

1. Today we are finishing up our series, an attitude of gratitude.
2. We have been using as our 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.
3. In week one we highlighted three words in this passage. Always, continually, and all.
4. All three of those words indicate an ongoing state of being.
5. Not sometimes, not sporadically, not in certain situations but always, continually and in all circumstances, we are to give thanks.
6. The idea is that thanksgiving is more than just an action. It is a mindset. It is a way of being. It is a heart attitude that permeates every area of our life.
7. I once saw our former Arkansas Assemblies Superintendent Larry Moore post this quote on Facebook. **O Lord, may gratitude be the constantly consistent core of my Christian character.**
8. That statement immediately resonated with me because it goes along with what we have been talking about. God's desire is not that we practice a day of thanksgiving or a season of thanksgiving.
9. God's desire is that gratitude or thanksgiving would be an integral part of who we are on the inside.
10. Last week we clarified how that is possible by making a distinction between the words for and in.
11. What it says in **1 Thessalonians 5:18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
12. The key word there is in all circumstances. However, what our minds can comprehend is for all circumstances or for everything, as another version of the bible states it.
13. In fact, the enemy wants us to be confused about these two little words because if we latch on to the idea of being thankful for everything, what will happen is eventually, we will find that pursuit futile, as kind of crazy if you will, and will give up on the idea of thankfulness altogether.
14. I made the statement last week and I think it bears repeating. I just can't be thankful for everything. There are a lot of evil things and people in the world that I am just not thankful for.

15. There are a lot of situations and trials and hardships that I am just not thankful for.
16. But in everything, no matter what the circumstances, no matter what the situation. I can choose to be thankful in that thing.
17. In the midst of trials and tribulations and stuff that stretches and pulls and tugs on my life I can choose to be thankful in that thing.
18. Someone shared with me this week that they were so blessed because they practiced obedience to this command to give thanks in all circumstances.
19. They shared that there weren't terrible difficult things going on in their life that day, but it seemed like there were 100 little things that were poking at them from all directions.
20. And the result of all those needle pricks was discouragement.
21. But In the middle of those discouraging circumstances, they committed to obey the Lord and thank him, not for, but in what they were experiencing.
22. And that thanksgiving in the middle of those things made a drastic change in them. It didn't change the circumstances, but it did change their discouragement into encouragement.
23. I loved it when they looked at me and said. This really works. Giving God thanks in all circumstances really works.
24. And that is the type of thankfulness that pleases the Lord.
25. Trying to thank God for everything makes you a fake. Thanking God in everything makes you faithful.
26. This morning let's move on to one last aspect of thankfulness. Of an attitude of gratitude.
27. And it is what I call...

TITLE: **The gift of Thanksgiving.**

I highlighted this gift just a bit in week one; but today I want us to consider it in detail. The gift of thanksgiving is found in...

TEXT: **Philippians 4:6-7** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

INTRO:

1. If I can just be transparent this morning, I must confess that from time to time I struggle to keep the command here in verse number six.
2. Do not be anxious about anything. I mean that is great wisdom. Those are words to live by.
3. But I have to tell you, by nature I am a worrier. By nature, I have a tendency to get a little anxious at times.
4. I have quoted the scripture so many times that I know it by heart. **2 Timothy 1:7** For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (KJV)
5. I have declared the truth of this verse over my life. I have claimed the promises that it contains. God, I know you have not given me this spirit of fear, so I claim power, love, and a sound mind.
6. I have prayed fervently, passionately, and loudly at times. I know the word is true and I know that God's word says he cannot lie.
7. But yet I have found myself still struggling with anxiety at times. Maybe you are like me.
8. I tend to beat myself up over struggles like these and of course the enemy is always there to whisper in my ear, well there must be something wrong with you or else this scripture would work.
9. And the reality is, I am flawed and of course I misunderstand. But the Lord began to give me some insight into this struggle and the secret to its fulfillment.
10. And at least part of the secret is found in **Philippians 4:6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
11. I am so thankful that God's word doesn't just give us the command, God's word also gives us the secret, the meat, the formula if you will of how to obey God's commands.
12. In this case, the formula is found in everything after the word but.
13. Do not be anxious about anything. But in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
14. Now. I must tell you I have prayed about anxiety many times. Lots and lots of times I have prayed and asked God to help me. I have asked God to calm me. I have petitioned God to create and provide

peace for my life.

