

Thanksgiving

Sermon Road Map
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Philippians 4:4-20
November 25, 2020

The open secret of Thanks-living in Christ Jesus

- A common question: *What are you thankful for this Thanksgiving?*
- A woman with an uncommon answer. *I'm thankful for the pandemic. It canceled our Thanksgiving gathering.* Her daughter, who played an integral part in their Thanksgiving, died in April. The pandemic would start a new tradition.
 - ♦ Note the psychological wisdom of a changed focus to gratitude.
 - ♦ What's the missing - the unstated ? God. Jesus Christ.
- *Now Thank We All Our God* - was written for time like ours, only worse!
 - ♦ Martin Rinkart was the only pastor left in Eilenburg during the 30 Years' War.
 - ♦ A walled city - afflicted with deadly pestilence & famine - plundering armies
 - ♦ In a 2 year span 8,000 died, most buried in ditches, without a committal
 - ♦ Rinkart conducted up to 70 committals/day. 4,500 over all, including his wife.
 - ♦ Response: his *German Te Deum*. Why? What got into him? Christ!

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I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, while being full or hungry, while having plenty or not enough. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.

Paul reveals 5 secrets - 5 insights for living a rich thank filled life in Christ Jesus.

❖ *Rejoice in the Lord always! I will say it again: Rejoice!*

- Not an order! A gospel imperative - invitation, exhortation, encouragement
- But, Why? How? *The Lord is near.*
- Our gracious Lord is at our side: forgiving, renewing, protecting, leading
- His coming is near - at just the right time for you & me. We are not alone.
- We're active, but not in charge - imposing our will. In Christ, gentle & rejoicing.

❖ *Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*

- Worry isn't caused by outside threats of fears.
- Worry = I want it my way. I need to make it happen. I can't rely on others.
 - ♦ Worry comes from trying to be *the master of my fate*. I don't trust God/others.
 - ♦ Worry doesn't give you control. It makes life miserable and often worse.
 - ♦ Sermon on the Mount: ...*seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*
- Same secret: Seek God's active rule in your life as your King. Seek in prayer.
 - ♦ Prayer: an act of **worship**: treat God as God; an act of **faith/reliance** on God.
 - ♦ Putting truth into practice, focus on reality, realigns thoughts/feelings/hope
 - ♦ Thankful: for who God is - claiming us as his own - his promised & activity
 - ♦ Prayers, steeped in the Father's character and care, provide:
 - gospel uplift - breathe new life in us that breaks out in songs of Thanksgiving
 - a change in us - how we see reality - guards our hearts/minds from fear/worry.
 - God's peace filling us - restoring us in health and wholeness in Christ.

- ❖ Fill our hearts and minds - focus on God's good things - real treasures
 - *what is true, ...honorable, ...right, ...pure, ...lovely, ...commendable, ...excellent, and praiseworthy, think about these things.*
 - Learned in Scripture. Known and experienced in the life a mature believer.
 - *You are what you eat. What your mind consumes, you become.*
 - A life of Thanks-living, walking with our God, full and giving thanks
- ❖ Discovering true and lasting contentment is found in Christ Jesus.
 - Consumables satisfy for a moment. In time, often consume us.
 - Youth, beautify, fame, wealth, health - don't last.
 - Only Jesus Christ our Lord truly satisfies today, tomorrow, and forever.
 - Relying on the Rock, Jesus Christ, we stand strong again life's challenges.
 - Jesus, like training coach, selects the exercises in life that strengthen us in him.
 - Content in Christ, we confidently embrace trials with thanksgiving, eager to see how he will work it out and bless us and others through the exercise.
- ❖ Children of God's generosity give thanks living generously.
 - Martin Rinkart was known for charity even living with scarcity.
 - ◆ We have new hearts and minds born of God's generosity in Jesus & providing
 - ◆ We know he gives us, so we can be generous like our Heavenly Father.
 - ◆ We know he provides for us. Content to wait on him, we delight to care.
 - The Philippians: *In a severe test of trouble, their overflowing joy and their deep poverty overflowed into an abundance of their generosity.* 2 Cor. 8:2
 - ◆ This is **not** giving because it makes you feel good!
 - ◆ Living and breathing the truths and promises of God - overflowing with thanks they looked for ways to serve God so Paul could share the gospel with others.

Thanksgiving is a vital part of every life lived in the Good News of Jesus. As we stop to say thank you to God, we focus on who he is, what he has done for us and to us, and what he promises to daily do for us. Thanksgiving filled with the gospel creates the environment we live in and sharpens our focus, producing even more thanks giving and thanks-living. This is the

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Explore it.