

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

As we come close to the end of yet another year, we are gathered here this morning to take time to express how grateful we are to the Lord. We take time to reflect on the goodness of the Lord and for most Christians, that has become a tradition.

It is looked down upon when you lack a sense of gratitude, when you appear to have a sense of entitlement. Many times, we fail to say thank you – this could be because we have not thought of it, or we take the person for granted or because we don't place value on a received gift. Whatever the case might be, a lack of gratitude needs to be dealt with.

This morning, I want to talk to you on the subject matter, **AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE.**

This is when you have a disposition of being grateful for something or towards someone. It is a way of life that greatly enriches the one who possesses it and for the recipients thereof. I would like to talk about 2 aspects that relate to thanksgiving.

1. Physical expression of appreciation.

- When you look at both the Old Testament and the New Testament, you will find that the two covenants place different emphasis on the notion of thanksgiving.
- In the Old Testament, there was a close link between knowing that you are grateful and the act of expressing and the acknowledgement of that appreciation.
- There was an expectation that if you are grateful for something, you were supposed to express it.
- One of the main sources of gratitude in the Old Testament was being clearly aware of sins committed and the forgiveness granted.
- This was accompanied by presenting sacrificial thanksgiving offerings.

Leviticus 22:29 And when you will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Jehovah, offer it at your own will.

2 Chronicles 29:31 And Hezekiah answered and said, And you have consecrated yourselves to Jehovah. Come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of Jehovah. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings. And as many as were of a free heart brought burnt offerings.

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- This tells us that when you are grateful to the Lord, you ought to express it with something tangible in the form of an offering. There is a place for that when you are grateful.
- The psalmist gives emphasis to the expression of ones gratitude:
Psalm 116:17 I will offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD.
- He was referring to a special offering he was presenting before God as an expression of his appreciation.
- What was he thanking God for:
 - God had heard his prayers (116:1).
 - God delivered him from death (116:3-6),
 - God guided his steps (116:8-9),
 - God freed him from chains (116:16).
- He was not going to simply say, thank you – he was going to give God something that costed him something.
- Secondly, in the Old Testament, gratitude was expressed using words – whenever they wanted to express their gratitude to the Lord, they would open their mouths and praise His Holy name.
- Often, the act of praise is expressed in singing – whether done in private or in public times of worship.
- Praise is a powerful way of expressing ones appreciation of the attributes of God. The psalmist did a great job in giving life and meaning to this way of expressing our gratitude.

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High - Psalm 92:1.

Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings - Psalm 33:2.

I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high - Psalm 7:17,

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2. The “being” of thanksgiving

- Whilst the approach to thanksgiving in the Old Testament was easily understood by its physical expression, in the New Testament, thanksgiving is more about being and one’s attitude.
- In this regard, thanksgiving for the New Testament believer has to do with agreeing with Scripture, and open confession of biblical truth.
- In other words, in the New Testament, thanksgiving goes beyond bringing a thanksgiving offering – it has to do with being rightly aligned with biblical truth.
- The level of gratitude for a New Testament believer, is measured by their level of agreement with taught scriptures.
- Your attitude of gratitude is more important than your act of gratitude.

Romans 6:17 But thanks be to our God that you were the slaves of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

- Paul’s gratitude is derived from God’s people being obedient to the doctrine that was delivered to them.
- He thanks God because they gladly received and obeyed God’s word.

Colossians 1:12 giving thanks to the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

- People who are grateful for the finished works of calvary live in agreement with biblical truth.
- They are deliberate about living out their life in a way that glorifies God.

Colossians 3:16 Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And everything, whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

The psalmist had this revelation in Psalm 116, where he vowed to go beyond just giving a thanksgiving offering.

Psalm 116:12 What shall I give to Jehovah for all His benefits toward me? 13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of Jehovah. 14 I will pay my vows to Jehovah now in the presence of all His people.

- Let your thanksgiving be seen in the way you live and let your offering follow the way you live.