15. And hear me out this morning. Prayer is good. Prayer is exactly what God says to do here.
16. We are commanded to pray, about everything, and prayer is a powerful tool. But this passage reveals something more.
17. Prayer alone is incomplete to drive away anxiety. Prayer and petitions and crying out to God alone is not enough to provide for us the wonderful gift that God promises us in verse 7.
18. Stay with me for just a moment. We are going to skip to verse seven and then we are going to come back to verse 6.
19. Here is the wonderful gift. **Philippians 4:7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
20. Whew doggies. That's what I call a gift. Do not be anxious about anything. Ok God, I got it. And the peace of God that transcends.
21. I looked up that word transcend, and I have to tell you I was thrilled that I did.
22. Transcend: to rise above or go beyond. Overpass or exceed. to outdo or exceed in excellence, elevation, extent, degree, etc.; surpass; excel.
23. And the peace of God will outdo anything your mind can imagine.
24. And this wonderful, powerful, amazing peace will guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus.
25. In other words, Jesus himself. The Son of God. The great I am. The first and the last. The alpha and omega. The beginning and the end. The way maker.
26. This great awesome God himself will guard your heart and mind. Man, I am loving this even more.
27. I said this a couple of weeks ago, but I will say it again. Who in their right mind doesn't want that?
28. Who in their right mind doesn't need that?
29. Who among us would say, thanks God but no thanks. I don't need your peace to guard my heart and mind. I'm good.
30. Which of use would say that? None of us.
31. So, it is something that each and every one of us want.

32. So, God doesn't want us to be anxious. So much so that he is willing to help us by guarding our heart and mind with peace.
33. Wonderful. So how do I unlock that wonderful gift God so freely wants to give?
34. I'm so glad you asked. Because the Lord is faithful, not only to give us the command and the gift, but he is also faithful to give us the key.
35. And the key is found in the last part of verse 6. **Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**
36. Let me break down this verse into three parts.

In every situation.

1. I won't spend much time here but to put it simply, in everything.
2. That is important because I suspect there are at least a few people who have a bent toward feeling like you are bothering God.
3. You don't want to bother him. Oh, it's just a little thing.
4. This isn't that big a deal, so I'll just deal with it on my own.
5. Hear the heart of God this morning. God wants you to come to him with everything.
6. In God's eyes nothing is too great, and nothing is too small.
7. In God's eyes you are not a bother. In God's eyes the big stuff, little stuff, and the in-between stuff all matters to God.
8. So come to him with everything.
9. On the other end of the spectrum are those who feel like you have prayed to God about that thing a million times.
10. Oh goodness. I have prayed about that thing so many times, what good will one more time make?
11. The reality is, I don't know what good one more time will make. But I do know God wants to hear from you. God wants you to bring it to him even if it is for the billionth time.
12. So, the first part of receiving this gift of peace for your heart and mind is to practice God's command in every situation.
13. What are we to do in every situation? We are to...

Pray, petition, and present our requests to God.

1. Again, I think you get the point, so I won't spend a ton of time here.

2. You know what the word pray means.
3. Petition. Here is my favorite definition of the word petition: a request made for something desired, especially a respectful or humble request, as to a superior or to one of those in authority; a supplication or prayer:
4. Yes, I am praying. Yes, I am presenting my requests to God.
5. But I am not bringing these prayers and presentations in an attitude of pride or entitlement. I'm not acting like I deserve an answer.
6. I am coming with an attitude of the heart that communicates humility and submission to God.
7. Prayer, petition, and present.
8. But it is here that I want to draw a distinction. There is one more piece of the puzzle we must consider.
9. The key to experiencing the peace that passes all understanding. The kind of peace in Christ Jesus that guards our heart and mind, is not just in humble prayer and petition.
10. You can pray, you can pray about everything, you can pray with the right attitude and heart and still be left struggling with fear and anxiety and worry.
11. It is only when you add in the last key that our prayers become complete.

