

1. Several months ago, as I was preparing for today's message, I felt the Lord directing me to revisit a series of messages from several years ago titled "An Attitude of Gratitude".
2. As you well know Thanksgiving is right around the corner, and I know this is a time when we think a little more about being thankful, but I am not referring to the thanksgiving holiday necessarily, but more importantly the act of giving thanks.
3. However, even deeper than just the act of giving thanks, I want to talk about an attitude of the heart or a mindset that is in alignment with what God intends, or with the lifestyle that will produce a harvest of fruit.
4. I want to talk about a mindset or an attitude that will bless us and will benefit us.
5. So the overall title of this series of messages is "An Attitude of Gratitude."
6. I am going to read what might be a familiar passage of scripture to many here today. My hope is that it's familiarity will not sidetrack us from the deep truths we find there.
7. The passage is found in...

**TEXT:** **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** Rejoice always, **17** pray continually, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

#### INTRO:

1. I want to highlight three words here in this passage. In verse 16 it is the word always. In verse 17 it is the word continually. And in verse 18 it is the word all.
2. Always, continually and all. What all three of these words indicate is an ongoing state of being.
3. Not sometimes but always. Not sporadically but continually.
4. Not in a few, or in some, or in most, but in all circumstances.
5. And the directions here to do always, continually, and all might on the surface seem to be three different things, but in reality, they are actually very closely related.
6. Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks in all circumstances.

7. The apostle Paul ties these three things together on another occasion. In his letter to the Philippian believers he has this to say. **Philippians 4:4-6** Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! **5** Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
8. These three things are what I would call for Paul the big three. Rejoice, pray, give thanks.
9. Rejoice, pray, give thanks.
10. And lest we think that is boring or unimportant, let me remind you that the purpose of focusing on these three directives is the fruit that it will produce in our lives.
11. What is that fruit? We will see in later weeks that there is much fruit to be gained but for today listen to verse seven. **Philippians 4:7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
12. So if we rejoice always, and pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances, then the fruit that will bear out in our lives will be that the peace of God.
13. What kind of peace? The kind of peace that is so amazing, so powerful and so awesome that it is beyond what our minds can understand.
14. This kind of peace, this amazing supernatural peace will guard our hearts and our minds.
15. Now let me stop here for just a moment. Is there any person in the room or watching online who would actually say? No pastor I don't need more peace.
16. No pastor, I don't need anything or anybody to guard my mind. My mind is just fine all by itself.
17. No pastor, I don't need anyone to guard my heart and protect me because I have never had my heart broken.
18. I don't think any of us would utter those words.
19. So what the Lord offers us here is something that I have found in life is really priceless. It is wonderful. Rare. Something that can't be found on every street corner, and that is peace.
20. The Lord says to us, let me give you a recipe for tapping into this

wonderful gift of peace that I want to lavish on you.

21. And that recipe is a constant, always, continual state of rejoicing, praying and thanksgiving.
22. More importantly, let's focus on what I call an attitude of gratitude.
23. I love word associations and translations. I'm kind of weird, I just like words, but I find the translation for the word thanksgiving in Spanish to be interesting.
24. While learning Spanish several years ago a word that really stuck with me is the word thanksgiving.
25. In Spanish is it said, **accion de gracias**. The literal translation in English is the action of thanks.
26. What I remember about the thanksgiving day holiday is that in English it is pretty simple. Thanksgiving day. But in Spanish it is this long phrase. Dia de accion de gracias.
27. A day devoted to the action of giving thanks. I'm not saying one translation is better than the other. I'm not saying that one is bad and the other is good.
28. I would just like to point out that it is possible in either language for the thought process to be incomplete.
29. If we are not careful, we can relegate thanksgiving to an action.
30. We can merely think of the act of giving thanks as just an action. Just something we do.
31. But I believe the intent of God. Actually, the blessing that God wants to give us is in understanding that **thanksgiving is not an action, thanksgiving is a state of being.**
32. If we take that a step farther, thanksgiving is not just an action it is an attitude.
33. And not just an every now and then attitude, but a continual attitude. A continual attitude of gratitude.
34. The other day I was talking to someone and I felt compelled to share with them something I had heard several years before.
35. This person is a hard worker, and that can be a very good and honorable trait to have. But I sensed that this person was overdoing it.
36. And I said to them, God did not create you as a human doing, he created you as a human being.

