

Introduction

I love Thanksgiving and have said many times that it is my favorite holiday of the year. It is a wonderful opportunity to give thanks to God for His blessings in our lives. The Pilgrim's Thanksgiving Feast of 1621 is well-known by many people. The Smithsonian says that it was not the first one; there were other ones celebrated in North America before that time. The first official Thanksgiving was proclaimed by George Washington on October 3, 1789, and it was celebrated on Thursday, November 26 that year. Thanksgiving Day was not proclaimed as a national holiday until October 3, 1863, when Abraham Lincoln declared that it was to be observed every year on the fourth Thursday of November.¹

One of the reasons that I like Thanksgiving is that it honors God. In Psalm 50, God tells us that He does not need our sacrificial offerings, and if He was hungry, He would not tell us. Instead, He tells us to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

(Ps 50:12) "If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains."

(Ps 50:14) "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving And pay your vows to the Most High;"

In Psalm 50:23, God tells us, "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; and to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God." Our offerings of thanksgiving are things that God does not own or already have, so these prayers of thanksgiving are very special to Him.

(Ps 50:23) "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders *his* way *aright* I shall show the salvation of God."

For many people, Thanksgiving has become more of a day for the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade, Dallas Cowboys football, and a feast shared with friends and family. This year, we will have about twenty-two of our family members over for Thanksgiving. In addition to those that live in Georgia, others are traveling in from Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Florida, and we look forward to visiting with all of them. But for me, the most important reason that I appreciate this holiday is that it is a great reminder that we should take time to give thanks to God for His many blessings, something we should do every day.

Most of us are familiar with God's commands to us to give Him thanks. We sing songs from Psalms 106, 118 and 136 that tell us to give thanks to the Lord, for He is good and His lovingkindness is everlasting.

(Ps 106:1) "Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting."

(Ps 118:1) "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting."

(Ps 136:1) "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting."

¹ <https://www.si.edu/spotlight/thanksgiving/history>

We are also familiar with 1 Thessalonians 5:18, where Paul instructs us to give thanks in everything, because this is God's will for us. Even though we know we are to give thanks in everything, it is not always easy to do that, particularly in difficult circumstances. We don't always have an attitude of thanksgiving, where our natural response to everything that we experience is thanksgiving. That attitude of thanksgiving needs to be cultivated.

(1 Th 5:18) "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

In Colossians, Paul mentions giving thanks seven times. In Colossians 4:2, he wrote, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving." The word attitude is in italics, meaning that it is implied, but there is not a Greek word used. The other translations do not use the word attitude. But the context of the verse, being devoted and alert suggests an overall attitude of thanksgiving.

(Col 4:2) "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of* thanksgiving;"

Today, I want to focus on how to cultivate that attitude of thanksgiving. The title of the message is *How to Cultivate an Attitude of Thanksgiving*. I say cultivate, because I believe that for most of us, it is a process to develop an attitude of thanksgiving. I don't believe that most of us wake up one day and automatically have this attitude of thanksgiving. I also use the word cultivate, an agricultural term, because I believe the steps of cultivation are very similar.

The dictionary defines cultivate as: 1) to prepare and use (land) for crops or gardening, 2) to try to acquire or develop a (quality or skill). Once you have a site picked out that you want to cultivate, there are four basic steps. First, you have to prepare the soil to break up the hard ground. Second, you have to sow or plant the seeds. Third, you have to tend the garden. Fourth, you must harvest the crop.

In our message today, we are going to look at Preparing the Soil of our hearts. Second, we will look at Sowing the Seeds of Thanksgiving, and in that we will review the principle of sowing and reaping. Third, we will look at Tending the Garden. We don't sow seeds one day and harvest the next day. There are things that we have to intentionally do between the time of sowing and harvesting. Fourth, we will look at Harvesting our Crop of thanksgiving. These four steps will help us cultivate an attitude of thanksgiving.

