

Sunday, February 19, 2016—2017 Southern California Grace Conference

Topic: *In Everything Give Thanks*—1 Thes. 5:18. This study will focus on the importance of giving thanks to God in all things, and why this is such a vital part of the will of God.

Introduction

- Yesterday I used the issue of thanksgiving to frame our discussion of joy. This morning I would like to continue that discussion by looking at the connection between thanksgiving and contentment and how we, like Paul can learn to be content in whatever state we find ourselves.
- In order to accomplish this task, we will look at the following points:
 - Thanksgiving the Key to Contentment
 - Learning to be Content

Thanksgiving The Key to Contentment

- I Thessalonians 5:18—in everything give *Eucharisteō*. God’s will is for us to have the same mental and heart attitude that Christ demonstrated for us. To be able in the midst of the circumstance and situation be able to find something to be thankful for.
- Philippians 4:6—this life of continuous prayer (I Thess. 5:17) that we are to be living as members of the body of Christ does not and cannot function outside the realm of thanksgiving. Paul tells us to make our request know unto God with “thanksgiving” (*Eucharistia*). The ungrateful heart is not capable of offering prayers with “thanksgiving” because it fundamentally believes that God is not good and is hardened from seeing the goodness of God. As we saw yesterday, the ungrateful heart is evil.
 - “Evil is that—a hole in the goodness of God. Evil is all that lacks the goodness of God, a willful choice to turn away from the full goodness of God to that empty of His goodness.” (Voskamp, 88)
- Psalm 100:4—“The only real payers are the one mouthed with thankful lips. Because gratitude ushers us into the other side of prayer, into the heart of the God . . . Prayer to be prayer, to have the power to change anything must first speak thanks . . . Prayer without ceasing is only possible in a life of continual thanks.” (Voskamp, 60)
- Colossians 2:7—a life lived with knowledge of; and in gratitude for, all Christ has done on our behalf ought to be abounding with “thanksgiving” (*Eucharistia*).
- Matthew 15:32-39—notice how the crowds not enough became more than enough through the giving of thanks. Don’t misunderstand me what I am after here is the principle. I am not

suggesting that God is working this way during the dispensation of Grace. No matter how much or how intently you pray over your food God is not going to physically multiply it as he did here.

- I am after the principle here. When we give thanks for what we currently have and possess we are able to find our stratification and contentment in what and who we already are not in what we do not currently possess.
- I Thessalonians 5:17-18—as we pray without ceasing Paul instructs us to give thanks IN every circumstances or situation.
- It is giving of thanks IN EVERYTHING that teaches us to be content. WE ARE NOT BY NATURE CONTENTED PEOPLE! CONTENTMENT IS A LEARNED PROCESS.
- Philippians 4:11—Paul had to learn to be content in “whatsoever state” state he found himself. Paul had to learn to be content regardless of his circumstances.
- There are a variety of words in the New Testament that deal with the concept of contentment.
 - Content—occurs 16 times in 16 verses in the KJB.
 - Mark 15:15—“to content the people” In this case the underlying Greek word means to do that which gives stratification or is satisfactory.
 - Luke 3:14—“be content” In this case the underlying Greek word means to suffice one’s self with, i.e., to be stratified or content with. The word is variously translated: be content (3x), be sufficient (2x), be enough (1x), suffice (1x), and content (1x)
 - II Corinthians 12:9—“my grace is sufficient”
 - Philippians 4:11—“content” In this case the underlying Greek word means sufficient in one’s self self-adequate, needing no aid, hence contented. The Greek word only occurs in this verse.
 - Contentment—occurs 1 time in 1 verse in the KJB.
 - I Timothy 6:16—“contentment”
 - *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* offers the following meanings of English words related to contentment. For the record there are 13 English words steaming form the root word content.
 - Content--quiet; not disturbed; having a mind at peace; easy; satisfied, so as not to repine, object, or oppose (I Tim. 6). 1) To satisfy the mind; to make quiet, so as

to stop complaint or opposition; to appease; to make easy in any situation (Mark 15:15); 2) To please or gratify.

