

Sunday, November 19, 2017—A Heart of Thanksgiving Revisited, Part 1

In 2013 Pastor Ross preached a series of messages titled "A Heart of Thanksgiving." This one-hour study is a reprisal and summation of two of those messages. Here are the notes from the original teaching.

Sunday, October 27, 2013—A Heart of Thanksgiving: Defining Our Terms

Introduction

- Two weeks ago before the Bible Conference we concluded our series of studies on the Battlefield of the Mind by looking at Philippians 4:6-8. Throughout that series I mentioned in passing the importance of the role of Thanksgiving in the battlefield of the mind, however, we did not stop to discuss it in any detail. My reasoning was that I did not want the series to get bogged down or become muddled or confused.
- What I decided to do is take a couple Sundays between the conference and the Thanksgiving Holiday to study the issue of Thanksgiving exclusively. I fear sometimes that we have superficial or even commercialized concept of Thanksgiving. A heart of Thanksgiving ought to be part of the grace life all the time and not just during certain seasons of the year.
- Philippians 4:6—we are supposed to with “thanksgiving” let our requests be made known unto God.
- So what is thanksgiving and why is so important in our lives as believers? I hope you will make a point to join us every Sunday over the next month as we consider this important subject from God’s word.

Defining Our Terms

- There is a cluster of related words used throughout the Bible to express the notion of thanksgiving.
- Thank—occurs 27 times in 26 verses in the KJB. This English word serves as the root word for all the other related words so it is a critical word to understand. *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines “thank” as: “To express **gratitude** for a favor; to make acknowledgments to one for kindness bestowed.”
 - Romans 1:8—“I thank my God”
- Thanks—occurs 73 times in 71 verses in the KJB.
- *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines “thanks” as: “generally in the plural. Expression of **gratitude**; an acknowledgment made to express a sense of favor or kindness received. **Gratitude is the feeling or sentiment excited by kindness; thanks are the expression of that sentiment.**”

Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory. 1 Cor.15. He took bread and gave thanks to God. Acts.27.”

- As the dictionary indicates, “thanks” is a noun and it denotes action. Therefore, in the Bible we find the words give, gave, giving attached to the word “thanks.”
 - Psalm 106:1—“give thanks”
 - Daniel 6:10—“gave thanks”
 - Mark 14:23—“had given thanks”
 - I Corinthians 14:6—“giving of thanks”
 - I Corinthians 14:7—“givest thanks”
 - II Corinthians 1:11—“thanks may be given”

- “Thanks” is something that needs to be given as an expression of the feeling of gratitude.

- **Thanked**—occurs 3 times in 3 verses in the KJB. Denotes the one who receives expressions of **gratitude** from another. “Having received expression of gratitude.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
 - Acts 28:15—“he thanked God”
 - Romans 6:17—“God be thanked”

- **Thankful**—occurs 3 times in 3 verses in the KJB. “**Grateful**; impressed with a sense of kindness received, and ready to acknowledge it. The Lord’s supper is to be celebrated with a thankful remembrance of his sufferings and death.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
 - Romans 1:21—“neither were thankful”
 - Colossians 3:15—“be ye thankful”

- **Thankfulness**—occurs 1 time in 1 verse in the KJB. “Expression of **gratitude**; acknowledgment of a favor. 1) **Gratitude**; a lively sense of good received.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
 - Acts 24:3—“with all thankfulness”

- **Thanksgiving**—occurs 28 times in 27 verses in the KJB. “Rendering thanks for good received. 1) The act of rendering thanks or **expressing gratitude** for favors or mercies or good.” (*Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*)
 - Psalm 26:7—“publish with the voice of thanksgiving”
 - Isaiah 51:3—“thanksgiving, and the voice of melody”
 - II Corinthians 4:15—“thanksgiving”
 - II Corinthians 9:11—“thanksgiving”

- **Thankworthy**—occurs 1 time in 1 verse in the KJB.

