

An Expression of the Fullness of the Holy Spirit



Thanksgiving, Praise, and Worship (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again today as I continue to share with you about things we can give to God.

In my introductory talk yesterday I established two main points:

1. First, God has ordained that whenever we come before Him as His people, we shall always come not merely to receive from Him, but also to give to Him. I cited two passages of Scripture:

a. Exodus 23:15, where God says:

> "None shall appear before Me empty handed."

b. and Psalm 96:8, where the psalmist says:

> "Bring an offering and come into His courts."

In other words, ever come without an offering.

2. And then in Acts 20:35, Paul reminds us of the words of Jesus.

> "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

This principle applies not only in our relationship with our fellow men, but also in our relationship with God. We are blessed when we receive from God, but we are even more blessed when we give to God.

In my talk yesterday I also discussed the various kinds of things that we can give to God. I pointed out that these include, but are by no means limited to, money and material possessions.

On a higher level, Scripture speaks of various spiritual gifts or sacrifices that God asks us to give Him. Specifically, I mentioned three such spiritual gifts or sacrifices:

thanksgiving, praise and worship. I pointed out that these three things are like the colors of the rainbow, they are distinct, but they blend into one another. And I offered a simple way to see the distinction between them. I said this:

Thanksgiving relates to God's goodness.

Praise relates to God's greatness.

Worship relates to God's holiness.

Furthermore, thanksgiving and praise are primarily utterances of our mouths, but worship is primarily an attitude.

Today and for the rest of this week I'm going to focus on the first of these three things; that is, thanksgiving. In Old Testament, Hebrew and indeed, in Modern Hebrew also, the word for thanks is related to the word for a hand. In other words, the Hebrew concept of giving thanks is the stretching out or lifting up of our hands to God.

In New Testament Greek, the word for thanks is related to the word for grace. Interestingly enough, this is the word that's found in the word "Eucharist" which is by origin, a thanksgiving service. The connection between thanks and grace is very, very important. There are two sides to it. First of all, being thankful is a direct result of God's grace.

When I was a missionary in East Africa some years ago, I was amazed to discover that in some African tribal languages there is no word for "Thank you." This brought home to me that, really, being thankful is only experienced where the grace of God has had an impact on human hearts.

Secondly, thanksgiving is an appropriate response to God's grace. So, bear in mind always the connection between grace and thanks.

Let me just state the two sides of it again. First of all, thanksgiving or being thankful is a direct result of God's grace. Secondly, thanksgiving is also an appropriate response to God's grace.

Now I'm going to talk about thanksgiving or thankfulness just as the same, thankfulness being the inner condition of the heart; thanksgiving the way that condition is expressed. And as I've said, primarily through our mouth.

Now the first thing I want to say today is that thanksgiving is a direct command of Scripture. In Colossians 3:15-17, Paul says this:

> "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you are called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

Notice the emphasis on being thankful and giving thanks. It's brought out in each of those three verses. In verse 15 Paul says, "Be thankful…" That's a direct commandment of God. In verse 16 he says we are to "sing with thankfulness in our hearts to God." And in verse 17 he says whatever we do in word or deed, we're to do everything "in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." That's a pretty good principle to determine whether something ought or ought not to be done as a Christian. Just ask yourself, can you do it in the name of the Lord Jesus and giving thanks to God the Father as you do? If you can, it's probably permissible for you to do it. But if you cannot do it in the name of the Lord Jesus and giving thanks to God as you do it, then you'd better not do it at all.

But what I want to bring out just now is the emphasis on thankfulness. Thankfulness is the expression of the peace of Christ ruling in our heart. Thankfulness is the expression of the word of Christ richly dwelling within us. And giving thanks is the principle that should guide all that we do.

Compare what Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19. It's a very short but very important verse. Verse 16 is just two words:

> "Rejoice always…"

Verse 17, three words:

> "Pray without ceasing."

Verse 18:

> "In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit."

There's three simple instructions: Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks. And concerning giving thanks in everything, Paul says, "this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." When we are not giving thanks we are not fulfilling the will of God. We're out of the will of God. How

important it is to understand that.