Cultivating an Attitude of Thanksgiving

1. Prepare the Soil
2. Sow the Seeds
3. Tend the Garden (water, weed, watch)
4. Harvest the Fruit

1. Prepare the Soil

The first step in cultivating an attitude of thanksgiving is to prepare the soil. Good gardens require good soil, and the same is true in our spiritual lives. Jesus gave the parable of the four soils, and it was the good soil that produced a good harvest of fruit.

(Lk 8:15) "But the *seed* in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance."

We have a very nice garden that produces abundantly. My neighbors have told me that they can't grow anything because the soil is so bad, and they have all but given up on a garden. Good gardens require good soil, and very often, the soil must be prepared. When I moved here, I picked up twenty-six truckloads of manure. Since then, I have picked up several more, and ten trailer loads of manure. I also bought a truckload of peat moss. I bought a nice tiller and added all of this to the natural soil.

I also had to remove the rocks, and we had lots of rocks. We made retaining walls of all these rocks, which are nice to look at and define the garden areas. As a result of removing all the rocks and adding organic matter, I have excellent soil in my garden and orchard. I had to prepare the soil before planting any fruits or vegetables.

The soil in our lives can also be hard and full of rocks. We live in the last days, a time where it is normal for people to be ungrateful. Listen to the characteristics of these last days. Paul wrote that men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, **ungrateful**, unholy, etc. This is not good soil, but hard soil, and it is a common attitude today. If we realize that our lives are not characterized by being grateful and full of thanksgiving, we need to repent, and ask God to forgive us and cleanse us. We should ask God to help us cultivate an attitude of thanksgiving.

(2 Ti 3:1–3) “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. {2} For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, {3} unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good...”

We have to prepare the soil of our hearts, just like I prepared the soil in my garden. Just as I added some things to my soil, we have to add some things to our soil. One of the things that must be added is an understanding that everything that we have is from God. Paul tells us in Romans 11:36 that “from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.” Everything that we have is from God.

(Ro 11:36) “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.”

We also have to add an understanding that everything belongs to God, and we are just stewards. The world does not revolve around us, but around God, who created everything. Psalm 24:1 tells us that the earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it. It belongs to Him because He created everything in it, including us. Psalm 100:3 tells us that we need to know that the Lord Himself is God; it is He who made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. We need to have this humble understanding of who God is and who we are.

(Ps 24:1) “The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.”

(Ps 100:3) “Know that the Lord Himself is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* His people and the sheep of His pasture.”

When I prepared our soil, taking out the rocks, and adding good, organic matter, I then used a tiller to break up the hard soil, and to mix in the good soil. In our lives there are a number of

ways to prepare the soil, and it includes breaking up the soil by repentance. In Hosea 10, God tells us to sow with a view to righteousness, and to reap in accordance with kindness. He tells us to break up our fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord until He comes to rain righteousness on you. There is a process, and it begins with breaking up the fallow ground, the hard ground, and preparing the soil. Then, we are to sow with a view to righteousness. Finally, we are to reap the harvest. It begins with breaking up the soil of our hearts. Our hearts become hardened by sin and the way that we break up that soil is repentance.

(Ho 10:12) “Sow with a view to righteousness, reap in accordance with kindness; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord until He comes to rain righteousness on you.”

We know that God wants us to give thanks in everything. We know that we are to have an attitude of thanksgiving. If our lives do not reflect that attitude of thanksgiving, and we do not give thanks in everything, we need to repent and confess this sin before God. We need to say, “Lord, I don’t have an attitude of thanksgiving. I do not always give thanks in everything. Will You forgive me and cleanse me of this? Will You help me to cultivate an attitude of thanksgiving? The great news for all of us is that when we repent and confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. God tells us in 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

(1 Jn 1:9) “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

2. Sow the Seeds

The second step in cultivating an attitude of thanksgiving is to sow the seeds of thankfulness. When Jesus was explaining the parable of the soils, He said that the seed was the word of God. We need to sow the scriptures that deal with thanksgiving. We need to read those scriptures. We need to meditate on those scriptures. I have found that when God was dealing with me in an area, I found it most helpful to memorize many scriptures about that area. So, it would be good to memorize some scriptures on being thankful.

