

THE MOST GRATEFUL HEARTS ON EARTH

This morning is our 'Thanksgiving Service' – a moment to look back at the year and give thanks that we've made it this far by His grace. 3 of our team leaders will be sharing testimonies but before they do, I'd like to share a short message about How Thanksgiving Works for The Born Again Believer ... Let's look at our text ...

Hebrews 13:15 **SLIDE**

Therefore by [through] Him [Jesus] let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name [Jesus].

DID YOU KNOW, THERE IS A UNIQUE PEOPLE WHO
CONTINUALLY OFFER PRAISE & THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR
HIS GRACE

Isaiah prophesied about them when he said ...

Isaiah 43:21 KJV

This [is the] people I have formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise. (More than Israel being set free from captivity)

You say, 'Who are these people? I would like to meet one!'

Well, look around you. You're sitting next to one ...

You say, 'You could have fooled me. They must be in disguise.'

But friends, the irony is: **We are in disguise!** Our outward flesh often does not reflect the inward life of Christ.

THE TRUTH IS ... EVEN THOUGH WE MAY NOT WALK IN THIS LIFE OF CHRIST ... REGARDLESS OF OUR OUTWARD FAILINGS ... *the Born Again believer is a person who has been 'formed for God'... and whose spirit offers continual praise and thanksgiving to God ... for who He is ... and all that He's done for us In Christ Jesus.*

CONTINUALLY OFFER PRAISE

Hebrews 13:15

Therefore by [through] Him [Jesus] let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name [Jesus].

Did you ever hear a believer who cannot stop saying, 'Praise the Lord' and 'Hallelujah' and 'Thank you Jesus'? **It may not be just a habit.**

*A pastor friend and I sat on a riverbank with a drug-lost, alternate hippy guy. He started expounding his wild ideas of alternate belief – raving about the demons of the earth and the planets aligning. But I noticed the whole time this pastor patiently sat and listened ... **AND ALL THE TIME HE KEPT UTTERING ... 'PRAISE THE LORD' ... 'HALLELUJAH'** ... Even though he didn't agree with the fellow, his spirit was worshiping God. Then, after the hippy ran out of words, the pastor shared the gospel ... and the hippy was ready to listen ... 6 months later I returned to my friend's church, and the man was running around with a Bible in his hand, declaring Jesus. He had been saved.*

THANKSGIVING IS AN EXPRESSION OF THE NEW HEART
REGARDLESS OF WHAT OTHER PEOPLE DO OR SAY

Hebrews 13:15 **SLIDE**

*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.*

NB: THE FRUIT OF OUR LIPS -

FRUIT IS AN EXPRESSION OF A DEEPER ROOT.

SLIDE *Our lips do not produce the fruit of praise ...*

OUR LIPS ARE THE FRUIT OF PRAISE.

IT IS THE FRUIT THAT FORMS IN OUR LIPS ...

This is the fruit that is blooming from a root deep inside us ...

*That root inside us is New Life ... **the life of Christ** that now dwells within you ...*

Every day your New Heart within you sings praise in gratitude to God for all He has done for us In Christ Jesus ...

For everything He has given to us In Jesus ...

For the Grace of God that saved us By Christ Jesus ...

For the continuing presence with which Christ Jesus leads us ...

Keeps us ...

Encourages us ...

Informs us ...

Comforts us ...

Energizes us ...

Equips us ...

LET US OFFER

Hebrews 13:15 **SLIDE**

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.

NB: It says, 'LET US' ... OFFER

Even though there is a chorus of thanksgiving going on in your spirit ... we are called to do our part ... And that is offer it to God ... We do this by simply ... 'LETTING IT' FLOW ...

If someone comes to my home to visit, they knock on my door ... I open the door and I don't take hold of them to force them in – I LET THEM IN.

I DON'T FORCE IT TO HAPPEN ...

They're standing at the door because they want to come in ...

I don't grab them by their jacket and pull them in ...

I LET THEM COME IN ...

