

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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The Words, Works, and Person of Christ

The Gospel of Luke

The Barren Fig Tree (Part 4)

The Fruit of Thankfulness

January 15, 2023

Sermon Text: Luke 13:6-9

Scripture Reading: Psalm 107

Luk 13:6-9 And he told this parable: “A man **had** a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and **found** none.

(7) And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, **for three years now** I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’

(8) And he answered him, ‘Sir, let

it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. (9) Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

We saw last time that the foundational fruit which the owner of the vineyard looks for and demands is – *love*. Not the cheaper more common kind of love which can be found even in unregenerate people, but God’s love. Love that is only produced by the Holy Spirit in the heart of His people. It cannot be manufactured by man.

And we said that this divine love is the evidence by which even the world knows that those who possess it are Christ’s people. Where it is absent, the Spirit is absent and such a heart is unregenerate no matter how

religious or moral the person may be.

Now, we also said that this love which is from God is a kind of foundational fruit from which all other fruits of the Spirit proceed. You see it here:

Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

This is not a comprehensive list of the fruits of the Spirit, and the one which we are going to consider this morning is not in that list Paul gives. That fruit is...*thankfulness*.

Psa 100:1-5 A Psalm for giving thanks. Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! (2) Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! (3) Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. (4) Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him;

bless his name! (5) For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

The Sin of UN-thankfulness

Now, there must have been some thought of this 100th Psalm in the Apostle Paul's mind as he wrote the first chapter of Romans.

- Know that the Lord, he is God
- It is He who made us
- Enter His gates with thanksgiving
- Give thanks to Him

But Paul shows us that man in his fallen condition does *precisely the opposite*:

- Refuses to acknowledge God as God
- Refuses to confess that God is the Creator
- Refuses to give thanks to Him

Listen to it –

Rom 1:18-25 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all

ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

(19) For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

(20) For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

(21) For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

(22) Claiming to be wise, they became fools, (23) and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. (24) Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,

(25) because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature

rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Man in his sin refuses to even acknowledge God, let alone give thanks to Him. And it is vital for us then to understand that THIS is the sin from which all other sins spring – worshipping the creature instead of the Creator and thus refusing to give Him thanks. UN-thankfulness then is a Satanic sin and it is at the core, along with its closely related sibling – *idolatry* – which is the basic reason God’s wrath is upon the sinner.

Luk 17:12-19 And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance (13) and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” (14) When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. (15) Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; (16) and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. (17) Then Jesus

answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? (18) Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” (19) And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

But you most clearly see the depravity of man’s soul in the Israelites’ response to the Lord’s many blessings to them. Almost to a man, they refused to give thanks and instead, *grumbled*.

Rom 9:4-6 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. (5) To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. (6) But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel,

Think of their response to the Lord’s provision of manna and quail as another example-

Exo 16:8 And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD.”

This is nothing other than UN-thankfulness. And we see how it arouses the wrath of the Lord:

Num 14:27-30 “How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. (28) Say to them, ‘As I live, declares the LORD, what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: (29) your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, (30) not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

We live in a nation today in which the mass of people are just this kind – grumblers, demanding that God bless America – but their unthankfulness does anything but bring blessing. Look around and you see it everywhere:

- A mindset of entitlement
- An exaggerated notion of self-importance
- Everyone owes me

An individual or a nation characterized by unthankfulness is not going to be blessed by the Lord. And this unthankfulness is a visible sign that there is no assurance such a person is born again. In fact they are like this type:

Heb 3:13-15 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (14) For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. (15) As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

Give Thanks to the Lord

It does not surprise us then that the Bible is filled with this subject of *thankfulness*. In fact, the giving of thanks is a very central part of worship.

The Christian is the most thankful person on the planet. A genuinely born again person will necessarily be thankful, and as he/she grows in Christ and understands more and more how great this salvation is, their thankfulness will grow.

Let’s look at this in Scripture:

(Psa 7:17) I will give to the LORD the thanks due to his righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the LORD, the Most High.

(Psa 9:1) To the choirmaster: according to Muth-labben. A Psalm of David. I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

(Psa 26:7) proclaiming thanksgiving aloud, and telling all

your wondrous deeds.

(Psa 28:7) The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

(Psa 30:4) Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name.

[NOTE: Watch for the connection of *singing and instruments* to the giving of thanks]

(Psa 30:12) that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever!

(Psa 33:2) Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!

(Psa 44:8) In God we have boasted continually, and we will give thanks to your name forever. Selah

[NOTE: Giving of thanks is a *sacrifice* in both the Old and New Covenants]

(Psa 50:14) Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High,

(Psa 50:23) The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!”

[NOTE: This giving of thanks is a *giving to*. To whom? *To the Lord*. The unregenerate person may give thanks for certain things and give it to certain people, *but he will never give thanks to God because he suppresses the knowledge of God. He lives as if God either doesn't exist at all, OR that God is entirely irrelevant to him*].

(Psa 54:6) With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you; I will give thanks to your name, O LORD, for it is good.