37. The way I interpret that is, one of the principles to life in Jesus Christ is not so much in doing, as it is in being.
38. In this case, the secret to experiencing the peace that passes all understanding is not in doing thanks, or necessarily giving thanks, but rather in being thankful.
39. Is that making sense this morning.
40. Sure, for thanks to be powerful and complete it must be expressed, it must be given, but **the secret to full life in Christ is not in doing or giving primarily, it is in being thankful.**
41. Having an attitude, or a mindset or a makeup that is one of thankfulness.
42. If we go back to the passage in 1 Thessalonians chapter five we see the extent to which we are to be thankful. We find the lengths to which we are to have or possess and attitude of gratitude.
43. **1 Thessalonians 5:18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**
44. The KJV says in everything give thanks.
45. The amplified bible says Thank [God] in everything [*no matter what the circumstances may be, be thankful and give thanks*],
46. The message bible says thank God no matter what happens.
47. Sure there is some emphasis here on the action of thanks or expressing thanks. But I contend it will be impossible to fulfill that command if all we do is attempt to latch on to the fact that I need to express thanks in all circumstances.
48. Trying to do, without being, will be nearly impossible. Again, it is not just in the doing where the victory comes, it is in the being thankful.
49. As a way of life. As a state of being. As a state of mind. Having an attitude of gratitude.
50. I asked if I could share this story and was given permission.
51. Several years ago, a friend shared a thought that had been in their devotional a few days before.
52. The devotional began that day by quoting a phrase. This is the day that the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it.
53. When they read that phrase, they were taken back in their mind to some songs that used to be very popular in churches all across

America.

54. This is the day, this is the day, that the Lord has made.... (traditional)
55. This is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it.  
(upbeat, contemporary)
56. This person kind of reminisced about those songs, but was prompted to question. Is that actually scripture.
57. It turns out it is. Psalm 118:24 This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.
58. There is that word rejoice again. This is the day the Lord has made. I will rejoice. I will express praise and thanksgiving. But it doesn't end with just the word rejoice. It says, and be glad in it.
59. Again, I point out. The word rejoice is an action word, but the word be, is a state of mind. We will be glad in it.
60. Not do glad, but be glad.
61. That is important because the writer of the daily devotional stressed the fact that we are not to rejoice in the day the Lord has made or given us, only when things are going well.
62. We are to rejoice and be glad even when things about that day are not going well.
63. My friend said they were very challenged by that and determined that during that day, they were going to practice rejoicing and being grateful in whatever that day held.
64. As it turned out, that was a pretty significant decision.
65. How many have learned that usually when we make a decision to be obedient to the Lord in some particular area or command, that it is normal practice for that decision to be challenged in some way.
66. My friend's day was no different. No long after making the decision to be grateful for whatever happened in that day, that day fell apart, with every seeming problem you can imagine manifesting itself.
67. What started out to be a calm, peaceful day turned out to be an almost all-day ordeal of struggle and difficulty and hardship.
68. It came to their attention that there was a misunderstanding with a family member.
69. Not wanting there to be tension or unresolved conflict, they called the family member to try and work it out, but quickly realized the more

they talked the worse it got.

70. They decided to call another family member who had knowledge of the situation, not to gossip, but to sincerely ask this person if they thought they were at fault and needed to apologize.
71. They were told they hadn't done anything wrong but decided, I am going to apologize anyway. Being connected intimately with that family member is way more important than being right.
72. So, they called the family member back and apologized, and even though the person said they accepted the apology, it was apparent there was still tension between them.
73. They got off the phone and just felt unfulfilled in how things had turned out. They didn't know what else to do, and yet the situation wasn't fully resolved.
74. I don't know about you but that whole thing seems pretty stressful to me. That nearly all day mess is not something I would even consider being thankful for.
75. But yet at various times throughout the day, my friend said they were reminded of the devotional and the scripture to rejoice and be glad.
76. So, at various times, in the middle of this whole mess, they would stop and give thanks to the Lord for this day that He had given them.
77. For sure it didn't feel natural or normal. But they decided to keep their vow to the Lord.
78. Finally, at the end of the day, even though everything wasn't all cleared up, they again gave thanks to the Lord in spite of everything that had transpired that day. By the way, they told me that when they went to bed that night, they were so exhausted that they slept like a baby for several hours.
79. These are my words now after having heard about this trying experience.
80. What the Lord wanted from my friend was more than just giving or expressing thanks. While that is important, that is not all there is to the matter.
81. The Lord wanted them to have an overall mindset of thankfulness. What I would call **an attitude of gratitude.**
82. The Lord wanted them, and us for that matter, to rejoice in whatever