- Contented--Satisfied; quiet; easy in mind; not complaining, opposing or demanding more. The good man is contented with his lot.
 - Contentedness--State of resting in mind; quiet; satisfaction of mind with any condition or event.
 - Contentless--Discontented; dissatisfied; uneasy.
 - Contently—in a contented way.
 - Contentment—1) Content; a resting or satisfaction of mind without disquiet; acquiescence. 2) Gratification.
- It is important to note that the following English words denote a lack of contentment: contention, contentious, contentiously, contentiousness
- Philippians 4:11—according to *Webster's 1828 Dictionary* the English word “learn” means “To gain knowledge of; to acquire knowledge or ideas of something before unknown.”
 - Philippians 4:12—Paul “learned” to be content regardless of his circumstances.
 - Please notice that within the context of the passage Paul’s learning to be content in verses 11-12 does not happen apart from his IN EVERYTHING offering PRAY AND SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING in verse 6.
 - Through the process of practicing I Thessalonians 5:18 “IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS” in his pray and thought life Paul LEARNS to be content regardless of the situation he finds himself in.
 - A Heart of Thanksgiving is able to turn Paul’s WANT or NOT ENOUGH into CONTENTMENT.
 - Philippians 4:13—the “all things” in this verse has a context in verse 12. Paul can handle and face times of not enough as well as times of more than enough through Christ working in Paul.
 - Today in this dispensation when you pray and give thanks over the seven loaves of bread and few small fish God will NOT physically multiply them he will teach us to be content with what we have regardless of the number.

Learning to Be Content

- I Timothy 6:6-8—Paul says that as believers we need to be content with food and raiment. In other words we need to learn to be content with the basic necessities of life. Like Paul we need to learn to be content when we are abased as well as when we are abounding.
- I Timothy 6:9-10—those who deliberately pursue riches are in danger of not only never being content; but causing great harm to themselves and those about them.
- So how can we learn to be content? We must start by following Paul instruction and example to “in everything give thanks.” Second, we can practically do that by naming and counting things we are thankful for in our lives.
- Psalm 139:17-18—the Hebrew word translated “count” means to number, to take account of, to reckon. The English word “count” carries the following meanings according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*
 - To number; to tell or name one by one, or by small numbers, for ascertaining the whole number of units in a collection; as, to count the years, days and hours of a man’s life; to count the stars. 2) To reckon; to preserve a reckoning; to compute. 3) To reckon; to place to an account; to ascribe or impute; to consider or esteem as belonging. 4) To esteem; to account; to reckon; to think, judge, or consider.
- The process of counting forces one to be deliberate. The process of counting forces us to take time to stop and consider. The key to learning how to be content is stop and name the things we are thankful for i.e., to be intentional about the giving of thanks.
- Genesis 2:19—one of man’s first tasks was to name the animals. Adam brings order to God’s creation by contemplating and studying creation and naming that which God made. To name something is to manifest the meaning and value God gave it.
- Why is it easier to name to things we want, desire, allude, or in some way discontent us than it is to name the things that content us?
- Philippians 4:11—“the hardest part of learning and training is the essence of transformation. Practice, practice, practice.” (Voskmap, 56) In learning to be content we need to practice the act giving of thanks in the details of everyday life.
 - “. . . all hard things come in due time and with practice. . . Do not disdain the small. The whole of the life—even the hard—is made up of the minute parts, and if I miss the infinitesimals, I miss the whole. . . There is a way to live the big of giving thanks in all things. It is this: to give thanks in this one small thing. The moments will add up.” (Voskamp, 57)

- Ephesians 5:20—as a means of practice in the process of learning to be content I challenge all of you to create a list of 1,000 things you are thankful for. To count and name in an intentional fashion 1,000 things we can praise and thank God for in details of our lives. Let’s start there. Let’s just start doing what Paul instructs us to do “give thanks always for all things unto God” and see what happens.
- Martin Luther the name that spawned the Protestant Revolution said, “If you want to change the world pick up your pen.” Let’s start changing our world’s through the intentional giving of thanks. “. . . that habit of discontentment can only be driven out by hammering in on iron sharper. The sleek pin of gratitude.” (Voskamp, 50)
- Colossians 3:15—Paul is literally telling the Colossians and by extension us to be *Eucharisteō*. To have the same mindset and attitude that Christ had on the eve of his death.
- Colossians 3:16—the state of being thankful is described as a state of mutual teaching and admonishing and the singing of *charis* (grace and thanksgiving) in our hearts to the Lord.
- Colossians 3:17—whatever we do in word or deed should be done with *Eucharisteō* (giving thanks) to God the Father.
- I challenge ever saint here this weekend to practice giving thanks by naming/counting 1,000 things in our lives for which we can be thankful. Let’s see if we can’t be like our Apostle Paul and learn to be content. Let’s allow the heart of thanksgiving to transform our want into more than enough.