So it is with this praise and thanksgiving. It is knocking at the door of your heart ... and all you have to do is open your heart and let it flow through your lips. This is the fruit or expression of the life within to God himself ...

Hebrews 12:28 NIV

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful ...

NO NEED TO FORCE THANKSGIVING

There is however, a praise in our churches that is so often forced ... stirred up ... whipped up ... and not heartfelt ...

This is not that praise. This praise springs from your heart within ...

Colossians 2:6-7 NIV

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, **rooted** and built up **in him**, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

THE INABILITY TO NOT PRAISE

- My mother is continually singing praise from her heart to God ... She cannot help but express The Fruit of Her Lips ...

- *Shelly asked Lord Byron why he wrote so much poetry. He answered, 'I lack the ability to not write.'*

This is how we as believers should be with our praise and thanksgiving - unable to contain it ...

THE SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING

Hebrews 13:15 **SLIDE**

*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.*

The writer of this verse is referring to the Old Testament 'Thanksgiving Offering'.

'of praise' (aineōs) Praise, commendation. From aineō; a praising, *i.e. a thank-offering.*

Leviticus 7:12 **SLIDE**

If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, (1) unleavened cakes mixed with oil (2) unleavened wafers anointed with oil, or (3) cakes of blended flour mixed with oil.

NB: This thanksgiving was voluntary and happened after the sacrifice ... So we can say our thanksgiving is **a willing offering based on the death of Jesus for our sins ...**

What a great reason to give thanks to God continually.

WHAT DID THE CAKES, WAFERS & FINE-FLOUR REPRESENT?

SLIDE UNLEAVENED CAKES, WAFERS & FINE-FLOUR

THE CAKES

NB: The cakes without leaven speak of the perfect life of Jesus without sin.

The oil was infused into the cake ... Jesus IS the anointed one ...

WE NOW OFFER SINCERE THANKSGIVING TO GOD **SLIDE - FOR THE LIFE OF CHRIST WITHIN & FROM THE LIFE OF CHRIST WITHIN.**

THE WAFER

The thin wafer is Jesus public ministry which was only 3 years thin.

The oil was not within the baking, but on top of the wafer.

This is Jesus public ministry -

Isaiah 61:1

... The Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor, He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.

THE FINE FLOUR

The fine flour was pounded ... beaten ... until fine.

The oil was blended into the mix ...

This is the Man who bore our weaknesses and learned obedience through the things He suffered ... who bore all our burdens through His entire life and yet without sin ...

He was our advocate ... pure and holy through it all ... victorious.

We have so much in Jesus, to give voluntary thanks for ...

THE BELIEVER GIVES THANKS REGARDLESS OF CIRCUMSTANCES

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NIV **SLIDE**

*Rejoice always, pray continually, **give thanks in all circumstances**; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:6-7 NIV

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

JESUS ALWAYS GAVE THANKS WHEN HE PRAYED ...

FOR WHAT HE HAD - the five loaves and two fishes at the feeding of the 5,000

John 6:11

Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

FOR HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER – at the raising of Lazarus

John 11:41 Berean Study Bible

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted His eyes upward and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me".

JOSIE'S TESTIMONY

*(Josie shared with Chris how she had suffered major pain not long ago.)
- I passed out with the pain in my back. I had to be dragged to the
bedroom, though I didn't know it ... But I said, 'Even though I feel pain,
thank you Lord I'm still able to breathe'.
I wake up every day and all I can say to the Lord is, 'Thank you for my
beautiful plants ... And that I'm alive and breathing'.*

TESTIMONIES

(See video 27/12/20 <https://www.facebook.com/newcreationchurchqld>)

CONCLUSION

*But how shall we give crowning thanksgiving for this crowning mercy of
the year? We can do it, dear friends, by the inward emotions of
gratitude. Let our hearts be warmed; let our spirits remember, meditate,
and think upon this goodness of the Lord. Meditation upon this mercy
may tend to nourish in you the tenderest feelings of affection, and your
souls will be knit to the Father of spirits, who pitieth his children.
Spurgeon*