

November 21, 2021

Sunnyside Community Church

Pastor Guy Shields

“Thanksgiving: The Quintessential Christian Disposition”—The Epistle to the Colossians: Selected Verses.

Introduction:

→ You may—not—have realized it—
—but—2021—marks—
—the 400 anniversary—
—of the—first—Thanksgiving—
—the Thanksgiving—
—celebrated—celebrated—
—by the Mayflower Pilgrims—
—at Plymouth Colony—
—in 1621—
—After a late arrival—in the new world—
—forced them—into a fight for their survival—against—the harsh—
northern winters—
—After the threat of starvation--
—drove them—to help themselves—
—to the caches of the native’s provisions—
—that they found—
—in their early explorations—
—around the tip of Cape Cod—
—After losing—nearly half—

—of those who had crossed—

—on the Mayflower—

—to the harsh conditions—

—decease—

—and—other causes—

—After having endured—

—the threat of attack—

—from the various tribes—

—of natives—

—To celebrate—

—the Lord’s providential care—

—and—provision—

—the Pilgrims gathered—

—with several of the natives—

—they had had befriended—

—in November of 1621—

—Abundantly supplied—

—with fish—

—and—fowl—

—with vegetables—

—and—venison—

—they feasted—

—and—gave thanks—to the Lord—

—for His kindness—

—and—his goodness—

—*By the goodness of the Lord—*

—*we are so far from want.”—*

—wrote Edward Winslow—

—one of the key leaders—

—of the Mayflower Pilgrims—

→ As Christians—

—we continue the tradition—

—that traces its roots—

—back—to that first—Thanksgiving—

—although the celebration—

—has—largely—lost its essential significance—

—in our contemporary culture—

—we understand—

—that every good—

—and—every perfect—gift—

—is from above—

—and—

—comes down—

—from the Father—

—of lights—

—the God—

—of creation—

—we understand—

—that they bounty—we enjoy—

—is—

—the display—

—of His goodness—

—it is—a witness—

—to his steadfast love—

—and—

—faithfulness—

→ But—

—as Christians—

—we understand—

—that there is more—to thanksgiving/ giving thanks—

—than—an annual Fall/Harvest festival—

—expressing gratitude—

—to God—

—for His material provision—

—we understand—

—that thanksgiving/ giving thanks—

—is—a continual confession—

—in view—of God’s grace—to us—in Christ—

—thanksgiving—is—

—an on-going exercise—

—it is—the right—

—and—proper—

—orientation—

—of our minds—

—in view—

—of what God has done—

—for us—

—what God—

—has provided to us—

—in Christ—

**—the nature—of our salvation—makes—thanksgiving—the
quintessential—Christian—disposition—**

—(the disposition/ orientation of mind and heart—that should
typify—the one who believes in Jesus)—

—This reality—

—is—reflected—

—in the Apostle Paul’s Epistle—

—to the Colossians—

—Seven times—

—in this short letter—

—the Apostle—makes reference—

—to thanksgiving/ giving thanks—

—Six—

—of the seven—

—relate—directly—

—to the believer’s behavior/ what the believer is to do—

—From these—six—references—

—we understand—four realities—

—about—the disposition—of thanksgiving—

1. Thanksgiving is—the appropriate—disposition—of the believer’s worthy walk
2. Thanksgiving is—the abounding disposition—of the believer’s grounding and growing—
3. Thanksgiving is—the all-pervading disposition—of the believer’s body life—
4. Thanksgiving is—the accompanying disposition—of the believer’s prayer life—

→ Let’s look—then—

—at this letter—

—and—be reminded—

—of thanksgiving—

—as—the quintessential—

—Christian—

—disposition—

Trans—first of all—then—in Colossians 1:9-12—

I. Thanksgiving is—the appropriate—disposition—of the believer’s worthy walk—1:9-14
--

→ Paul begins—his letter—

—with the typical—introduction—

—and—greeting—

—and—

—then—

—in vs.9—

—he relates to them—

—his prayer—

—on their behalf—

—Colossians 1:9-14—*“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*”

