratitude to God in difficult times gives our Witness a Greater Impact**

Saints, our painful experiences and grateful response allow us to help those who are hurting in the same way. By sharing our struggles with others who don’t understand what God is doing, our witness for Christ becomes more powerful.

**1 Peter 4:12-13**

12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

**8. Thankfulness Displaces Anxiety with Peace**

Saints, the

**“Greek word for peace, *eirene*, means to bind together**

When we keep thanking the Lord in the midst of sorrow, loss, and heartache, we are bound to Him, and His peace fills us as our anxieties crumble.

The pain and difficulty may remain, but we’ve changed inside. This kind of peace is only available to those who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Although anxiety may suddenly come upon us at the moment, we don’t have to stay in that state. If we keep praying and giving thanks to God, His peace will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus!

**Philippians 4:6-7**

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

**9. Thanksgiving focuses our attention on God rather than our circumstances**

Saints, if we fix our eyes on the difficulty, the pain becomes unbearable, peace eludes us, and the situation seems hopeless. But thanksgiving shifts our focus to the Lord and reminds us of what we can know for certain:

**We’re not alone!**

**Hebrews 13:5**

“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

**God is with us!**

**Matthew 28:20**

“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.”

**He loves us!**

**1 John 3:16**

“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

**We’re Eternally Secure**

**John 10:27-30**

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are one."

**He will Bring us Through**

**James 1:12**

“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

**God will turn this experience into something profitable in our lives**

**Romans 8:27-30**

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

**In Closing:**

Saints, Gratitude energizes us physically, emotionally, and spiritually in difficult times.Pain, trouble, and disappointment drain us, but trusting God, focusing on Him, and thanking Him revitalize us. It’s His presence within us that renews us physically,

spiritually, and emotionally so we can keep going.

**1. When adversity or suffering comes into your life, do you tend to judge God by the circumstance or judge the situation by what Scripture has said about Him?**

**2. How would each perspective affect your gratitude and your ability to trust the Lord?**

**3. How would a life of consistent gratitude to God equip you for the most difficult moments you might encounter?**

**Let’s Pray**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**