I've dealt at various times with so many Christians: ministers, missionaries, and others who felt somehow that they weren't in the will of God. Somehow they weren't in the right ministry or they weren't in the right prayer group or they weren't in the right church. Something was wrong. And when I analyzed their situation and went into it with them, nothing was wrong in the external. It wasn't the wrong ministry. It wasn't the wrong prayer group. It wasn't the wrong church. But the problem was they weren't giving thanks. And Scripture makes it clear, when you're not giving thanks, you're not in the will of God. Everything else in your life may being line with God's will, but the fact that you're not giving thanks puts you out of the will of God. For Scripture says, "In everything give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

The second thing I want to say about thankfulness or thanksgiving is that it is an expression of the fullness of the Spirit, an essential expression. Listen to what Paul says in Ephesians 5:17-20:

> "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

And my interpretation is that what Paul then goes on to say is the will of the Lord. If we don't understand this then we are foolish. And this is what he goes on to say in verse 18:

> "And do not get drunk with wine for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit [capital 's,' the Holy Spirit]."

As Christians we need to bear in mind that there's a negative and a positive and each are equally valid. It's wrong for a Christian to get drunk with wine, but it's equally wrong for a Christian NOT to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Sometimes as religious people we focus on the negative, not being drunk with new wine, and we forget about the positive which is equally valid, we have to be filled with the Spirit.

And then Paul speaks about the results of being filled with the Holy Spirit, verse 19:

> "Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father."

Everywhere you look in the New Testament that it speaks about people being filled with or full of the Holy Spirit, the first immediate expression of that comes out of their mouth. They do something connected with speaking. This actually is a principle of Scripture. Jesus Himself states the principle in Matthew 12:34:

> "For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart."

When your heart is filled, it will overflow through the mouth. If your heart is filled with praise, with thankfulness, it will overflow through the heart. When you're filled with the Holy Spirit, there will be an overflow, it'll be through the mouth. You'll speak, you'll sing, and you'll give thanks. Notice that Paul says there, "always giving thanks for all things."

I was a logician by profession and sometimes logic helps me to understand Scripture. When Paul says, "Always giving thanks for all things," it seems to me that there's no time and no thing for which we are not to give thanks. And this is an expression of being filled with the Holy Spirit: "be filled with the Spirit"; "speaking in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing and making melody"; "always giving thanks for all things." There are three marks of being filled with the Holy Spirit: (1) speaking; (2) singing; (3) giving thanks.

Let me say this: an unthankful person is not full of the Holy Spirit. Remember what Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:

> "In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit."

The moment we cease to give thanks, we are quenching the Holy Spirit.

Start to apply this today. Start to give thanks. It'll change your day, it'll change your week, it'll change your life.

All right. Our time is up for the day. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue with this theme of thanksgiving. Specifically, I'll be speaking about thanksgiving as a requirement for entering God's presence.

Radio Program

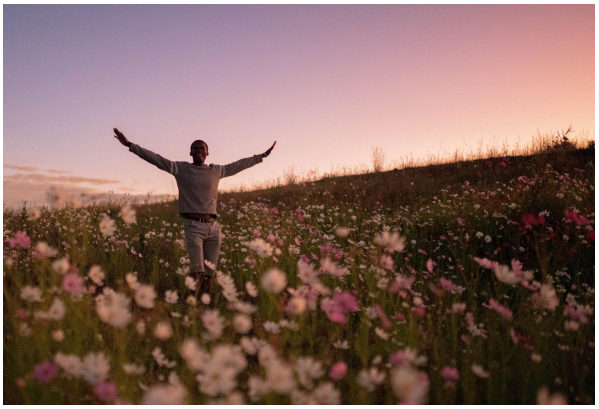
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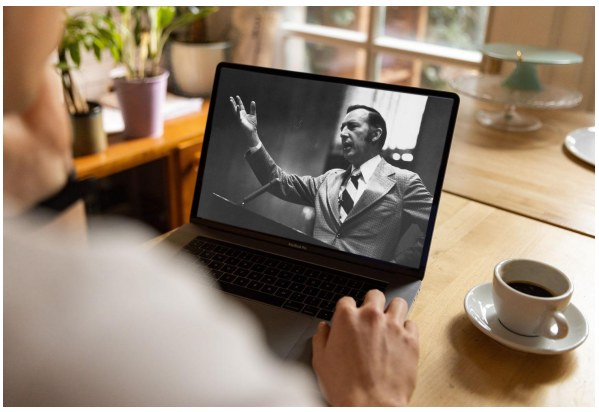
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