(Lk 8:11) “Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.”

In the opening, I mentioned a number of helpful scriptures, which included Psalms 50:23, 106:1, 118:1, 136:1, 1 Th 5:18, and Colossians 4:2. These six verses are a great place to start, but there are many more verses that deal with giving thanks. In fact, there are one hundred and thirty-nine verses where thanks, or a form of thanks is used.

When I was memorizing verses on thanksgiving, God often gave me songs of the verses. That helped me to memorize them, and to get them planted deep in my heart. Here are a few of those songs:

Psalm 100:4

Enter His gates with thanksgiving
Enter His courts with praise
Give thanks, and bless His name

Psalm 9:1-2, Psalm 111:1

I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart
I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart
I will tell of all Your wonders, be glad, exult in You
I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart

I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High
I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High
I will tell of all Your wonders, be glad, exult in You
I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High

I will give thanks to the LORD with all *my* heart
I will give thanks to the LORD with all *my* heart
In the company of the upright, the assembly of the saints
I will give thanks to the LORD with all *my* heart

Psalm 92:1-2

It is good to give thanks unto the LORD
To sing praises to Your name, O Most High
To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning
And Your faithfulness by night
Oh, it's good to give thanks unto the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

In everything give thanks
Give thanks in everything
It is God's will for me to fill
This place with words of thanks
In everything give thanks

In everything give thanks
Give thanks in everything
It is my choice, To lift my voice
And fill this place with thanks
In everything give thanks

In everything give thanks
Give thanks in everything
No matter what, no matter why
That's how I will reply
In everything give thanks

In everything give thanks
Give thanks in everything
I will not gripe, I'm not that type
I'll fill this place with thanks
In everything give thanks

Those are all just songs and choruses that God gave me over the years. We do not use many of them in corporate worship, but I sing them unto the Lord. God has used them to help me cultivate a heart of gratitude. It is okay to use other songs of thanksgiving. You might sing songs like, Forever, Give Thanks, Thank You For The Cross, Thank You Lord, Or Thank You Jesus. These are songs that we have sung in worship in the past. Learn to sing songs of thanksgiving, because singing songs of thanksgiving is an excellent way to cultivate a heart of thanksgiving.

When sowing, one very important principle to keep in mind is the principle of reaping and sowing. Paul wrote about this principle many times, usually in regard to giving. In 2 Corinthians 9:6, he wrote, “he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully.” If I plant a garden, and I plant ten carrot seeds, the most carrots that I will get is ten. However, if I plant fifty carrot seeds, I will get significantly more carrots from the garden. If we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly; if we sow bountifully, we will reap bountifully.

(2 Co 9:6) “Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”

Paul was talking about giving generously. In our case, I am using the same principle, but applying it to being grateful. If we sow just a few seeds of thankfulness, we will reap a little bit of thankfulness, which is better than none at all. However, if we sow lots of scriptures on being thankful, we will reap a bigger crop of thankfulness. We want to sow bountifully so that we have a bountiful crop of thanksgiving. A bountiful crop of thanksgiving comes preparing the soil of our hearts, and sowing abundantly with scriptures about giving thanks.

3. Tend the Garden

The third step is to tend the garden. In Psalm 37:3, God tells us to trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Many character qualities and attitudes are cultivated. It is interesting that the normal Hebrew word that is translated as cultivate is *abad* (Strong’s H5647), which means to serve, do, or work. Cultivation is work. Many things in our faith require work on our part. The Hebrew word that is used in Psalm 37:3 is not *abad*, but *ra’a* (Strong’s h7462), which is a shepherding word that means to feed, shepherd, and tend. When we are cultivating, we work and we tend the garden. What do we mean by tending the garden? Here are three aspects of tending: watering, weeding, and watching.