- I Peter 2:19—“thankworthy”
- Unthankful—occurs 2 times in 2 verses in the KJB. “Not thankful; **ungrateful**; not making acknowledgments for good received.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
 - Luke 6:35—“unthankful and to the evil”
 - II Timothy 3:2—“unthankful”
- Please note the connection in these verses between a lack of thankfulness/gratitude and evil. *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines the state of “unthankfulness” as: “Neglect or omission of acknowledgment for good received; want of a sense of kindness or benefits; **ingratitude**. **Immoderate favors breed first unthankfulness, and afterwards hate.**”
- Throughout this study I have bolded a key synonym for “thank” and all its related descriptors in each definition, the word “gratitude.” For the sake of completeness we need to define “gratitude” and its related descriptors.
- Gratitude—“An emotion of the heart, excited by a favor or benefit received; a sentiment of kindness or good will towards a benefactor; **thankfulness**. Gratitude is an agreeable emotion, consisting in or accompanied with good will to a benefactor, and a disposition to make a suitable return of benefits or services, or when no return can be made, with a desire to see the benefactor prosperous and happy. Gratitude is a virtue of the highest excellence, as it implies a feeling and generous heart, and a proper sense of duty.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
- Ingratitude—“1) Want of gratitude or sentiments of kindness for favors received; insensibility to favors, and want of a disposition to repay them; **unthankfulness**. 2) Retribution of evil for good.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
- Ungrateful—“1) Not grateful; **not feeling thankful for favors**. 2) Not making returns, or making ill returns for kindness. 3) Making no returns for culture; as an ungrateful soil. 4) Unpleasing; unacceptable. Harsh sounds are ungrateful to the ear.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
- Ungratefulness—“1) Ingratitude; want of due feelings of kindness for favors received; ill return for good. 2) Disagreeableness; unpleasing quality.” (*Webster’s 1828*)

Conclusion

- Luke 6:35—notice the connection between unthankfulness, ingratitude, and evil.
- II Timothy 3:1-7—what would you call the person described in these verses? I would call them evil. Notice that tucked within this description of the evil that will comprise the last days of the body of Christ is “unthankfulness.”

- In our next study we will demonstrate from the Word of God how unthankfulness and ingratitude are the seedbed of sin.

Sunday, November 3, 2013—A Heart of Thanksgiving: Ingratitude the Seedbed of Sin

Introduction/Review

- Last week we began a new series titled, “A Heart of Thanksgiving.” To get started, we looked at all the different words in the bible associated with thanksgiving: thank, thanks, thanked, thankful, thankfulness, thanksgiving, thankworthy, and unthankful.
 - Thank--“To express **gratitude** for a favor; to make acknowledgments to one for kindness bestowed.”
 - Thanks—“Expression of **gratitude**; an acknowledgment made to express a sense of favor or kindness received. **Gratitude is the feeling or sentiment excited by kindness; thanks are the expression of that sentiment.**
- When defined using *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* each of the English words listed above were associated with notion of “gratitude.”
 - Gratitude—“An emotion of the heart, excited by a favor or benefit received; a sentiment of kindness or good will towards a benefactor; **thankfulness**. Gratitude is an agreeable emotion, consisting in or accompanied with good will to a benefactor, and a disposition to make a suitable return of benefits or services, or when no return can be made, with a desire to see the benefactor prosperous and happy. Gratitude is a virtue of the highest excellence, as it implies a feeling and generous heart, and a proper sense of duty.”
(*Webster’s 1828*)
- So if thankfulness and thanksgiving are the same thing then unthankfulness and ingratitude would also go together. This morning we want to consider the results of ingratitude and how a lack of thankfulness is the seedbed for sin.

The Unthankful Heart

- As we observed last Sunday, the word “unthankful” appears 2 times in 2 verses in the KJB. Each time the word appears there is a clear connection between ingratitude and evil.
- Luke 6:35—notice the connection between the “unthankful” and the “evil” that is made in this verse. The fundamental problem with someone who is evil is that they are unthankful.
 - Matthew 5:44-45
- Unthankful—“Not thankful; **ungrateful**; not making acknowledgments for good received.”
(*Webster’s 1828*)

- II Timothy 3:2—in his final epistle, at the end of his life Paul tells Timothy what the last days of the dispensation of grace are going to look like. Verses 2-7 describe the condition of mankind during that time. How would you describe people that manifest the attitudes and actions described in the passage? I would describe them as “evil.” According to verse 2 they are “unthankful” or in a state of “unthankfulness.”
 - Unthankfulness--“Neglect or omission of acknowledgment for good received; want of a sense of kindness or benefits; **ingratitude. Immoderate favors breed first unthankfulness, and afterwards hate.**”
- An inability to be thankful leads to hatred towards the one bestowing kind benefits. Eventually the unthankful heart seeks to repay kind benefits with evil.
 - Ingratitude—“1) Want of gratitude or sentiments of kindness for favors received; insensibility to favors, and want of a disposition to repay them; unthankfulness. 2) **Retribution of evil for good.**” (*Webster’s 1828*)
 - Ungrateful—“1) Not grateful; not feeling thankful for favors. 2) **Not making returns, or making ill returns for kindness.** 3) Making no returns for culture; as an ungrateful soil. 4) **Unpleasing; unacceptable. Harsh sounds are ungrateful to the ear.**” (*Webster’s 1828*)
 - Ungratefulness—“1) Ingratitude; want of due feelings of kindness for favors received; ill return for good. 2) **Disagreeableness; unpleasing quality.**” (*Webster’s 1828*)
- Romans 1:19-20—the gentiles knew who God was because God has showed himself unto them. One of the ways he did this was through his creation.
- Romans 1:21-23—notice the degenerative spiral in this verse.
 - The Gentiles knew who God was
 - They become unthankful not glorifying God as God *which leads to*
 - Becoming vain in their imaginations *which leads to*
 - Their foolish hearts being darkened *which leads to*
 - Professing themselves to be wise *which leads to*
 - The transferring to the glory due to the uncorruptible God into the worship of images made after corruptible things.
- Romans 1:24-32—all of the evil described in this passage finds its point of origin in verse 21 in their lack of thankfulness and glorifying God as God. Consider all the evil that resulted from a lack of thanksgiving.

