

Sunday, November 10, 2013—A Heart of Thanksgiving: Gratitude the Seedbed of Joy

Introduction/Review

- Last Sunday we had our second study in the series titled “Ingratitude the Seedbed of Sin.” In that study we considered how sin both in the universe and in the world originated with a lack of thankfulness. We observed this by considering three examples:
 - Romans 1:21—all the sin in detailed in this passage began with a lack of thankfulness in verse 21.
 - Isaiah 14:12, 14—the heart of Lucifer that was not content with being the anointed cherub that covered the throne of God.
 - Genesis 3:6—the heart of Eve that was deceived by the serpent into thinking that was holding out on her.
- Luke 6:35—sin entered the universe and into the world through the gateway of ingratitude. The Scriptures equate the “unthankful” heart with evil.
- I want to submit to you this morning that if ingratitude is the seedbed for sin than gratitude is the seedbed of joy. It is only when we are thankful and grateful for what we have and who we are that we can ever be truly joyful.

The Thankful Heart

- Ephesians 2:8-9—how are we saved? We are saved by grace through faith. What is grace? *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines Grace as: 1) Favor; good will; kindness; disposition to oblige another; 2) the free unmerited love and favor of God, the spring and source of all the benefits men receive from him. So grace is unearned favor and kindness from God that we do not deserve.
- Ephesians 2:1-3—because of Adam’s sin, we were dead in trespasses and sins and were by nature the children of wrath. In other words we had God’s wrath abiding upon us.
- Ephesians 2:4-5—but God who is rich in mercy loved us and provide a way through Christ for us to be saved from his wrath by the grace of God.
- Romans 3:24—how can God “justify us freely by his grace?” Because Jesus Christ paid the necessary price for our redemption. Christ gave us life and made satisfaction for the offended justice of God against our sin. God poured out his wrath upon his son and extends grace and kindness towards us who are completely undeserving on the basis of the crosswork of Jesus Christ.
- At this point it would be good to recall the definitions of the words associated with “thanksgiving.” Notice how in each definition “thanksgiving” is associated with acknowledging

favors and kindness bestowed upon a person. Consider these definition again from the vantage point of the definition of the word Grace.

- 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.**
 - Thankfulness—“expression of gratitude; **acknowledgment of a favor.**
 - Thanksgiving—“rendering thanks for **good received.** 1) The act of rendering thanks or expressing gratitude **for favors or mercies or good.**”
- Ephesians 2:8—the Greek word translated “Grace” is the word *charis*. 8 different times in the New Testament this word is translate either “thank” or “thanks” by the translators of the KJB.
 - Luke 6:32-34—“thank”
 - Romans 6:17—“God be thanked”
 - I Corinthians 15:57—“thanks be to God”
 - I Peter 2:19—“thankworthy”
 - Philippians 4:6—the Greek word translated “thanksgiving” is the word *eucharistia*. 15 times this word is translated in the KJB: thanksgiving (9), giving of thanks (3), thankfulness (1).
 - I Thessalonians 5:18—the Greek word translated “give thanks” is the word *eucharisteō*. 39 times this word is translated in the KJB: give thanks (26), thank (12), thankful (1)
 - Romans 1:21—neither were “thankful”
 - Please consider that all the major Greek words in the New Testament associated with the giving of thanks or thanksgiving are all connected associated with “grace.”
 - *Charis*—“grace,” “thank,” “thanked,” “thanks be to God,” “thankworthy”
 - *Eucharistia*—“thanksgiving”
 - *Eucharisteō*—“give thanks”
 - When one considers these facts along with the definitions of the relevant English words the heart of thanksgiving comes into the focus. Fundamentally, the heart of thanksgiving allows the unearned, unmerited, favor, kindness, and grace of God to stir up the sentiment of gratitude for all that God has done for us an on our behalf and then it expresses that sentiment by giving thanks to God for his grace. A heart of thanksgiving is literally taking the grace of God and living it out daily in the details of life.

The Seedbed of Joy

- Ephesians 2:4—speaks of a God who is rich in mercy and the great love wherewith he loved us. The Psalmist repeatedly pleads with Israel to give thanks unto the Lord because “his mercy endures for ever.”
- Where did the Godhead most visibly demonstrate the mercy and great love he had for us? At the cross.
- Genesis 3:15—immediately after giving into ingratitude God promised that he would send a seed to redeem mankind for their sins. To do for man what he could not do for himself.
- Acts 2:23—in eternity past the Godhead had an eternal life conference at which time it was decided the God the Son would die as a payment for sin.
- Philippians 2:5-8—this is why Christ was incarnated. For the purpose of suffering the death of the cross.
- Luke 22:19—on the eve of fulfilling the reason for which Christ came, knowing that the time of his death was at hand, and with full knowledge not only the impending physical agony but spiritual separation from the father that he would endure Christ gave thanks.
- Matthew 26:27—Jesus Christ gave thanks both for his broken body and his shed blood. Jesus offers thanksgiving for that which will break him, crush him, and cause separation from God the father. Christ was thankful for the privilege of being able to lay down his own life in payment for and they by accomplish eternal salvation for you and I.
- Hebrews 12:2—why did Christ endure the cross? For the joy set before him. Christ could give thanks to God despite pain, anguish, suffering, and separation because he knew the joy it would produce to have made satisfaction for sin.
- There is no joy without thanksgiving. This is the Grace Life, the life of *charis*, the life of “thanksgiving” (*Eucharistia*), the life that offers itself service to God motivated by a profound appreciation for what God has done on our behalf. It is the only life and lifestyle capable of experiencing joy to its fullest capacity.
- When we quench thanksgiving we kill joy.