(Ps 37:3) “Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.”

a. Watering

Seeds need to be kept moist in order to germinate, so they have to be watered once or twice a day. Once they germinate, they still have to be watered daily, but usually once a day will be all that is required. Older, more established plants, can get by with less frequent watering, but all plants require water. The plants don’t get watered by themselves; we must water them, which means we must be intentional. We have to prioritize and set the time aside to do this necessary job. It does not take long, but it does require us to be intentional and faithful.

In cultivating an attitude of thanksgiving, we also have to prioritize the time to water the seeds of thanksgiving that we are planting in our heart. We have to take time to memorize the scriptures. We have to take time to review the scriptures. We have to be intentional and faithful.

In 1 Chronicles 16:4, David assigned some Levites to give thanks and praise to the Lord. In particular, he assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks. This was an intentional act to give thanks to the Lord. David understood that the giving of thanks honored the Lord, and he took the necessary steps to make sure that thanks were continually being offered unto the Lord. Just as David was intentional, we can be intentional and take steps of action to make sure that we are continually giving thanks to the Lord.

(1 Chr 16:4) “He appointed some of the Levites *as* ministers before the ark of the LORD, even to celebrate and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel... {7} Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the LORD.”

We can be intentional to begin our prayer time with thanksgiving. Psalm 100:4 says to enter His gates with thanksgiving and courts with praise. We enter the gates before we enter His courts, and so we should begin with thanksgiving. When Karen and I pray together, we usually begin with thanks, and sometimes our prayer time will become a half hour of giving thanks. If we were not intentional, this would not happen.

A number of years ago, when I was pastoring another church, I gave instructions to our leaders that I wanted the first five minutes of our corporate prayer to begin with thanksgivings and praises. That should have been very easy to do. I did this because many of the people would begin their prayers by telling the Lord everything that they wanted the Lord to do, and they were not in the habit of entering His gates with thanksgivings and His courts with praise. I had to be intentional until they learned to do this.

b. Weeding

In tending the garden, another area that we must give attention to is the removing of weeds. The weeds rob the other plants of nutrients, so we must remove them. The earlier that we remove the weeds, the easier they are to pull. For some reason, the roots of weeds grow fast, and they get increasingly difficult to pull.

What are the common weeds that we come across when cultivating an attitude of thanksgiving? One of the most common weeds is pride. Pride wants to take credit for everything, instead of giving credit to God. One day I was telling someone that everything that I have has been given to me. The other person said, “Not me. I have worked hard for everything that I have.” I don’t doubt that the other person worked hard. When I said that everything that I have has been given to me, I did not say that I had not worked hard. I am a hard worker. I get that from my parents, and both of them were very hard workers. Even when my dad went fishing, he worked hard at it. But God’s word tells us that from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. In other words, everything that we have is from God. All things are from Him, and we are to give thanks to Him for all things.

(Ro 11:36) “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.”

Notice what God tells us in Deuteronomy 8. God told Israel that He had humbled them by letting them go hungry. Then He went on to say that their clothing did not wear out nor did their feet swell for the forty years they were in the wilderness. He provided for them all that time. He was leading them in a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, a land of wheat

and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, where they would not lack anything. He told them when they had eaten and were satisfied, they were to bless the Lord what had given all of that to them. He humbled them so that they had nothing in order that they would understand that everything they had was from God.

(Dt 8:3-10) “He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. {4} "Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years... {7} For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; {8} a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; {9} a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. {10} When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.”

In verses 11-18, He warns them about eating and being satisfied with these good things and becoming proud so that we forget that it all came from God. In verse 17, He said, “Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’” That is the weed of Pride, and it can grow in our garden and keep us from humbly giving thanks to God. He is the One that gives us the power, strength, ability, and wisdom to make wealth. All things come from Him.