The Example of Lucifer

- Isaiah 14:12—Lucifer was the God given name for the being later known as Satan. As the verse states Lucifer was cast out of the third heaven. The question is why?
- Ezekiel 28:12—the person being addressed in this verse is described as sealing up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Lucifer was the sum total of God's creative genius in terms of wisdom and beauty.
- Ezekiel 28:13—he was decorated or clothed in precious stones. In addition, he had a built in system of musical orchestration.
 - Exodus 28:15-21—these are same stones there were set in the breastplate of Israel's high priest.
 - Revelation 21:19-20—the heavenly Jerusalem is adorned and decorated with these same stones.
- Ezekiel 28:14—Lucifer was the anointed cherub who covered the throne of God. He had excess to the very presence of God.
- So who was Lucifer at this point in his career?
 - Sum total of wisdom and beauty
 - Clothed in every precious stone
 - Musical instrument for leading the angelic realm in the worship of God
 - Cherub who covered the throne of God
 - Had direct access to the presence of God
 - Second only to God himself.
- Ezekiel 28:15—there was nothing wrong with Lucifer in any way till he sinned against God.
- Isaiah 14:12-14—Lucifer's fundamental problem was the unthankful, ungrateful, and unsatisfied with the station he had been given and wanted more.
- Ezekiel 28:16-19—he goes out and merchandises and traffics plan to supplant and replace God. The first sin was fundamentally a sin of ingratitude. Lucifer was not thankful/grateful for the exalted position he had been given and wanted more.

The Example of Eve

- Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17, 25—Adam and Eve are placed in the Garden of Eden with the charge of dressing and keeping the garden. Nothing is off limits to them except eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They enjoy perfect and unbroken fellowship with each other and God.

- Genesis 3:1—Satan comes and subtly questions God’s word.
- Genesis 3:2—Eve takes the bait and engages Satan in conversation about what God said. Eve subtracts from God’s word by leaving off the “freely” (Gen. 3:16).
- Genesis 3:3—Eve adds to the word of God. God never said anything about not touching it (Gen. 3:17).
- Genesis 3:4—Satan flat out denies what God plainly said (Gen. 3:17).
- Genesis 3:5—Satan sows the seeds of doubt causing Eve to think that God was holding out on her. That there was more to be known. That God was not good and was purposely holding back and keeping knowledge from her.
- Genesis 3:6-7—Eve’s problem is the same as the folks we studied in Genesis 1 she was unsatisfied with the knowledge of God she presently possessed and tricked into thinking there was more. Eve was fundamentally unthankful and ungrateful for what God had given her.
- “Adam and Eve are, simply, painfully, ungrateful for what God gave. . . Our fall was, has always been, and always will be, that we aren’t satisfied in God and what He gives. We hunger for something more, something other . . . in the beginning, our eyes were already open. Our sight was perfect. Our vision let us see a world spilling with goodness. Our eyes fell on nothing but the glory of God. We saw God as he truly is: good. But we were lured by the deception that there was more to a full life, there was more to see. And, true, there was more to see: the ugliness we hadn’t beheld the sinfulness we hadn’t witnessed, the loss we hadn’t known. We eat. And, in an instant, we are blind. No longer do we see God as one we can trust. No longer do we perceive Him as wholly good.” (Voskamp, 15)
- Genesis 3:8-13—conflict, strife, and religion immediately enters into the picture. The allure of something more something greater leads to a life anguish and pain (Gen. 3:16-19).
- Ingratitude is the seedbed of sin. We kill contentment by comparison.
- I Thessalonians 5:18