**PP God’s Will Revealed**  
**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 11/19-20/2022**

This coming week is Thanksgiving Day and all over the world the meal’s prayer will go like this:

*‘Lord, thank you for this food and bless it for the nourishing of our bodies, Amen.’*

But Jewish people are taught to pray like this before a meal: **PP** *“Blessed are you, Lord our God,*

*King of the world, who has caused bread to come forth out of the earth.”*

Instead of asking God to bless the food and drink, they bless the God Who generously gave them

the food and drink

The first prayer is aimed at ourselves-bless this food for our bodies-while the second is aimed

toward God in thankfulness and gratitude, and this difference is important

Thankfulness to God is not natural in humanity for every person is infected with selfish nature

Samuel Leibowitz, a criminal lawyer and judge, saved 78 men from the electric chair and said

that not one of them ever thanked him

But we who have been forgiven our sins should be full of gratitude, and in fact, thankfulness is

how God wants us to live

***“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of***

***God in Christ Jesus for you.”* 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

**PP** **1-God commands us to *‘rejoice always’***

Rejoicing isn’t difficult to do when life is going well, but rejoicing when it isn’t??

I’m sure that most of us can think of a time when our hearts seemed incapable of anything but

sorrow, despair, or hopelessness, y even then God tells us to ***‘rejoice always’***

He isn’t telling us to put a happy face over a struggling heart for He wants authenticity

**PP *‘rejoice always’*** isn’t so much a feeling of happiness, but an attitude or mindset of joy, a state

of being than an emotion, a choice more than a reaction

In the 1300s the word meant to enjoy the possession of something, like a spouse or land

In fact the name *Joice* means joy, and when we put the prefix *re* in front of joice, it means to be

*joyful again*

Where joy, or rejoicing is unique for the church, different from the world, is rejoicing is always

connected to the works and character of God

When we help each other as we struggle through life, connect what God is doing in His perfect

character, rejoicing is the result…the glad

**PP *“This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”* Psalm 118:24**

The disciples of Jesus went out to minister in the towns and cities, and they came back **PP *“with***

***joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!’ And [Jesus] said***

***to them… ‘do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your***

***names are written in heaven.’”*  Luke 10:17–20**

In both examples, joy was based on the reality of God’s character, not on the circumstances

Only when circumstances connect us back and reveal God’s character will we truly rejoice

**PP To *‘rejoice’*** is to bring back to mind, possess again, the truth of the character of God

It’s the persuaded mind that truly knows that God is utterly sovereign and always good to us

**PP 2-God commands us to *‘pray without ceasing’***

This is not a picture of a long-robed monk kneeling on a cold stone floor for hours and hours

It is a heart tuned to the channel of God, who thinks of God and hears from God through the day

You look forward to checking in, you want to run ideas by and hear from that person, and there's

a longing that grows when you are apart for a time

Is it any surprise when the same is present in our relationship with God?

To pray without ceasing is to have a flow of spiritual text messages going back and forth

throughout the day with God

And when our hearts are rejoicing, those messages we send are usually not requests!

If you want to try an interesting experiment, then spend one day in much prayer and don’t make

a single request of God

A rejoicing heart sets our minds at ease in the peace of Christ, freeing us to enjoy being in His

presence through prayer

**PP 3-God’s commands us to *‘give thanks in all circumstances’***

We cannot, at the same time, have both a complaining and a thankful heart

When we rejoice always, and maintain conversation with God through the day, we will ***‘give***

***thanks in all circumstances’***

Illus Corrie Ten Boon was a woman who survived a Nazi concentration camp. Her sister Betsie, also there, insisted that **1 Thessalonians 5:18** was God’s will for them, but the camp was filthy and even worse, there were fleas everywhere. *‘Give thanks for the fleas Corrie’*, Betsie would say, but giving thanks in a flea-infested place seemed unrealistic to Corrie—until she realized why the guards didn't come into their barracks to make them stop praying and singing hymns. They wanted to avoid the fleas! So, the prisoners were free to worship and study the Bible.

