

Be You Thankful

I remember an occasion when I was using the telephone in the United States. At the end of the conversation I said "*Cheerio*" to the person. My wife giggled and said "*They do not know what that word means!*"

I thought to myself; "*What does it mean anyway?*" Every time I use the telephone and say good-bye to the person I say "*Cheerio*". What does it mean? Our lives are full of words that we use without necessarily thinking about them. Talk is cheap, they say, because oftentimes we do not realise what we are saying, what we are meaning.

One particular word I would like to look at today, is a word that we reiterate numerous times throughout the day as we deal with people. If we go into a shop in the morning in England to pick up a newspaper, or get a cup of coffee, what do we say to the person when they have served us? What do we say to the staff in the office who provide some service to us, or the serviceman at the garage who repairs the car, or somebody helps us out during the day? How often do we say "*Thanks*", or "*Thank you*" to another individual as part of our daily routine?

I guess most of us never think about it, do we? It is just one of those words that we learned in our vocabulary. We know the right time to use it, and we say it.

There are all sorts of other words like that in our vocabulary that we use. I often wonder if it is worthwhile stopping to ask "What do I really MEAN when I say "*Thanks*" or "*Thank you*" to another person?"

Thankfulness has become institutionalised in the western world. It has created its own industry: "Thank-you" cards. If you are invited out to dinner at somebody's house, the essential requirement is that when you go home you send them a thank-you card. My wife said to me "*Have you sent a thank-you card to so-and-so for dinner the other night?*" I said "*No, I thought you were doing that!*".

If somebody does not send a thank-you card after having been invited for dinner, what would we think? Would we think they are a lesser individual because they did not send a thank-you card?

We write a thank-you card to an individual or a couple who have provided some form of hospitality. What does it mean? We go and find something on the shelf that appeals to US (that we think looks nice); it may have "Thank You" on the second page inside, or it may be blank. We write the person's name, and if we are a person of a few words, we may just sign our name. Some have the ability to express themselves very freely in giving thanks. Others of us labour over trite sayings as we try to say "Thanks" for whatever it is that a person has provided. But having done it, we feel our duty to that person has been taken care of. It has been fulfilled.

Is it not interesting though, that you can send a card to an individual as a statement of thanks, but yet spend the whole time criticising the individual for what their place is like, the meal they have provided, someone's conduct etc. You have to ask; "What does it really mean?"

Having made those comments about thank-cards, I do not want to criticise the sending of notes and cards to others. I am not calling for a Church of God boycott on "Hallmark Cards". Get that in mind! Because I, like many others, have received cards that have expressed sentiments and had meaningful messages which have been a source of encouragement and help. We have probably all experienced that at some point in time, where someone, in sending a card has been able to reach out and offer some help and encouragement to another individual, and I would hate for us to ever cease doing that.

But what I would like to do is to look at this aspect of thanks, because it so easily can become no more than a rote action that is expected of us; something that we do because it is demanded of us socially. As a rote action it can so easily be undertaken without great thought or meaning, and that is where the problem comes in.

The apostle Paul frequently spoke about giving thanks. One of the most prolific places where Paul uses the word "thanks", or "thankful", is in the epistle to the Church at Colossae. Speaking to them he made the statement:

Colossians 3: 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

He said the peace of God has got to dwell in our hearts, and he said we are to be thankful. So why be thankful? What is it that the apostle Paul saw about thanks that is so important?

Let us start by asking ourselves what does thankfulness entail? We have been talking about human interactions, and the way in which we use the word "thanks", so let us stay at the human end of the spectrum and examine this aspect of thankfulness in terms of human beings. Then we can move from there into godly aspects of thanks.

It is an important place to start as well, because it is so very easy to take people for granted. Jesus Himself challenged some of the basic concepts of human thankfulness. If we have problems with thankfulness today, it is not new. It is a problem of humanity, a problem of every generation. Jesus Christ, in speaking to the people of His day, 2,000 or so years ago, talked about the way in which people will use the aspect of thankfulness.

Luke 6: 32 "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? ...

Where are you getting to, if you just love people who reciprocate to you?

32 ... For even sinners love those who love them.

33 "And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

34 "And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back.

It is very easy to thank someone that you identify with. Jesus Christ said there is something rotten about that! That is not the way that a human being should be thankful. You should not be thankful or reciprocate nicely to a person, just because you know they will do the same back to you!

Thanks and thankfulness should not be for those who will reciprocate it. That is partiality, and it is against God's Law! Thanks and thankfulness has to be for all humanity. The apostle Paul understood that when he spoke to Timothy. He spoke about some very big concepts here ...

