

“What’s Your Style of Expressing Gratitude?”—1 Chronicles 16:8-11

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “What’s Your Style of Expressing Gratitude?”, is 1 Chronicles 16:8-11 → *Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; tell of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice! Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His presence continually!* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

People have many ways to express gratitude. Along with the basic “Thank you!” they may express their appreciation with a card, a gift, money, flowers or various other tokens of appreciation. From a very young age it is probable that most of us here were taught the importance of acknowledging the receipt of a gift with some kind of formal “Thank you!” In fact, it was drilled into us! We knew if we didn’t say “Thank you!” mom or dad would be “on our case” about it immediately! I wonder if the same intentionality was given to expressing thanks to God. What is the motivation behind giving Him thanks if it’s not mom or dad?

Our text is a portion of a psalm of King David expressing his thanks to the

LORD after bringing the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem in the midst of great joy and celebration. Their “style” of giving thanks included *singers who played loudly on musical instruments, with harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise sounds of joy.* (1 Chronicles 15:16) They offered various sacrifices, (1 Chronicles 15:26) celebrating *with shouting, to the sound of the horn, trumpets, and cymbals,* (1 Chronicles 15:28), with *dancing and celebrating* (1 Chronicles 15:29) and giving *to each person a loaf of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins.* (1 Chronicles 16:3) They certainly gave thanks to Yahweh **in style!**

In our text we are commanded to express to the LORD our gratitude for all the great things He has done in our lives! Since giving *thanks to the LORD* is an act of submission in worship as we *call upon His name*, the most basic “style” of giving thanks is through prayer. While this applies specifically to prayers of thanks it applies to our whole prayer life. Philippians 4:6 says: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* Notice . . . **in everything** we are supposed to make our *requests . . . known to God . . . with thanksgiving.*

Actually, this may be an unusual way in which most people think about bringing their requests and petitions to God. How many times do we ask or petition God to do something specific for us based upon dissatisfactions, not

based upon gratitude? It is usually the adverse critical moments in peoples' lives when they are driven to their knees in prayer, begging God for deliverance from their suffering. Too many fail to use those same knees for prayer when things are going comfortably well and they take God's providence for granted. Prayer and thanksgiving go hand-in-hand as 1 Thessalonians 5:18 commands us: *Give thanks **in all circumstances**; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

Other ways of expressing gratitude are also mentioned by David in our text. Singing *praises to Him* (Verse 9) is another style of expressing our heart-felt gratitude while praising God! Ephesians 5:19-20 commands us to address *one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, **giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*** Music has always played a major role in the worship life of God's people!

We express gratitude by sharing with others what Jesus has done for us! Verses 8-9 of our text tells us to *make known His deeds among the peoples . . . tell of all His wondrous works!* Ever thought of witnessing—telling others how the LORD works in your life everyday—as an expression of thanks? It is another way that your thanksgiving is thanks**living**! This is especially true when you share with others the *wondrous works* of God as He has revealed

them in your life in the Person & Work of Jesus. He kept God's Law perfectly **for you so you can stand in God's presence holy and righteous in His sight!** He offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice **for your sins so you can be forgiven!** He rose from the dead **for you so that you can live eternally in God's presence!** What *wondrous works* He has done for us!!

We express gratitude when we do things for His glory. This is simply living who you are in Christ in your daily vocations, tasks, relationships and conversations of life. The Holy Spirit moves you to give of yourself in various ways so that God may be glorified as your life touches the lives of those around you! Colossians 3:16-17 commands us: *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.*** The LORD is glorified when people come to Him, repenting of their sins and seeking *His strength* and *His presence continually!* Since His *presence* among us is found only in Jesus through Word and sacrament, God is glorified when you believe in Him for the forgiveness of your sins!

It is crucial to *seek the LORD and **His** strength . . . continually* because we find ourselves amidst the presence of sin and satan's attacks upon our lives

daily. These work to draw you into an unthankful life. They deceive you into thinking that your “style” of giving thanks is based upon your circumstances. On the contrary, thanks and joy are not produced by circumstances, only challenged by circumstances. Chronic illnesses, tragedies, relationship conflicts, victimization, death and whole gamut of others sinful circumstances and sins will challenge your thankfulness everyday. Just having to live with and work around so many grouchy people will make your thanksgiving **thanksliving** difficult. Does the “shoe fit?”

Seeking the LORD’s face **always** in the face of Jesus is the key to making your thanksgiving a constant **thanksliving!!** 2 Corinthians 4:6 says *God . . . has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of His glory . . . **in the face of Jesus Christ***. Even when our earthly circumstances don’t give us much joy we can still be thankful for what we have experienced in the *face of Jesus Christ*—that is, in His love, grace, forgiveness, eternal life and the Holy Spirit’s power!

This is the uniqueness of a Christian’s style of expressing gratitude! Because of who you are in Christ Jesus you can express gratitude for God’s gracious providence with all your heart **at all times and in all circumstances**. Not only is His grace expressed in His physical providence which He *sends . . . on the evil and on the good, and . . . on the just and the unjust* (cf. Matthew

5:45), but also in His spiritual providence which He sends in the Person & Work of His Son, Jesus Christ. Thankfulness which is focused on God's grace and forgiveness in Jesus is the kind of thankfulness that will make the Lord Jesus known among the nations because it will tell of all He has done for us! It permeates every "style" of giving thanks because it's focus is properly on Christ! What's your style of expressing gratitude? Amen.

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make known His deeds among the peoples!

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