

Christ Community Covenant Church
Thanksgiving in all things
Pastor Dave Scherrer - November 30, 2014
Thanks Service

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

The easy things are easy. Pizza, puppies, chocolate, smooth jazz, things like that that make us happy, those are easy things to be thankful for. And, it is good to be thankful for good things in our lives. This simple discipline is often overlooked in our busy and entitled culture. We get to thinking we deserve all these things so rather than have a spirit of thanksgiving we have a spirit of wanting more. Of greed instead of gratitude. Funny how that works in the fallen human soul.

But there is another form of gratitude that is a much tougher lesson to learn and discipline to live into. This is the idea of being joyful, thankful for the difficult things.

Remember in the book of James, where the brother of Christ writes;

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

We give gratitude not for what we have now that is passing away. We have gratitude now for the grace to overcome a world that is falling apart at the seams. We give gratitude for what we are promised when we have persevered to the end.

The best place to see Jesus showing us the way is in the Upper Room where he, ***took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19)***

Christ gave thanks knowing that in only two or three hours he would be suffering a horrific torment and death. He was able to give thanks not because he was looking to the comfort of the near future but because he had his eyes on what the near future bought for the Kingdom.

The Greek word for "thanks" in this verse is "***eucharisteo***." The root word of eu***charist***eo is ***charis***, meaning "grace." Jesus took the bread and saw it as grace and gave thanks. He took the bread and knew it to be a gift and gave thanks. Eucharisteo, thanksgiving, envelopes the Greek word for grace, charis. But it also holds its derivative, the Greek word ***chara***, meaning "joy." Charis. Grace. Eucharisteo. Thanksgiving. Charity. Joy.

Jesus' thanks was not based on his present circumstances. He was about to endure the worst possible horror. He felt ***thankful*** to the Father for the ***grace*** (the ***charis***) and glory that was coming because of the cross and this gave him ***joy***. Eucharisteo.

So what is your future joy? The very best possible future you could ever imagine is yours for the asking—if you will believe it. Here is a short list:

- You will have the free gift of complete forgiveness of all your sins extending into forever (Romans 6:23).
- You will never have to merit your justification by keeping the law (Galatians 2:16).
- You will have all your real needs provided while on earth (Philippians 4:19).
- You will receive all the grace you need at all times so that you will abound in every good work God has for you (2 Corinthians 9:8).
- God will complete the good work he began in you (Philippians 1:6).
- You will be raised from the dead and never, ever die again (1 Corinthians 15:52–53).

- That means someday soon you will see Jesus, be with him (2 Corinthians 5:8), and be like him (1 John 3:2).
- In that day you will know for the first time full, unpolluted joy (Psalm 16:11).
- You will be completely free from all corruption (Romans 8:21).
- You will have God forever (1 Peter 3:18) as your exceeding joy (Psalm 43:4).

And that's just a small sampling! The joy set before you is the same joy the Father set before His Son, because you are an heir of the kingdom with him (Romans 8:17).

Celebrate God with me. Let's continue with our sharing or gratitude to God . . .