1 Timothy 2: 1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,

There is an attitude of thanks that is to be expressed towards ALL HUMANITY, not just your friends!

2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

It affects the type of life that we live in terms of our relationship with God. You can contrast what Paul is saying there with what Jesus Christ described in ...

Luke 18: 9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

They looked down on others. They were partial. The human condition two thousand years ago is the same human condition today.

10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men - extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

He thanked God that he was not like everybody else! God said he trusted in himself that he was righteous, and he despised others. You might say the aspect of thankfulness has SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE WAY IN WHICH WE SEE OTHER INDIVIDUALS. Here was a man who was full of himself. Jesus Christ was making the point that this man needed to get rid of something of himself, of the outlook that he had towards other individuals. He needed to cast down the opinions that he had of himself, of who he was. So we have an intimation as to one aspect of thankfulness.

Is society thankful today? Do people really express thanks to one another? Oftentimes they do not. Why? Because what they receive is what they EXPECT. *"So why should I give you any thanks for what I expect? It is my right. It is my due."* Perhaps this is the case in some cultures more than others.

Parents expect a lot from their children in terms of the care they will receive as they reach the latter years of life. The concept of a parent thanking a child for what it has done for it would never enter their minds, because it is "expected".

Are we like that?

How many marriages fall apart because the wife EXPECTS something of the husband, or the husband EXPECTS something of the wife? They have expectations, and they are never ever thanked.

How many children grow up with a distorted view of life, because their parents never learned to thank them for what they were able to accomplish? Because they had a certain expectation of their children, the relationship between the parents and the children was distorted.

People take things for granted. We live in a society which takes other individuals for granted. Is it new? No. It has always been a problem of humanity, to take things for granted.

Luke 17: 11 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off.

13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"

18 "Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?"

You have to ask yourself, why did the other nine not return to give thanks to Jesus Christ for the miracle that had been done in their lives through the power of God? Was it that they EXPECTED this religious leader to be able to perform works for them, to cleanse them? Was that their expectation? *"A Messiah is coming who will have this power, and as an Israelite it is my due, my right"*. They took it for granted. Only one person came back to thank God. Were the others unthankful? Perhaps, in this day and age, they would have sent Him a card the next day, after the event.

Jesus Christ highlighted the aspect of the Samaritan who came and thanked Him on that occasion, there and then. He appreciated it.

Coming to the end of the epistle to the Hebrews, the writer says:

Hebrew 13: 15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

We are to continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God. Clearly, Paul is referring to the thank offerings that were offered in the Temple, and the way in which those were supposed to have a part in a person's life; not just as a physical event taking place in the Temple. They were supposed to instruct a person as to how they were to relate to God.

They were to give thanks. We are to give thanks to His name.

16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The word "share" is an interesting word. In the Authorised Version the word is "communicate":

16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The use of the word "communicate" in the Authorised Version or "share" in the New King James Version is a very instructive one in terms of thanks, and giving thanks. It is the very same word that is used in terms of community -- exactly the same word.

We are to see ourselves as part of a community. What does that concept of a community do for us? How does that tie in to the giving of thanks?

A community has a recognition of dependency; that we do not exist of, and by, ourselves. You might say, that is a great challenge for the world at this point in time in terms of "Generation X", or in terms of the "Baby Boomers". Many of us are part of those generations. They are generations that can very easily see themselves as self dependent. "Me-ism", individualism, characterises the society that we are a part of in this world: "being your own man".

The apostle Paul described it:

***2 Timothy 3: 1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:
2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud,
blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of
good,
4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,***

Does that characterise society today? It does in many ways. We live in a world of individualism. My wife and I left the ground at Heathrow Airport at about 8.30 on Thursday morning, and flew 12 hours to Los Angeles. You do not do that as an individual. You do that in a state of dependency.

How many people do you depend upon to fly from Heathrow to Los Angeles? We do it without giving another thought to it. We see somebody at Check-In. Our bags disappear down a conveyor belt, hopefully to reappear on another conveyor belt thousands of miles away. Most times they do. The reappearance of those bags is dependent upon people I have probably never ever seen, nor will I ever see.

How many are involved? I do not know. There are many people running around the tarmac operating hydraulic lifts, tractors and trailers. People put the bags through x-ray units to see what is in it, before it is given to you, or taken from you. There is a multitude of people involved with just your baggage!

