

November 17, 2019 – Elmont Baptist Church

Text: Colossians 3:12-17

Message Series: Be Thankful

Week 3: Health-Giving Gratitude

Introduction:

1. It's November and that means that Thanksgiving is close.
2. But for most, even those who are in Christ, Thanksgiving comes and goes without us giving it the attention it deserves.
3. Yes, we should be thankful all the time, but there are certain times where our minds should instruct our hearts to really focus in on a particular discipline or celebration of the faith.
4. We began by saying that Thanksgiving is a great time to reflect on what it means to be thankful and work hard to discern if our gratitude is God-glorifying or closer to idolatry by wanting God's blessings but not wanting Him.
5. Last week we looked at using gratitude as a Sin-Crushing weapon that God has given us in our battle against the enemy and our flesh.
6. So we continue today and next week looking to the Scriptures for instruction and asking the Spirit to empower us to Be Thankful.
7. This time of the year we start to be a little more proactive about our health and trying to not get sick
8. No one wants to go down for a few days with the flu, strep, a virus, or even a cold, so we start to do all kinds of things to help make sure that doesn't happen
9. There are things we avoid to keep sickness away and things we pursue to build up our immune system. We play defense and offense.
10. We do all this to stay healthy and avoid sickness and the consequences it has on our lives for a relatively short period of time.

11. But even with doing all these things, sometimes the symptoms still come upon us, and in those times we usually ramp up our efforts. We may go to the doctor, Google home remedies, use more oils, or eat more bacon – whatever you’ve found that seems to help.
12. God designed our bodies in a way that they tell us when we’re not at our best. There are indicators that tell us something is wrong.
13. So what about our spiritual health? Do we value and protect it in the same way? Has God designed us in a way that there are indicators or symptoms when we are not healthy, or to help us know when things are not as they should be?
14. The answer is YES and the we need to understand that everything God made in the physical and temporal is an illustration or example of something spiritual and eternal
15. Many Christ followers have been spiritually unhealthy for so long that they don’t even realize it. They don’t know what healthy feels like
16. Like someone with chronic daily pain, they have forgotten what it feels like to be pain free
17. Our text today is going to give us a picture of a spiritually healthy person and in that we can see the indicators or symptoms that arise when things are not as they should be

Read Colossians 3:12-17

This passage tells us what the spiritually healthy person looks like. Not perfectly at every moment because we sin and fall short, but overall what they value and pursue and live out. So if we look into the text we see...

Spiritual Health involves...

1. **Things We “Put On” or Pursue – v 12-14**
 - a. **Compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, love**
 - b. **Resulting in bearing with one another, forgiving one another**
 - c. **And being together in perfect harmony**

- i. We need to understand that spiritual health is not an optional part of our being “in Christ” or being a Christ-follower. But if we’ve been unhealthy for a long time, it’s easy to make excuses like “I’m just wired that way” or “I didn’t grow up like that”.
- ii. In Paul’s letters he’s writing to people who grew up for generations in idol worshiping cultures, where immoral and unethical lifestyles were normal
- iii. And he’s telling them to stop doing all the things they grew up thinking were normal and become more and more like Jesus
- iv. The evidence that we have put on the things that the Scriptures instruct us to are that we bear with one another, forgive each other like God forgives, and have an incredible harmony among us
- v. If those things are not present in your life and or the life of the body, then you have not put on the six things listed there
- vi. Those six things give us the ability to bear, forgive, and live in harmony and bearing, forgiving, and living in harmony serve as proof that we have put on kindness, humility, patience, love, and the rest
- vii. That’s what spiritual health looks like which means the reverse is true as well. We are unhealthy when the indicators of bearing with one another, forgiving like God, and harmony are absent from our lives
- viii. We’re not “putting on” what we’re commanded to, which as we know from Eph 4:22-24, Col 3:10 and Gal 5 is only possible when we are “renewed in the spirit of your minds” or “being renewed in knowledge” or “walking by the Spirit” or as we say “drawing near to Christ.”

- ix. So there are things that we put on or pursue as we draw near to Christ. We put them on or pursue them as we grow closer to Jesus and the Spirit bears His fruit in us. Spending time with Jesus is the key.
- x. This relationship causes us to see Christ more clearly and desire and ask for His grace to empower us to keep crucifying our flesh and welcome His attributes to grow in our lives by the work of the Holy Spirit.
- xi. And then there are things that happen in us as we seek and spend time with Him...

2. Things We Let Happen in Us...

a. Peace of Christ ruling our heart

b. Word of Christ dwelling richly

c. Resulting in Thankfulness

- i. There are things you can do to encourage these works happening in you, and things you can do that keep these things from happening, but these are a work of the Spirit in your journey.
- ii. You “let” the peace of Christ rule your heart and the word of Christ dwell in you richly
- iii. This means that this a work that God desires to do through the Spirit and your communion with Him in the Word
- iv. The more you press into the Scriptures and understand who God is for you especially in the person and work of Jesus, and who you are in Christ, the more unshakeable you will be
- v. Guess what? Not everyone will love you. Not everyone will treat you well. Not everyone will want the best for you. And that can shake us and cause us to worry and be anxious.
- vi. So the Scriptures instruct us to renew our new self in knowledge, in the Word. Let the Truth dwell richly in you. Deep down and life-giving kind of dwelling.

- vii. So that you are more convinced and comforted of how God sees you and loves you than you worried or frustrated how another fallen human out of their hurt is wanting to hurt you.
- viii. How do you know when the peace of Christ is ruling, and the word of Christ is dwelling richly – You are thankful.
- ix. Just like bearing, forgiving, and harmony show that you are putting on kindness, humility, and patience, gratitude indicates that you are spiritually healthy as the peace and word of Christ are doing their work in you.
- x. And again, the reverse is true. Ingratitude is a symptom of spiritual sickness like a sore throat or body ache is a symptom of the flu.
- xi. The good news is that you fight ingratitude with gratitude. Carving out time to meditate on God's faithfulness to you and in you. Time in the Word seeing His faithfulness to generations and seeing His great gift of love in sending Jesus to become your sin so that you could know and love Him will help you re-center your soul in gratitude toward God and strengthen your faith in His future promises.
- xii. When we do this, we live in much more freedom.

3. So That Through Us...

a. All we do and say

b. Will be for God's glory

c. With thankfulness

- i. The more we grow in the discipline of gratitude the more we are going to live fearlessly for the glory of God in all our words and actions
- ii. We struggle to do this when we turn inward. We are dissatisfied with something and we seek to correct it sinfully.

- iii. It is sinful because we are seeking our own pleasure outside of God through Christ
- iv. Being thankful or expressing gratitude to God for all He is and does helps us fight sin, like we said last week, and also builds up our spiritual immune system
- v. When we're not expressing thankfulness on a regular basis, we can be assured that spiritual sickness is coming or may have already set in

Closing

1. Is compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and love empowering you to bear with others, forgive like God, and have harmony?
2. Does your ongoing gratitude serve as an indicator that the peace and Word of Christ are ruling and dwelling deep in your heart?
3. Let's pray and then confess to the Lord the honest condition of our heart and mind today knowing we have a gracious God who knows already and loves to restore and renew you.