(Dt 8:11-18) “Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; {12} otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived *in them*, {13} and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, {14} then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. {15} He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, *with its* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. {16} In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. {17} Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' {18} But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.”

c. Watching

Another aspect of tending the garden is watching over it. Animals, cold weather, or insects can eat and/or destroy your plants; therefore, we have to watch over the garden. One day a few weeks ago, my wife came into the house and told me that the deer had come in during the night and eaten her lettuce and carrots. Therefore, to prevent any further losses, we put up netting over the carrots and lettuce. Every morning, she removes the netting, and every night she covers the raised bed with netting. It takes time to do this, but in order to protect them from the deer, she found that this was the best solution. If she sees that a freeze is coming, she may spread straw around them, or even cover them with a tarp. Part of her watching over her garden is to pay attention to the weather forecast and to take appropriate action.

In cultivating an attitude of thanksgiving, we also have to be watchful. What are the things that can hurt our thanksgiving crop? One of the things is busyness. In Psalm 103, we are exhorted to forget none of the benefits. It is easy to get so busy that we don't take time to remember all the things that God regularly does for us. We need to take time every day to thank God. Even if it is only five minutes, we should take the time to thank Him for His many benefits. We can thank Him for our salvation, and for drawing us to Him. We can thank Him for helping us grow and mature. We can thank Him for His provision. We can thank Him for forgiving us of all of our sins. We can thank Him for healing us from sickness. We can thank Him for His lovingkindness and compassion. We have so much to thank Him for; we just need to set aside time to regularly thank Him.

(Ps 103:1–5) “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, *ble*ss His holy name. {2} Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; {3} who pardons all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases; {4} who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; {5} who satisfies your years with good things, *so that* your youth is renewed like the eagle.”

Another common thing that can destroy our garden of thankfulness is attitude of entitlement. Many people believe that what they receive is owed to them; they are entitled to it. When they receive something, they are not grateful for it, because it was owed to them. Even if they have not worked for it, they feel they are entitled to have it. The government owes it to them. Other people owe it to them. Everything they get is owed to them. I have found this crop destroyer even in the church. People think that God owes them this or that. I find that what we are really owed by God is death. The wages of sin is death, and all of us have sinned; therefore, what we are really owed and deserve is death. What God freely gives us is His grace, forgiveness, and love. There are even some pastors that believe that since they are doing God's work, He must provide full-time support for them, and they do not have to work another job. I have told many of them that when their church grows and it can support them, they can consider not working bi-vocationally. We have to be careful not to allow this cold attitude of entitlement to damage our attitude of thanksgiving.

(Ro 6:23) “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

4. Harvest the Fruit

One of the most joyous times of being a gardener is harvesting the fruit. When we gather strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, kale, lettuce, carrots, or any of the other things that we grow, it is a joy to pick and eat it. The harvesting of the things that we have grown is a very joyous occasion.

In the Old Testament there were three feasts a year, and two of the feasts pertained to harvesting of fruit. The second feast was the Feast of Pentecost, which is also called the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits. The third feast was the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year when they gathered in the fruit of their labors from the field. God told the Jews, “Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me.” The harvesting of our fruit is a joyous celebration.

(Ex 23:14–16) “Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me. {15} You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed. {16} Also *you shall observe* the Feast of the Harvest *of* the first fruits of your labors *from* what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in *the fruit of* your labors from the field.”

Our harvesting of thanksgiving is by giving thanks to God and to others. When someone does something for us, and thanks springs up in our heart, and we give thanks to them for what they did, we are harvesting the fruit. When we read the word in our quiet time, and we are reminded that He removes our sins as far as the east is from the west, and we say, “Thank You, Lord, for forgiving me of my sins.” When we sit down to have a meal, and we take a minute to give thanks for the food, we are harvesting the fruit. When we see an answer to prayer, and we take a minute to thank God for hearing and answering our prayers, we are harvesting the fruit of thanksgiving. All through the day as we see all that God has done and is doing, we can harvest the fruit by giving thanks to God. When the harvesting of fruit becomes a way of life for us, we can be encouraged that we have cultivated an attitude of thanksgiving.