You go through various controls, and there are more people there taking care of you. Eventually you get on

the aircraft and there are the Gate staff, the Cabin staff. The Cabin staff are the most obvious ones; the ones people gripe at all the way from Heathrow to Los Angeles. I could not believe the guy sitting a couple of rows behind me. All he ever seemed to do was gripe at the staff! It was not their problem.

As well as the Cabin staff, there are also a couple of people in the cockpit. Before the plane gets into the air, someone has to push the aircraft back from the terminal, then the Traffic Control tells him where to go, what order the plane is in, when to let the brakes off and rev the engine up, and everything of that nature.

The plane gets in the air, and then somebody else takes over. Somebody else provides some radio waves so that they can fly on a proper path between Heathrow and Los Angeles. They are separated from other aircraft operating on that same sector by height and distance, so that the aspect of a collision is avoided.

Do we ever see these people? Do we ever meet them? No. I do not think I have ever met an Air Traffic Controller. The same happens at the other end. Somebody else takes over and guides the aircraft into landing, and then it is unloaded.

Are you an individual? Not at all! You are totally dependent upon a myriad of people that you never see. Your life is dependent upon them. We take it all for granted, do we not? We never think of how dependent we are upon those other individuals.

I have not even said anything yet about those who do the maintenance on the aircraft, the maintenance crews that have to overhaul the aircraft and keep it in good operating condition. Someone may come on and cause great disruption because something in the cockpit will not work properly. He has to come on and either fix it, or sign it off saying "The plane is not safe to fly". We are dependent upon those people, one after the other. You might say they are not part of our community. But we are totally dependent upon them!

We are dependent upon one another as well. When we start to look at our situation in life, the concept of us living by, and to, ourselves is fictional. We do not. We live, we exist by the benefit of numerous others, who we never ever think of. So often we are so busy thinking of ourselves.

Maybe we come across a Baggage Handler at the airport. What is he dressed in? He is not dressed like we are. So what sort of a person is he?

We are human beings. We respond to people based upon how we see them. We subconsciously evaluate one another in terms of our past, our nationality, sex, race, education, schooling, what part of the country we are from, our likes, our interests etc.

The interesting thing is that in doing that we are building a barrier between ourselves and others. We are immediately separating ourselves from others. We are making "good guys" and "bad guys". The good guys are the guys who line up with "me and my aspirations in life". The bad guys are all those people who do not measure up to it, no matter what these people are doing, no matter what way these people are serving us.

We create divisions, barriers, between ourselves and others. Is there another way to see another person, to look at another person? When we see another person, what should we really see? Ultimately speaking, when you look at another person, what you are looking at is another potential member of the God Family! *"Another potential member of the God Family, just like me. His future, her future, is the same as my future."*

The apostle Peter made a reference to this, in terms of marriage. Talking to the husbands, he said ...

1 Peter 3: 7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

There is a way in which husbands can look at their wives that is not godly. Because it is a way that takes the other party for granted, that places expectations upon them, but they are never thanked and are never honoured. He said if you live your life that way, if you do not see what the ultimate potential of your wife is,

your PRAYERS could be hindered, because you are creating barriers that God does not want to see there. You are not looking at people in the right way. You are looking at yourself. I am looking at myself, and I am getting caught up, you might say, in the spirit of the age. My thanks are hollow, empty.

What do we think of other people when we say "thanks" to other people? How do we really see them? Do we see them as people upon whom our own life depends? Do we see them as being an essential part of a community which we relate to?

How do I look on you? If I do not look upon you in a proper light, what will happen? As a minister I am dependent upon you for the most basic thing out: an income! If I do not see you in the right light, do you know what will happen? If I do not see you in a godly manner, that income will disappear! It may not be because you disappear. It may be because I disappear!

So each and every one of us has to have a right approach. We have to see one another in the right godly framework, not as an individual, but as a dependent member of a community. There is not one solitary independent member of the Family of God! We are all dependent upon one another.

So what do we think of others? We talk about *agape*. We talk about godly love. We could examine the aspect of godly love, and if we could just boil it down to a nutshell, one of the essential elements of *agape* is RESPECT for another person. If I do not respect another person, I do not have godly love. I am missing it. There is something missing from my make-up.

Go back a little later and look at some of the Scriptures we have read today, and see how often love is coupled with thankfulness. Thankfulness requires an element of respect of the other party, an appreciation of that other individual for what they really are.

Respect is an essential element of *agape* towards other people. Thanks, or thankfulness is an expression of that love for our neighbour: loving our neighbour as ourselves. It is an essential part of it. It is not just a card. It is not just a word. It is an appreciation of that other individual for what they really are.

