

THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, November 26, 2024

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Today is Tuesday, November 26 and during the week of Thanksgiving we are exploring what the Bible says about gratitude and thankfulness.

OPENING PRAYER

Blessed and Holy Lord God, in the morning my heart sings of Your faithfulness. I welcome Your gentle presence and rest in Your goodness. I breathe slowly and deeply, quieting the voices of my busy mind and listening for the message You have for me today. I pause to remember and count my many blessings. I rejoice with gratitude for Your steadfast love and faithfulness. You have given me so much and I am filled with thanksgiving. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:15-17

REFLECTION

Paul is telling the Colossian Christians how to live. As his words stretch out across the centuries, Paul is telling you and me as well. We are to live in peace with one another. The peace of Christ is to rule in our hearts. We are to be thankful. Grateful. Our hearts are to be filled with gratitude. I find that the closer I am to God and the more the Holy Spirit is in my life and in me, the more I am filled with gratitude. God gives me a thankful heart.

Paul tells us, "whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Whatever we do, whatever the hour, whatever the day, big things and small things are done in the name of Jesus. The words we speak and write, type and post, text and swipe are shared in the name of Jesus. The deeds we perform, the actions we do, the work we achieve, the learning we attain, is done in the name of Jesus. Our activities, large and small, become sacred vessels when they are done in the name of Jesus. Whether we bake cookies for prisoners, donate food to the food pantry, write a note for the prayer ministry, call someone who is alone, check on a neighbor, smile understandingly at the store clerk or walk a dog - little acts of kindness have power in the name of Jesus. According to Paul, all we do is to be done with thanksgiving. We live life thankful for every opportunity to do good in the name of Jesus.

The early church understood this, they had it right, there is power in the name of Jesus. People are healed, relationships are restored, wrongs are righted, prayers are answered. It is not by our power, but the power of Jesus. What a wonderful way to live. Living a life that is full of meaning

because every word and action has the power to change the world. We can be thankful God can use us in even the smallest ways to make a difference. We can be grateful that our lives have purpose and immense meaning because they are rooted and grounded in Jesus. So this Thanksgiving pause to think about all of your relationships, all of your communications, all of your activities and give God thanks at how He is using you for good and blessing others through you.

Ask: How might God want to use me today to bless another person? How can I express my gratitude to God for the ways He is using my words and deeds to make the world better in the name of Jesus?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, let Your peace rule in my heart and fill me with gratitude. Thank you for loving me, equipping me and calling me to be Your hands and feet in the world. I am thankful for the many opportunities I have to serve You through my words, deeds and actions. Grow my awareness of how I might make a difference in the life of another. Show me how my words or deeds could help, encourage, strengthen or build another up. Thank You for giving my life purpose and meaning. Amen.