With thanksgiving.

1. **Philippians 4:6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
2. As I read and re-read this verse I couldn't help but question why is thanksgiving so important.
3. I know being thankful is important. I know it is a very powerful part of our lives.
4. I know that coming to God in everything is important.
5. I know that I ought to pray and pray humbly and pray often.
6. But why is it that thanksgiving seems to tie it all together.
7. I don't mean to sound like a broken record this morning, but the truth of this principle is so powerful that it bears repeating.
8. **When I present my prayers and petitions to God without thanksgiving, I am me focused and I am problem focused.**

9. But when I present my prayers and petitions to God with thanksgiving, I am God focused and I am faith focused.
10. Thanksgiving changes my whole focus and mindset and attitude.
11. When I come to God with all my problems and all my worries and all my fears. Which God wants us to do.
12. If I come without thanksgiving my focus will usually be on myself and my problems.
13. Even though I am asking God for his help, I am really focused on myself and what I want or need.
14. When I bring those same prayers and petitions to God with thanksgiving, it shifts my focus from myself onto God.
15. I'm going to say it is near impossible to be thankful and at the same time be selfish.
16. Selfish people aren't usually thankful and thankful people aren't usually selfish. The two just don't exist together.
17. So, when I bring my prayers and petitions to God with thanksgiving, it shifts my focus to God and who he is.
18. And that one key. Thanksgiving. Changes everything.
19. Without thanksgiving I am me focused. And when I am me focused it magnifies the size of my problems.
20. But with thanksgiving I am God focused. And when I am God focused it diminishes the size of my problems and it builds faith in God.
21. Let me take that one step closer.
22. When I pray and petition God without thanksgiving, I am me focused, which magnifies the size of my problems, which breeds more anxiety, stress, worry and fear.
23. But when I pray and petition God with thanksgiving, I am God focused. Which diminishes the size of my problems which builds faith in my heart.
24. And that faith breeds peace. The kind of Christ like peace that guards my heart and mind.
25. How many are still with me this morning?

Conclusion.

1. So, the reality is I can quote scripture, pray about everything, pray a lot, and even pray humbly. But if those prayers aren't bathed in thanksgiving I am left where I am. Anxious, worried, fearful.
2. But when I come in an attitude of gratitude. With thanksgiving, I am transported to a place where God's peace is released in my life and that wonderful peace that is so powerful that I can't even comprehend it begins to guard my heart and mind in Christ Jesus.
3. Lack of thanksgiving breeds anxiety.
4. Much thanksgiving breeds peace.
5. As I contemplated those two phrases I just gave you, the Lord directed me to the word breeds.
6. Little thanksgiving breeds anxiety.
7. Lots of thanksgiving breeds peace.
8. That word breeds indicates multiplication. Rapid multiplication.
9. So, when I am not thankful it breeds a rapid multiplication of anxiety.
10. But when I am thankful it breeds a rapid multiplication of peace.
11. The female rabbit or doe can have a litter or a kit every 30 days.
12. In each kit or litter, she will have between 4 and 12 little babies.
13. That means over a year she can have anywhere from 48 to 144 rabbits. Thus, the saying, multiplying like rabbits.
14. Lack of thanksgiving multiplies anxiety.
15. Lots of thanksgiving multiplies peace.
16. Let's thank God this morning and do what will breed peace in our lives.
17. Lead in a time of thanksgiving.
18. Have the team lead the song, thank you for the cross Lord.
19. I would like to ask everyone here this morning and watching online to participate.
20. In just a moment I am going to ask you to find a place and get alone and spend some time with the Lord.
21. During that time with the Lord, here is what I am asking each of us to do.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas of ungratefulness or

negativity in your life. Ask Him to show you clearly.

- Ask the Holy Spirit to change you. Change the way you think.
- Bring your requests to the Lord but do so with thanksgiving.

22. While people are moving and praying, if you are here this morning and you don't know Jesus as your savior, I will be right here in the front. Will you come talk to me about your salvation?