

The Life of Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a huge part of the Christian life. The Old Testament and the New Testament are so full of thanks given to God that to ignore it would be to ignore massive portions of the Bible (not to mention a direct teaching from the Bible). One might argue well that thanksgiving defines the Christian life so that the apostle Paul writes: *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him,* (Colossians 3:15-17).

To show how intricate thanksgiving is to the Christian life, our Lord gives thanks on the night when He was betrayed when He broke the bread and when He gave the cup of the new testament in His blood: “*When He had given thanks...*” When He fed the five and four thousands He gave thanks to His Father in heaven and so blessed the bread and fish which He multiplied and satisfied the hunger of so many. Giving thanks is part and parcel of our Lord blessing others, blessing His disciples, and blessing creation.

The sum of the Christian life is one of thanksgiving to God for all things, especially for sending His only-begotten Son into the flesh that He would redeem us from sin, death, and the power of the devil; that He would give us eternal life and that we should be called the children of God, and so we are, adopted by grace and held steadfast by His eternal Spirit. Truly this is worthy of thanksgiving!

But so, too, is our daily bread well worthy of thanksgiving. So too are our spouses, children, jobs, homes, cars, and so forth, well worthy of thanksgiving. Everything is a gift of your heavenly Father. Now someone might object a bit and ask whether or not adversaries and adversities are gifts of our heavenly Father. Yes, they are. They are gifts because the Lord teaches (disciplines) those He loves (Hebrews 12:6-11; Revelation 3:19). Moreover, what are these adversities but opportunities to defy the devil and give glory to God? To do as our Lord did in the desert of temptation and rely not on what we see or feel (our Lord saw stones and felt hunger), but to rely on the word of the Lord, which is the blessing of our Father in heaven and by which we know His promises and comfort.

We should remember that despite the worldly teaching that sometimes it's hard to give thanks, it's actually easy to give thanks, for the yoke of Christ is easy and His burden is light, and He, before any of us, gives thanks to His heavenly Father. So the apostle teaches that we give thanks in Christ Jesus. It is easy to give thanks when the Spirit reminds us that our heavenly Father cares for us and that all things are a gift from Him to us, something our Lord teaches when He says that, “*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*” All things belong to Christ for from Him and through Him and for Him are all things (Colossians 1:16), so we give thanks for and in all things.