

Thanksgiving

1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- We are actually commanded to give thanks in everything.
- But here, this command appears to be in a kind of rapid-fire list of commands without any context of how or why.

But the same command (mostly) is also in Ephesians given in greater context:

- **Ephesians 5:20** giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

So what is that context?

Ephesians 5:1-2 Therefore **be imitators of God** as dear children. ²And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

- The initial imperative of Ephesians 5 is to be imitators of God.
- Be like God.

How? To start with:

- **Ephesians 5:3-7** – Don't do these things – they are not fitting for you

Why?

- **Ephesians 5:8-9** For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),
- Why? Because that is who you are!

What then?

- **Ephesians 5:10-11** finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. ¹¹And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.

- Learn, grow in your knowledge of God. Get to know what brings him pleasure and what is unacceptable.
- If you find darkness in you, expose it to Jesus.
- **Ephesians 5:12-14** – Those evil deeds I told you not to do – when they are exposed to the light of the gospel, we see them for what they really are – evil.

This process enables us to walk rightly:

- **Ephesians 5:15-16** See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

RECAP 1-16

Which leads us to the main text we will look at:

Ephesians 5:17-21 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

- Don't be unwise. Understand what the will of God is.
- We started off with
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:18** in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
- And the first part of Ephesians 5:1 – Be imitators of God.
- So part of being an imitator of God, or being like God is thankfulness.

Being thankful is a big part of God's will for you.

- Not His purpose
- Not your calling

- Not his entire will, but a large part of it is wrapped up in Thankfulness.

How do we get to being thankful at all times and in everything?

- Don't be drunk with wine
 - It is possible that Paul is referring to Bacchus – a festival of worship that includes getting drunk to honor the god of wine.
 - More probably, this is not really anything to do with drunkenness, but a contrast to how you should be.
 - Drunk = loss of inhibition, loss of control, unclear thinking.
- The church should not be out of control with unclear thinking!!! There is no Biblical precedent for that. Even Acts 2 the people were only accused of being drunk because they were speaking other languages, not because of loss of control or weird behaviors.
 - Sometimes our behaviors may appear weird to non-believers, tongues, healing prayer, even worship. But that is not an indication of loss of control of ourselves or unclear thinking.
 - Mostly the church is commanded to be sober and think sober!
- Be filled with the Spirit.
 - This is another imperative.
 - The first real step to being able to have a life of thankfulness is to be filled with the Spirit.
 - That's because becoming more like God requires being filled with His Spirit!
 - Paul is writing to believers. Therefore when he says be filled with the spirit he is not referring to salvation where we receive the Holy Spirit.
 - Filling and receiving are not the same.
 - And note – this is in contrast to being drunk. Filled with the spirit leads us into perfect living. Clear thinking (the mind of Christ). Knowledge of God. Use of the gifts which Paul says are done decently and in order.

So what is being filled with the Spirit?

- If being drunk is to be under the influence of alcohol, then filled with the spirit is being under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
- It is a full surrender to allowing the life of Jesus to be lived through us.
- Why do people get drunk? To escape feeling bad. To be carefree, to stop worrying. The Spirit is to give those things and more.
- When we are filled with the Spirit, there is peace, joy, righteousness
 - **Romans 14:17** for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

And Being filled with the Spirit is the only way to become an imitator of God.

We can be like Him when we are filled with His Spirit!

After being filled with the Spirit Paul says

Ephesians 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

- I do not believe this is a command. I believe this is a response. Fruit.
- When we are filled with the Spirit, praise and worship to God and encouraging others is a natural outcome.

And Paul continues:

Ephesians 5:20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

- Again, the result of being filled with the Spirit.

We talked about being filled with the Spirit bringing joy, praise, and thanksgiving. And leading up to that avoiding evil and exposing the darkness. Let's go back to the verse we started with and read it in context. Maybe those rapid-fire commands aren't actually rapid fire commands:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 Rejoice always,¹⁷ pray without ceasing,¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit.

- While the explicit imperative of being filled with the Spirit is not given here, it is implied by saying not to quench the Spirit.
- Rejoice – being filled with the Spirit brings joy
- Pray without ceasing – being under the influence of the Spirit gives us a great prayer life
- In everything give thanks – Being filled with the Spirit will result in an overflowing of thankfulness. In all things.
 - Without the Spirit it is difficult to be thankful in trials or distressing times. But with the Spirit, we can.
- Do not quench the Spirit – if we quench the Spirit all of these benefits go away. This is where complaining comes from.

How do we not quench the Spirit?

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 Do not quench the Spirit.²⁰ Do not despise prophecies.²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good.²² Abstain from every form of evil.

- Do not despise prophecies – Do not have disdain for the working of God. Do not dislike moves of the Holy Spirit. Do not reject His voice.
 - We are told to beware of false prophets, but also that the Spirit would give us discernment.
- Test them. Reject the bad, cling to the good ones.
- Abstain from evil.

So when it comes down to it, a life of thankfulness can only be achieved by being filled with the Spirit. And when we are filled with the Spirit, we become imitators of God. We become like Jesus.