Conclusion

God’s will for us is to give thanks in everything. This happens when we have an attitude of thanksgiving. We cultivate that attitude of thanksgiving by **preparing** the soil of our heart, which begins by repenting of being ungrateful and unappreciative, and asking God to give us an attitude of thanksgiving.

Second, after preparing the soil of our hearts, we need to **plant** lots of seeds of thanks. We need to read, memorize, meditate, and dwell on scriptures that deal with giving thanks. If we want a bountiful crop, we need to sow bountifully.

Third, we must watch over our crop of thanksgivings. We must be deliberate, intentional, and watchful. We must root out pride and other weeds that hinder our giving of thanks. We also need to guard against attitudes of entitlement.

Fourth, we need to harvest our crops, and we do that by expressing thanks to God and to others when thoughts of gratitude rise up within us.

I want to close with two final thoughts. First, God tells us that we are temples of the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit dwells inside us. God wants us to walk in the Spirit (Ga 5:25) and to be led by the Spirit (Ro 8:14), empowered by the Spirit (Ac 1:8), and filled with the Holy Spirit.

(1 Co 3:16) “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

How do we get filled with the Holy Spirit? In Ephesians 5:18-20, Paul exhorts us not to be drunk with wine for that is dissipation, but to be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with our hearts to the Lord, always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we sing and make melody and give thanks in all things, we get filled with the Holy Spirit. Our worship with praises

and thanksgivings create an atmosphere in our temple the Holy Spirit loves and He fills us with His presence. That is a wonderful benefit of our cultivation of an attitude of thanksgiving.

(Eph 5:18–20) “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, {19} speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; {20} always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;”

The second and final thought that I want to end with is in Luke 17, the account of the ten lepers that Jesus healed. After healing them, only one of them returned and gave thanks to Jesus. That one leper turned back and glorified God with a loud voice, and fell on his face at Jesus’ feet and gave thanks to Him. Jesus then asked where the other nine were. We want to be a church that is like the one leper that turned back. We want to be those who stop and glorify God and give Him thanks for everything He does for us. This flows out of an attitude of thanksgiving.

(Lk 17:15-18) “Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, {16} and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. {17} Then Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? {18} Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?”

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for forgiving us of our sins. Thank You for our salvation. Thank You for Your faithfulness in all areas of our lives. Thank You for Your provision. Thank You for inclining Your ears and listening to our prayers. Thank You for Your Word and for the promises that You give us. Help us to cultivate hearts that are full of thanksgiving. We want to be a church full of people that bless, honor, and thank You. Help us cultivate that attitude of thanksgiving. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- What are the things that keep us from giving thanks in everything?
- What is something that stood out in the message today, and why?
- What is the difference between saying thanks over a meal and having an attitude of thanksgiving?
- What are three things that are on the top of your thanksgiving list that you can share with others?
- If we have an attitude of thanksgiving, how does that impact others around us?
- We looked at being intentional in cultivating an attitude of thanksgiving. What is something that you plan to do intentionally to cultivate this attitude of thanksgiving?

Cultivating an Attitude of Thanksgiving

Introduction (Ps 50:12, 50:14, 50:23, 106:1, 118:1, 136:1, 1 Th 5:18, Col 4:2)

1. Prepare the Soil (Lk 8:15, 2 Ti 3:1-3, Ro 11:36, Ps 24:1, 100:3, Ho 10:12, 1 Jn 1:9)

2. Sow the Seeds (Lk 8:11, Ps 100:4, 9:1-2, 111:1, 92:1-2, 1 Th 5:18, 2 Co 9:6)

3. Tend the Garden (Ps 37:3)

a. Watering (1 Chr 16:4)

b. Weeding (Ro 11:36, Dt 8:3-14)

c. Watching (Ps 103:1-5, Ro 6:23)

4. Harvest the Fruit (Ex 23:14-16)

Conclusion (1 Co 3:16, Ga 5:25, Ro 8:14, Ac 1:8, Eph 5:18-20, Lk 17:15-18)