

ActNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Connect Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Connect Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

5 Marks of a Methodist (3): A Methodist Gives Thanks

2 Corinthians 9:15

Rev Adrian Ng

SERMON SYNOPSIS

- **Giving thanks is the third mark of a Methodist** which is a trait of a disciple of Jesus Christ. When we follow God close enough, we will find ourselves exhibiting traits of discipleship like *giving thanks*.
- **Human Nature** – By and large, we are inclined to grumble and complain about what we do not have and even clamour especially when we deem it our right to have them. In Exodus 16:8, God's Word pointedly tells us that when we complain, *our complaints are against the Lord* because we have failed to see what we have and have chosen to see what we do not have – and we have the Lord! When we fail to see *what we have*, we will complain, stumble and fall.
- **About Thanksgiving** – Thanksgiving helps us see *what we have* so that we can rejoice in praise. As believers in Jesus Christ, we have Jesus, the Son of God, our Lord & Saviour in our lives (2 Corinthians 9:15). Hence, we can rejoice in praise in ALL circumstances – in challenging, anxious & painful situations as well as in blissful & happy ones – because Jesus is with us always and the Holy Spirit dwells inside us.
- **Why give thanks?** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 teaches that rejoicing always, praying continually and giving thanks in all circumstances is **God's Will for us**. Hence, first & foremost, God calls us to give thanks. Secondly, we give thanks because of **who God is** – God is good (Psalm 119:68), God is not tempted by evil & He tempts no one (James 1:13), God is love (1 John 4:8), & God works for the good for all who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). Thirdly, we give thanks because of **who God is to us personally** – We rejoice always and give thanks regardless of circumstances because we are happy *in God* who loves us perfectly, casts out fear and gives only good gifts to us who have wholly committed our body and soul into the hands of our faithful Creator (1 John 4:18, James 1:16 & 1 Peter 4:19).
- **Practice Thanksgiving!** If we want to grow in holiness, we are to grow in thanksgiving by **daily reflecting** on how much God loves us and what God calls us to do to love others. If we do this regularly – over time, **our lens will change**: Instead of seeing how big the problem is, we will see how much bigger God is compared to the problem!

Let us encourage one another to **give thanks wherever we are** to show that God is real and at work in and through us, disciples of Jesus – and **witness first-hand** God transforming our workplaces, our church, our schools, families, society through our giving thanks in all circumstances. May God be glorified through it all!

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RELATE

1. On an average ordinary day, how many times did you hear people complaining and how many times did you hear people giving thanks?

REFLECT

2. Meditate on **Colossians 3:17**. Reflect what this Scripture is teaching us about giving thanks & share your discoveries with your CG and remember to be doers of God's Word!

RESPOND

3. Share with your CG what steps you will take to practice thanksgiving – to **daily reflect** on how much God loves us and what God calls us to do to love others. (Eg. When, how long, where, what specific acts of loving others & who is the Lord asking you to love, how will you monitor your progress ...etc).

PRAYER POINTERS

- Give thanks to the Lord for Jesus! Because Jesus died on our behalf, He has enabled us to go into God's presence and to give thanks to God the Father, anytime!
- Pray for one another in the CG as well as a church family in TPMC to give thanks wherever we are to show to all around us that God is real and at work in and through us, His people.
- Pray also for God to transform our workplaces, our church, our schools, families, society through our giving thanks in all circumstances.

SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON

"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]