

“IT’S ALL ABOUT THANKFULNESS”

COLOSSIANS 3:15-17

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INTRODUCTION

In the litany of depravity of the human race described so vividly in Romans 1:18-32, there is one brief phrase that does not receive its due as an explanation for the cause of man’s depravity and departure from God: **“They were not thankful.”** I submit to you in the words of Dr. Bob Jones Sr., that **“When gratitude dies on the altar of a man’s heart, he is well-nigh hopeless.”**

In this passage Paul gives us as believers three powerful commands that have a powerful effect upon the individual Christian life, and upon the community of Christians in the local church:

- 1) Let Christ’s Peace rule in your hearts.
- 2) Let Christ’s Word richly dwell within you.
- 3) Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

All three of these commands are governed by **thankfulness**:

- 1) **“Be ye thankful”**—v. 15
- 2) **“With grace/thankfulness in your hearts”**—v. 16 (See I Cor. 10:30)
- 3) **“Giving thanks”**—v. 17

It is amazing how many sermons, articles, books, devotionals have focused on one or more of the commands in vv. 15-17 about the command to let peace rule, let the Word dwell richly within us, and doing all in Jesus’ name without placing the focus on **thankfulness**.

YOU WILL FAIL IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IF YOU ARE NOT THANKFUL.

- I. YOU MUST LET THE PEACE OF CHRIST RULE. (15)
 - A. The Subject—“The Peace of Christ”
 1. Peace—internal and in relationship with other believers
 2. Sent and governed by Christ
 - B. The Command—“Let it rule as umpire/arbitrator”
 - C. The Location—in your hearts
 - The center of emotions, will, and mind.
 - Affecting your passions inwardly and outwardly.
 - D. Your Calling as elect ones—God’s sovereign control of your life.
 - E. Your part in the “One body”—of which Christ is the Head (see 1:18, 24; 2:19).

In all of this—BE THANKFUL—showing “good grace” [all that we are and have is due to His grace]
- II. YOU MUST LET CHRIST’S WORD DWELL IN YOU (16).
 - A. The Subject—“The Word of Christ”
 1. What is “the word”?
 2. What is Christ’s relationship to the word? [objective or subjective]
 - B. The Command—“Let it dwell/make its home/settle down”
 1. The place—“in/within you all”
 2. The measure—“richly”/extravagantly/abundantly
 - C. The Results—“Teaching and admonishing”
 - Explain “teaching”
 - Explain “admonishing”
 1. The subjects—You, the individual believers, not merely church leaders!
 2. The objects—yourselves/one another (reflexive pronoun used as reciprocal)
 3. The Accompaniment: “with all wisdom”

4. The Means
 - a. Psalms—esp. Book of Psalms; OT praises to God
 - b. Hymns—esp. NT compositions, mainly to Christ
 - c. Spiritual songs—Covers preceding, also any other songs but must be spiritual—directed
5. The manner--singing
 - a. The accompaniment—**with grace/thanksgiving.**
 - b. The location of the thanksgiving—“in your hearts.”
 - c. The direction of the singing—“To God.”

SIGNIFICANT PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

- 1) The Word of God is central in worship.
- 2) Various forms of music may be used. [But, **profoundly worshipful and God-centered**]
- 3) Worship is instructive, as all are involved, not merely elders (as in I Tim. 3:2; 5:17; I Cor. 12:28; II Tim. 2:2), men like Paul (1:28) and Epaphras (Col. 2:7).
- 4) It must be Godward in direction.
- 5) It must be motivated by grace/gratitude.
- 6) It must come from the heart.

Hendriksen wisely remarks that “a good Psalter-Hymnal is the richest fountain of edification” next to Scripture. Such provides “daily nourishment for the church, but they also serve as a very effective vehicle for the outpouring of confession of sin, gratitude, spiritual joy, rapture” (163). I agree that these ought to help “carry the attention away from that worldly cacophony by which people with low moral standards are being emotionally overstimulated” (Ibid.). **But, in our modern Christian circles, how can then be done when Christians are aping every musical style of the world in their “Christian music”?** These principles can and should be applied to every kind of Christian gathering—not only to Sunday.

III. YOU MUST DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS (17).

Literally:--“All which anything you all may do.” Does that leave anything out?

- A. Extent of Coverage—“in word or deed”
- B. Inclusiveness of coverage—“all” repeated.
- C. Explanation of the demand—“in the name of the Lord Jesus”
 1. Not merely by His authority.
 2. His name represents His person—**all that He is as He has revealed Himself**
 - Acting as His followers, imitating Him so as to reflect Him.
 - Everything we do must be in harmony with His person and character.
 - Everything we do must be according to His will.
 - Everything must be under His Lordship—“Lord”.
 - Everything must be reflective of our salvation—“Jesus/Savior.”
- D. Manner of keeping the demand—**Giving Thanks.**
 1. To God the Father—both our sovereign God, and our heavenly Father
 2. Through Him—through the finished work of atonement of Jesus Christ

A very appropriate question in light of this verse for any projected word or deed of any Christian:
“Am I able to thank God the Father for having given me the opportunity to say or do this?”

CONCLUSION

Here we have direction as to living in **PEACE**.

Here we have direction as to living under the **authority of Christ’s Word** in our training and worship.

Here we have direction as to **living all of life in the name of the Lord Jesus**.

But, all of this is under the direction of **THANKSGIVING**.

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