

Series overview

The battle

- Lots of struggle / battles
- I've urged you to remain faithful
- I've held out God's promises
- I trust you're praying, and I'm thankful you're here

One casualty

- Really been impressed that there's been one casualty to this battle:
Thanksgiving
- So easy to see only the problems - but we are to be thankful
- Lord has laid several thoughts on my heart

Next three weeks

- We'll use this verse as our theme **1 Thess 5:18 (ESV)** *(18) give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you
- Today, I'll look at the command to give thanks - and why that's so hard for us
- Next week, we'll look at the benefit/blessing of giving thanks
- Thanksgiving Sunday we'll remind ourselves of that which we have to be thankful for

Message

Opening

- **Ask** How many had time to pray this morning?
- **Ask** Of that prayer time how much was spent giving thanks
- **Ask** This past week - did we spend more time griping about things that are wrong, or giving thanks?

The command to give thanks

What are we called to do?

- Give thanks
- Even unbelievers understand the power of thanksgiving - but as believers its even more important
- We are called to say "Thank you" to God!
- This takes time, and focus - but it is a "mandate"
- Not isolated - study Scripture, and you'll see we are repeatedly urged to give thanks!
 - Psalms - 12 times "Give thanks to the Lord..."
 - Throughout the epistles urged to give thanks!
- **Note:** not just lip service
 - We are called to give thanks - to offer up thanksgiving
 - See the kiss of Judas!
 - See the worship of the centurions
 - Is our thanksgiving like this?

For what are we to be thankful?

- Everything
- Not just the stuff we like, but everything!

What is our motivation?

- This is God's will for us

Discuss

- **Ask:** Do we do this?
- **Ask:** Why not? Why is this so hard?
- Allow people to discuss

Why is this difficult

Let me propose a few reasons for our lack of gratitude

We are unobservant

- We really just don't see all that God has done for us
- **James 1:17 (ESV)** *(17) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*
- Some examples this morning...
 - Hip wasn't hurting as I walked
 - Sunrise gorgeous, etc.
- When we do notice something.... It's usually something that's wrong!
- Over the next 21 days I want us
- every good and perfect gift
- Discuss sunrise this morning, hip, etc.
- So many good things God has done we take for granted

We are selfish

- In Luke 17, Jesus meets 10 lepers
- He heals them, but only 1 return to say thank you
- Why do you think the other 9 failed to give thanks?
- Their reaction is often ours
- Propose two things:

We don't recognize God's blessing - seeing them as things we've earned / deserve

- If you've ever parented teens you understand this
- We don't give thanks, because we see the things in our lives that God has given us / blessed us with - as things we have earned or deserve
 - Health, possessions, etc
- In fact (as our previous verse said) everything God has come from God!
- Thus, 9 can go on their way!

Worse, we think we deserve more better

- When its' complaining - thats what we're really saying - I deserve more
- Children of Israel constantly struggled with this. (See Numbers 14)
- The next time you complain, stop and consider what you're really doing!

We see no need to give thanks for things that we don't like

There's lots in our lives that aren't pleasant - sickness, pain, heartache

Everything includes the unpleasant things

- Yet "everything" includes these things!
- **Illustrate:** giving thanks to God for fleas in Ravensbrook

Calls for faith

- God knows what's going on
- God is good
- God can take care of me!

A warning if we fail to give thanks

Rom 1:21 (ESV) (21) *For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

Closing/CallChallenge

10 minute

- One of the biggest reasons we don't obey **1 Thess 5:18 (ESV)** (18) *give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.* is because we're too busy.
- We have to make giving thanks a priority
- Spend at least 10 minutes per day in thanksgiving
- Include the difficult things

11/18 service

- Thanksgiving Sunday
- Part of our corporate worship - spending time sharing things for which we are

thankful

- Come prepared to share
- Not a 20 minute testimony - but stand up and publicly thank God for something in your life

Come next week - look at what happens when we give thanks

- We've looked today at why this is hard, but I will continue the series next week, looking at the blessings that come from giving thanks!

Response

- Think about the worst thing in your life right now
- Can you obey the command?
- Do you trust a God who has allowed this in your life?
- I want you to give thanks for this