

Give Thanks in All Circumstances Sunday: 11/26/2023 – Pastor Hunter Hankins – 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18

“If we are going to live in unity, we must do good to one another. We must not return evil for evil.”

Passage

12 We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. 15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Overview:

In this start to the holiday season Pastor Hunter walked us through a call to thankfulness from 1st Thessalonians. Pastor Hunter provided context of Paul’s thankfulness (1:2) and love for the church (1:8). Paul found joy in this local body (3:9) and was encouraging them to keep building each other up (5:11). In our passage, the benediction to the letter, there are a number of action items for us to take away. In verses 12-13 we see a call for how we are to approach leaders in the church. In verse 14 we are instructed to care for three types of people. Verses 15 and 16 paint a picture that should characterize us as believers:

- Not to repay evil for evil
- Do good for each other (and everyone)
- Rejoice Always
- Pray without ceasing
- Give thanks in all circumstances.

Finally, in verse 18 we learn that having a mindset of these things causes us to do these things and it is the will of God.

Discussion Questions

1. Rejoicing all the time and being thankful in all circumstances is a hard task, especially in hard times.
 - a. Can you describe a time when rejoicing and thankfulness wasn’t your first response in a crisis?
 - b. How would your thankfulness change that situation?
 - c. What can you ultimately be thankful for?
2. The characteristics we see in verse 16 have a context of “all the time.” This is how we are to walk in the world, this should be our mindset. Amazingly, from this passage we can know God’s will for us.
 - a. How do these characteristics, this mindset, help us with the commands of verses 12-15?
3. In verse 14, Pastor Hunter pointed out three types of people that will be in the church and how we are to love these people.
 - a. How can you describe these “types” in your own words?
 - b. What steps do you need to take to walk in obedience to this call?
 - c. How do verses 12-14 support peace and unity in the church?
4. Pastor Hunter challenged us with the questions about what it would look like if we prayed for each other, love each other, and gave thanks for each other.
 - a. How would being a people characterized by this kind of thankfulness effect our church and our mission in the community?
5. Was there anything else that stood out in the passage?