A friend of mine recently told me he was thankful he got Covid, though he almost died from it

It was because of Covid that doctors discovered his cancer, which had given him no symptoms

Notice that Paul didn’t say *“give thanks for all circumstances”*, but ***‘in all circumstances’***

We aren’t to give thanks for the devil, for rebellious kids, for loss of jobs, but ***‘in’*** all

circumstances we know that our good, trustworthy, sovereign, loving God is at work

It’s an attitude that results in joyful living that is anchored by constant prayer

A thankful Christian is convinced that God is sovereign and good, even in difficult times

What an anchor of hope and peace thankful Christians have!

Christian, are you persuaded that everything that God gives you, or doesn’t give you, allows or

doesn’t allow, is for your highest happiness and deepest joy?

If God hasn’t given it to you, or allowed it for you, you couldn’t be happier with it!

***“No good thing does* [God] *withhold from those who walk uprightly.”* Psalm 84:11**

London orphanage pioneer George Muller understood this and it endured him as his beloved

wife of 39 years was dying from rheumatic fever

He wrote, PP *“if it is really good for me, my darling wife will be raised up again; sick as she is.*

*God will restore her again. But if she is not restored again, then it would not be a good*

*thing for me. And so my heart was at rest. I was satisfied with God.”*

George Muller learned to ***‘rejoice…pray…and give thanks in all circumstances’*** because he

was persuaded that God would withhold nothing that was not for their highest good

Friends, this is God’s will for us, to *Rejoice always, Pray continually, give thanks at all times*

Yes God commands us to live this way, but how can this be possible??

The key to living this out is an insignificant 2 letter word in verse 18, **PP** ***‘in Christ Jesus’***

The most common term for believers in the New Testament was not the title *‘Christian’* but

rather, the title, *‘in Christ’*

We use the word ***‘in’*** to explain *‘I’m in a good place right now’*, or *‘She is part of the in crowd’*

It describes where you are in the moment, and that you are at rest, not moving

The Apostle Paul understood this well: **PP *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I***

***who live, but Christ Who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith***

***in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.”* Galatians 2:20**

By faith, we are ***in*** Christ Jesus, and He lives ***in*** us through the Holy Spirit, working to change us

from the inside out

I’ve offered this illustration before but imagine a woman who is so poor one day she cannot even

buy food for herself, but so rich the following day that she ate at her own restaurant

What made the difference from one day to the other was she married a wealthy restaurant owner

The day before she had nothing, but through marriage, what belonged to him belonged to her

Christian, the moment you trusted in Jesus for salvation...He and you were joined seamlessly

He is now in you, with you, and you are in Him, with Him forever

More than just influencing you, He lives in you exerting His mighty power changing you to love

like Him, be patient like Him, have His self-control, and His gentleness

In short, if you are ***‘in Christ Jesus’*** you are being filled with the Holy Spirit Who is changing

you bit by bit to be like Jesus

Do you remember me telling you that the home where I grew up had a well that tapped into

sulfur water, so we were always getting water from an outside source for drinking water

I often took our empty jugs to a spring 5 miles away where someone had drilled a pipe into the

side of a hill, and pouring out of it was some of the best water I’ve ever had

That pipe is not source of the water, it is merely the channel through which the water flows

By faith I am in Christ and He is in me, His power and His desires are being out in my heart

So Christian, what is the will of God for your life?

**PP *“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will***

***of God in Christ Jesus for you.”* 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

Is it possible to live this way?

Yes, because you are ***‘in Christ Jesus’*** and He is in you by the Holy Spirit, pouring into you His

rejoicing heart, His continually praying heart, and His thankful heart in all circumstances!

This Thanksgiving Day and beyond, be full of joy, pray throughout the day, and give thanks in

all circumstances for God is good and in control of everything in your life!

Amen!