

"ThanksLiving"

I Thessalonians 5:18

Let them see Jesus!!!

November 23, 2008 RKS

i. **Pray** –

ii. **Introduction** – It's Thanksgiving time! Time for turkey and stuffing and punkin pie. Time for family and friends to gather to give thanks to God for His goodness, for the glorious blessings He has poured out in our lives!

Thanksgiving is a day - one day of celebration. ThanksLiving is a lifestyle - giving thanks to God 365 days a year. What's it all about?

- I. ThanksLivers
- II. Nine Things
- III. Thank Him Anyway!

I. **ThanksLivers** –

Tony Dungy in his book, "*Quiet Strength*" tells of his first NFL head coaching assignment with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. They lost their first five games before going to Minnesota to beat the league-leading Vikings.

After the game they held team prayer in the locker room, thanking God for the win. BUT, Coach Dungy had always led his players in team prayer, before and after every game – even after every single one of his first five losses!

God blessed him to go on to lead the Indianapolis Colts to the Super Bowl – and they won!!! In the post-game TV interview, Coach Dungy gave thanks to God for the victory, giving Him all the glory! *ThanksLiving!!!*

-The Bible is full of ThanksLivers –

Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel, the Apostle Paul, our Lord Jesus Christ as well! Every one saw the almighty power of God at work in their lives.

They loved God! They trusted God! They gave God thanks! They gave Him the glory – no matter what!!!

Is ThanksLiving only for the heroes of the Bible??? **No, indeed!!!**

Reading God's Word, ThanksLiving is to be the normal lifestyle for normal people – for every person – for you and for me!

What's a ThanksLiver like? Let's see!

II. **Nine Things** –

I want to thank Charles Stanley for this outline of a life lived continually giving thanks to God:

-You will walk in His presence – living a godly life!

"And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to live in obedience to Him...

Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all He has done." (**Col 2:6-7**)

-It motivates us to look for His purpose –

Rick Warren, in his book *"The Purpose Driven Life,"* opens the chapter on "Made for a Mission" with this verse:

Jesus is praying to His heavenly Father,

"In the same way that You gave Me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world." (**Jn 17:18**)

God has a plan for your life. Just ask Him!

-It brings my will into submission to His will -

Jesus prayed just before his betrayal and crucifixion:

"Father, if You are willing, please take this cup of suffering from Me. Yet I want Your will, not mine!"

(**Lk 22:42**)

-It reminds us of our continued dependence on Him -

Tony Dungy wrote: "I don't have the strength or wisdom to get through a single day without guidance and grace from God." (*Quiet Strength*)

-It prompts us to think about our witness -

Your life is a sermon that all who know you are reading. You are a "living epistle" as Paul put it.

The ThanksLiver causes people to ask, "What do you have that brings such peace, such joy, no matter what?"

Then you can tell them - gently and gratefully!

-Drives anxiety and fear out of your life -

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God,

and the peace of God that passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (**Phil 4:6-7**)

-Keeps your focus on God in difficult circumstances -

"You [Lord] will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed [is fixed] on You, because he trusts in You, Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength!" (**Is 26:3-4**)

-It energizes you - You can sing with the psalmist:

"I will enter His gates with thanksgiving [in my heart] I will enter His courts with praise!!!" (**Psalms 100:4**)

-It makes you an attractive person -

People want to be around you! Remember how the children flocked to Jesus? And kids know a joyful, thankful spirit!!!

III. **Thank Him Anyway -**

God's Word is so emphatic, so uplifting and positive!

David rejoiced,

"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." (**Ps 34:1**)

Paul encourages us,

"Always be joyful and never stop praying. Whatever happens, keep thanking God in everything because of Jesus Christ. This is what God wants you to do!" (**I Thes 5:16-18**)

"Give thanks always for all things to God the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (**Eph 5:20**)

In everything? **For** everything? How can this be?

"We know that all things work together for good to those who love God..." (**Rom 8:28**)

[Even if we don't understand how He's going to do it!]

Our friend, Chaplain Steve Weber, in his "*Daily Encouragement*" wrote,

"Whether I am having a good day or a bad day, whether things are going well or I'm going down a rough road; whatever happens to me I am to conduct myself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ."

He is a *ThanksLiver!!!*

IV. **Close** – God's "*Unspeakable Gift*"

The deepest thanks that can ever be expressed by man was penned by the apostle Paul,

"Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift [our Lord Jesus Christ]" (**II Cor 9:15**)

"For by grace are we saved by faith... it is a gift of God..." (**Eph 2:8**)

Will you open your heart today to receive God's gift of salvation?

Will you pray with me?

"Dear Jesus, make me a ThanksLiver! I confess that I am a sinner and turn from my sinful ways.

Please forgive me as I open my heart to receive You, right this very moment, to be my Savior and my Lord. In the precious Name of Jesus, Amen!"