that day held.

83. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:18 to give thanks in every circumstance. In all things.
84. I saw a meme the other day and it said, fake it till you make it. Now I am going to confess, I have practiced that strategy a time or two.
85. At times I have had to just put on a brave face and plow ahead. But as a whole, I have not found the fake it till you make it philosophy to be a recipe for success.
86. Faking it only gets you so far. When things get tough you have to believe in something. When life batters you on every side you have to be grounded in something real and solid.
87. If I am going to have any chance whatsoever at being able to rejoice always and pray continually and give thanks in every circumstance, then I can't be carried by feelings or emotions.
88. I've got to have something real. I have to have a lifestyle that is grounded and rooted in thankfulness.
89. I've got to have an attitude of gratitude. An ongoing mindset and way of being that goes beyond just doing.
90. And friend, I'm here to tell you, even then that mindset will be tested. Look at Teresa.
91. Some time back a friend asked me how I was doing. I thought for a second and I asked, do you really want to know? They said they did, and so I told them. I've got about a dozen situations in my life that are out of my control.
92. Friend whose wife has terminal cancer.
93. Friends, multiple, who are battling Alzheimer's.
94. Loved one to have heart surgery.
95. Friends battling anxiety.
96. Another friend who has more problems on their plate than they can handle.
97. I've got enough problems, and I bet you do too, that fake it till you make it isn't an option.
98. And I will give thanks and I will rejoice, but I need more than mind over matter. I need more than making myself be thankful.

99. I need a lifestyle of thankfulness. An attitude of gratitude. And the source of that kind of mindset cannot be the situations going on around me.
100. The source of that attitude of gratitude has to be the powerful God who lives in me.
101. My thanks has to be rooted and grounded in who Jesus is.
102. Only when I know, that I know, that Jesus is enough, can I have an attitude of gratitude.

### Conclusion:

1. I am here to declare that we can trust in the Lord. But that trust is a choice.
2. Usually in the morning I spend some time looking though and reading some stories in my news feed.
3. Now. I have personally selected the kinds of stories and topics I want to be in that feed. I have tried to cut out as much garbage as I can.
4. But I have to tell you. Most days I can't spend a whole lot of time reading about the current day's events because if I do, I will pretty quickly start to get depressed.
5. What I find is that everybody has a problem that they are upset about.
6. Most people have someone to blame for the problem and very rarely is that person to blame them.
7. Everybody has an idea of how to solve the problem, but very often their idea involves somebody else doing the fixing while they do the criticizing.
8. And on and on and on the drama goes.
9. I am here to tell you this morning. This world's problems can't be solved by the world's philosophies.
10. Government is not the answer. More money or stuff is not the answer.
11. An easier life is not the answer. There is only one answer, and his name is Jesus.
12. So that leaves me with a choice. Either I am going to mull over and mutter about and make myself sick about every terrible thing going on



in the world, or I am going to choose, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to look to God my father and BE thankful that he has everything under control and that He isn't losing any sleep about the happenings of our world.

13. And so today I am asking you to make that choice with me. Together let's choose to trust in the Lord and to be thankful for who he is.
14. We are not asking God to change our circumstances, though there is nothing wrong with that.
15. Instead, we are asking the Lord to change us into a follower of Jesus Christ that has an attitude of gratitude.
16. Prayer. Lord build our faith.
17. Sing a worship song of thankfulness.
18. Salvation call.