Let us read what Paul said:

Colossians 3: 1 If then you were raised with Christ (if you have been through the waters of baptism), seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

We have got to put the earthly mindset away. Human beings look at other individuals, and they say "What can this person do for me?" Is that a godly mindset? No. A godly mindset would say; "*How will I be able to relate to this person in the Kingdom of God? How will I be able to work with them, and accomplish God's purposes with this person, in the Kingdom of God?*"

3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,

There is destruction coming upon this earth. God is going to change it.

7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

We all had a part in that world at one point. We have now put it behind us.

8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

How many "thank-yous" that are given to people, amount to outright lies? They are given out one side of the mouth, but on the other side of the mouth the person is destroyed and consumed by the anger of the other individual. It happens.

***9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,
10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the
image of Him who created him,***

We are to be new people! We are to take on a new character.

***11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised,
barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free ...***

All of these labels, all of these pigeon-holes into which humans are slotted, by their nationality, by their sex, by their race, by their education, whatever it may be, are of the world, says Paul. It is not of God.

***11 ... but Christ is all and in all.
12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies,
kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;***

All of these attributes affect our relationships one with another. They all change the way in which we conduct ourselves with other people. They alter the whole dynamic of the relationships that we have, because the "me" is no longer at the fore. The other individuals are there. There is respect given to them.

13 bearing with one another (concern for one another)...

One of the things I get asked more than anything else is "What is the latest on so-and-so"? There was a man we were asked to pray about from the north-west. People come to me and say "Have we got an update on this individual?"

I went up to Scotland recently. One of the members up there has been seriously sick with a bone degenerative disease. When I came back people said "*How is Tom Anderson?*". They wanted to know because they have taken on that aspect of Christ, of being prepared to bear one another's burdens. They see that person being dependent upon them. They see a sense of dependency between them.

So we are bearing with one another. We are forgiving one another.

***13 ... and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another;
even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.
14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.
15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in
one body; and be thankful.***

After having talked about love being the bond of perfection, what does he say? Be thankful! Appreciate it all! See it in its perspective. See your own life in the right perspective in relation to what God is doing; to what He is doing with other people.

We can look at these aspects; we can look at our relationships one to another.

Now let us notch it up, and look at the aspect of our relationship to God. We can ask ourselves what is our thanks to God based upon? We do not send cards!

Interestingly we now have the phenomena of "e-mail cards" on the Internet: dancing whistling cards! They are quite fascinating.

But we cannot send cards to God!

What is thanks to God based upon? Is it not based upon a sense of dependency, a dependency upon Him for EVERYTHING; total dependency, because without Him, what are we? A few years ago, somebody calculated what the human body was really worth in terms of its elements, in terms of the chemicals. I am sure the value has not gone up very much over the years. We are not worth very much at all.

So we have this aspect of dependency upon God.

Colossians 2: 6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

Paul has talked already about ...

Colossians 1: 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

He is talking about our calling. What is the future? What is it all about? Where are we going?

***Colossians 2: 6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,
7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.***

We are to be rooted and built up in Jesus Christ. Why do you root something? Why do you place roots of a plant in the ground? Because they have a dependency upon the elements within the soil! I know there are some air plants, but most plants require the roots to be in the ground, firmly established, so they can take the water and the nutrients out of the soil, because the entire plant is dependent upon it, together with light.

Where does light come from? Where does true light come from?

We are to be rooted, built up, and established in the faith, as has been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. We have this responsibility.

How do we go about giving thanks? As I say, we have institutionalised the giving of thanks in particular ways. It is interesting to look at the way in which God's Word TELLS us to give thanks, so that it does not become something that is trite and rote.

Obviously the Scripture talks about offerings; the way in which we are to give offerings as an aspect of our thanks. Israel were taught to give thank offerings (Leviticus chapter 7). This is what Paul was referring to in Hebrews chapter 13.

Let us turn to Psalms, chapter 100. You might say this is the most common way we offer thanks to God, but is it the only way? Psalm 100 is described as being a Psalm of thanksgiving:

***Psalm 100: 1 <<A Psalm of Thanksgiving.>> Make a joyful shout to the LORD,
all you lands!
2 Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing.
3 Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we
ourselves ...***

We are dependent upon Him. Without Him we amount to nothing.

3 ...We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

The Psalmist understood his relationship towards God. He understood the relationship of all other human beings towards God. He was able to put himself in that right context. He understood his dependency. So, having established that he goes on to say ...