(Psa 57:9) I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations.

(Psa 69:30) I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving.

(Psa 75:1) To the choirmaster: according to Do Not Destroy. A Psalm of Asaph. A Song. We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks, for your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds.

[**NOTE:** Our thanksgiving to God is in response to *who He is, and what He has done. His wondrous deeds*. Our giving of thanks has a reason, and that reason is Christ].

(Psa 79:13) But we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever; from generation to generation we will recount your praise.

[**NOTE:** from generation to generation. This means that we are to instruct our children in thankfulness to God]

(Psa 86:12) I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever.

(Psa 92:1) A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath. It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High;

(Psa 95:2) Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

[I leave the following Scriptures for you to read later. Let the incredible frequency of this subject – give thanks to God – sink deeply into your mind. The Psalter is God’s hymnbook and it shows us that the worship of God without thanksgiving is not true worship. Why should I come to church? Why should I remember the Lord’s Day? *Because I owe Him thanks and if I am born again I WANT to come and thank Him. Note that the Eucharist (the Lord’s table) is from the verb eucharistein which means “to give thanks.”]*

NOTE ALSO: We will necessarily be grieved and convicted and moved to confession and repentance for our

UN-thankfulness as we understand these things more clearly].

(Psa 97:12) Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!

(Psa 100:1) A Psalm for giving thanks. Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

(Psa 100:4) Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!

(Psa 105:1) Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!

(Psa 106:1) Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

(Psa 106:47) Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.

(Psa 107:1) Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

(Psa 107:22) And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of his deeds in songs of joy!

(Psa 108:3) I will give thanks to

you, O LORD, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations.

(Psa 109:30) With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD; I will praise him in the midst of the throng.

(Psa 111:1) Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

(Psa 116:17) I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD.

(Psa 118:1) Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

(Psa 118:19) Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.

(Psa 118:28) You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you.

(Psa 118:29) Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

(Psa 122:4) to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

(Psa 136:1) Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his

steadfast love endures forever.

(Psa 136:2) Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever.

(Psa 136:3) Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever;

(Psa 136:26) Give thanks to the God of heaven, for his steadfast love endures forever.

(Psa 138:1) Of David. I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise;

(Psa 138:2) I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

(Psa 138:4) All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O LORD, for they have heard the words of your mouth,

(Psa 140:13) Surely the righteous shall give thanks to your name; the upright shall dwell in your presence.

(Psa 142:7) Bring me out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name! The righteous will surround me, for you will deal bountifully with me.

(Psa 145:10) All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you!

(Psa 147:7) Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre!

Some New Testament Scriptures

(1Co 1:4) I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus,

(1Co 15:57) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Col 3:15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

Consider how Thankfulness Proceeds from Love and Produces Other Fruit

We said that thankfulness is a fruit which proceeds from a new creation heart and the fruit of *love*. Our love for God and for one

another WILL produce
thanksgiving.

But thanksgiving is also a kind of foundational fruit – a root if you will – from which the other fruits of the Spirit proceed.

- Joy. Have you ever seen a joyful, *unthankful* person?
- Covetousness/envy. The very opposite of thanksgiving. The fruit of thankfulness leads to gratitude, contentment, generosity.
- Patience, forgiveness. We are thankful to God for His patience with us and His forgiveness of us.

And therefore we can know that a person who is characterized by unthankfulness is not born again. Conversely, the person who is characterized by *thankfulness to God* knows Him.

This will sound like I am trying to be humorous – but it isn't funny because it is absolutely true:

My dogs are more godly than these kind of “dogs.” My dogs are truly thankful to Verla and I and they show that thankfulness through affection and wanting to be with us. If anyone is still dead in their sins, unthankful to God, let this fact bring them low – the “worship” of the animal creation is more acceptable to God than you are. That is to say, the animals fulfill their purpose, but the wicked are worse than a beast.

(Psa 147:9) He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry.

(Psa 104:27) These all look to you, to give them their food in due season.

(Psa 104:28) When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

I plan to bring you God's Word next time on what we might call the “anti-fruit” of thankfulness – *pride*. Where there is a prideful heart there will be a void of thankfulness. Nebuchadnezzar had to learn this

lesson the hard way – *that in his unthankfulness the animals of the field were superior to him in God's sight* –

Dan 4:28-33 All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. (29) At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, (30) and the king answered and said, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?”

(31) While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, (32) and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.”

(33) Immediately the word was

fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

King Nebuchadnezzar, unlike most unthankful people, learned the lesson:

Dan 4:37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Do not be proud. In humility, give thanks to God. Let's confess our unthankfulness, and examine ourselves with honesty – *Am I from my heart truly thankful to God for all that I have, for Christ and His great salvation, or am I actually still dead in my sins, walking in unthankfulness to the One from whom every good gift comes?*

Am I a fruitful fig tree or a barren one?

There is no unthankfulness in heaven, and no unthankful person will ever enter there.

Rev 4:8-11 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”

(9) And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever,

(10) the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, (11) “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”