4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

So there is giving of thanks by BLESSING GOD'S NAME. We sing hymns as a means of blessing God's name, and praising God's name. So often in the Hebrew, the concept of praise and thanks are very subtle differences; very minuscule differences between the two, because praise IMPLIES the giving of thanks.

5 For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.

In the New Testament, in Matthew chapter 6, when the disciples asked to be taught how to pray, Jesus Christ said:

Matthew 6: 9 "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

The word "hallow" means "to sanctify, to set apart"; to understand it in its proper relationship. You might say within the concept of being hallowed, one is thanking God. One is expressing one's thanks to God, because one is putting God in His right position in relationship to our life. You and I are coming to appreciate our dependency upon Him, for all that we do!

So we are to give thanks in what we say.

A Psalm which deals with another aspect of thankfulness to God is ...

***Psalm 16: 5 O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot.
6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance.***

... all of the good things that I have in life are a result of what God has provided.

***7 I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.
8 I have set the LORD always before me ...***

... He is always there in the right position.

8 ... Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.

... because I understand my relationship to Him, my dependency upon Him.

***9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.
10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.
11 You will show me the path of life ...***

Without the appreciation of God, what future is there for mankind? There is nothing. It is "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die". That is the problem with society today, is it not? God does not enter into their thinking. They have nothing to be thankful for. Thanks is so often an empty word for them.

For you and me though, it can mean hope. It can mean the promise of eternal life. It can mean a future that overcomes the problems and the difficulties that human beings face at this time, in this day and age.

The Psalmist ends this Psalm by saying ...

11 You will show me the path of life, In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

That is where the true pleasures are!

In Psalm 19, the psalmist expresses his thanks to God in a different way. This is a hymn we sing frequently:

Psalm 19: 1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.

He goes on to talk about the creation; about the way in which God's handiworks show His greatness. The recognition of the works of God is another way in which thanks are given to God: a recognition of by whom, and for whom, all that exists has been created.

Psalm 147: 7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; Sing praises on the harp to our God,

We are instructed to sing to the Eternal with thanksgiving! It does not matter how well we might be able to sing, it is an expression of thanksgiving towards God. It is putting God in His right relationship to us.

You might say; *"So what? There is nothing new about that. We do that all the time"*.

Let me express to you ANOTHER MEANS whereby we give thanks to God.

Daniel 9: 1 (This verse gives us the timing of this particular event) In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans -

2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

4 And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,

Where is the aspect of thanksgiving there? There is nothing mentioned about thanksgiving is there?

Sorry, there is! Because the exact same word that we have read as being "thanksgiving" in other places we have looked at today, is, on this occasion, translated "confessions".

Confessing is also a means of expressing thankfulness to God, because once again we are putting God in His right place in our life. We are showing ourselves for what we really are, compared with God. We are poor, corruptible human beings. We sin.

So Daniel, you might say, was giving thanks to God. The translators translated it appropriately. He made confession.

In the New Testament we find a similar concept.

1 John 1: 9 If we confess our sins ...

That is tied in with thanksgiving as well; seeing ourselves for what we really are, and understanding the total dependency we have upon God. There is a total sense of dependency that has to exist.

Notice another occasion where that same word is used:

Philippians 2: 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord

...

We come to understand our relationship to God and to Christ. We get it the right way round and the individualism is taken out of the picture. God is placed in that picture. His Son is placed in that picture, so that our dependency is well and truly established.

Matthew 10: 33 "But whoever denies Me before men ...

... "If you refuse to accept Me before people".

That is not a matter of going round and expressing; "*I am a Christian. Here is my badge*". How do people deny Christ before others? By not living up to the standard that Jesus Christ set, they deny Him. They do not confess Him. Rather than confessing Him, they deny Him on this occasion. They do not give Him thanks. They do not show our dependency upon Him. They do not understand that aspect of thanks.

Colossians 3: 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom ...

The word of Christ, the word of God, has got to be an integral, internalised part of us.

16 ... teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

How many times a day do we use the word "thanks"? It is just one of those words, so easily said, and so easily overlooked as to what it really conveys. How dependent are we upon one another? How dependent are we upon God above all else?

You might say that that is part of the answer to the challenges that exist to the various generations that are alive at this point in time, because having that true dependency one towards another, and that true dependency on God, helps us overcome all those individualisms, and "me-isms" that we are surrounded with 24 hours a day, 365 1/4 days a year.

The Eternal provided the answer for us: to be thankful, not just in word, not just in cards, but in action!

...Peter Nathan
16 June 01

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