→ Having heard of their faith—

—Paul—

—ceaselessly—

—prays—

—for the Colossians—

—He prays—

—that—

—the Spirit—will fill—them—

—with wisdom—

—and—understanding—

—in the knowledge—

—of God’s will—

—the aim—

—of his prayer—

—is—

—their—

—worthy—walk—

—a worthy walk—

—that manifests/ shows itself—

—in—four—

—particular—

—ways—

—In—

—the bearing—

—of the fruit—

—of good works—

—in—

—the increase—

—of the knowledge of God—

—in—

—the strengthening—

—with power—

—according—

—to the glorious might of God—

—for joyful—patience—

—and—endurance—

—and—

—In—

—the giving of thanks—

—Thanksgiving—comes in—

—as—

—the capstone—

—as—

—the pervading/ all-pervasive/persistent—

—spirit/ attitude—

—as the—appropriate—

—disposition—

—as the disposition—befitting—the worthy walk—

—Why is this so?

—Why is—thanksgiving—

—the appropriate—

—disposition/ the disposition—

—that befits—

—the worthy walk?

—It is—because—

—of the Object—

—and—the Occasion—

—of the thanksgiving—

—He says—

—vs.12—**"giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light."**

—The—object—

—of the thanksgiving—
 —is—the Father—
—the—occasion—
 —for the thanksgiving—
 —is—His qualifying us—
 —to share—
 —in the inheritance—
 —of the saints—
—He explains this—
 —further—
 —in vs.13—
 —***“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,***
—The Father—
 —has—qualified—us—
 —to participate—
 —in the inheritance—
 —of the saints—in light—
 —in that—
 —he has—delivered us—
 —out of the domain/ authority—
 —of darkness—
—and—
 —transferred us—
 —into the kingdom—

—of his beloved Son—

—He has provided—

—to us—

—redemption/ forgiveness of sin—

—in Christ—

—This idea—of—*qualify/qualified*—

—that he speaks of—

—(vs.12)—

—means—

—*to make sufficient for/ to render fit*—

—the Father—

—has—made us—sufficient for/ rendered us—fit—

—for—

—participation—

—in the inheritance—

—of the saints—

—for—

—share—

—in the Savior/Messiah—

—the Father—has provided—

—redemption—

—and—righteousness—

—the forgiveness—

—of sins—

—and—
—positional—holiness—
—as his—peculiar—people—
—the Father—
—has—delivered us—
—out of the domain—
—of darkness—
—we belonged—
—to Satan’s kingdom—
—we served—
—Satan’s wishes—
—We were—Satan’s—

THE SERMON VIDEO STARTS AT THIS POINT

—loyal subjects (Eph.2:2-3)—
—but—
—the Father—
—delivered—
—us—
—We were—
—alienated—
—from God—
—But—

—He—reconciled us—

—He—qualified—us

—He—rendered—us—fit—

—He provided—the Son—

—as the redeeming sacrifice—

—He provided—

—forgiveness—

—in the blood—

—of the Son—

—He provided—

—a robe of righteousness—

—in the perfect obedience--

—of the Son—

—The Father--

—has provided—

—all—of this—

—to us—

—the Father—

—has done—*everything*—

—for our salvation—

—so that—thanksgiving—

—is—the appropriate—disposition—

—for those—

—who are in Christ—

—thanksgiving/ gratitude—to God—

—is the appropriate/ fitting—disposition—

—to characterize—

—our worthy walk/ walking worthy of Christ—

—If it is—only—by the gracious provision of God—that we participate in Christ—then—the appropriate disposition of our minds and hearts toward God as we walk along in our life in Christ is—thanksgiving—

—gratitude—is—the attitude—of the one who understands—that it is not by right—but by grace—that he participates—in Christ—

—the believer--

—ought to be characterized—

—by thanksgiving/ be possessed—by a heart—

—of gratitude—

—to God—

—and—

—this should be so—

—even—amidst—

—life’s—trials—

—and—tribulations—

—because—

—in Christ—

—God has delivered us—

—from the greatest of all trials/ tribulations—

—God has delivered us—

—from separation—

—from Himself—

—Paul’s instruction—

—in 1 Thess.5:17—

—is truly true—

—*“In everything—give thanks”*

—Why?

—because--

—God—

—in Christ—

—has—delivered you—

—from the kingdom of darkness—

—into the kingdom of light—

—from death—

—to life—

Trans—So—

—first of all—

—thanksgiving is—the appropriate—disposition—

—of the believer’s worthy walk—

—because—

—God—

—in Christ—

—God has delivered us—

—from the kingdom of darkness—

—into the kingdom of light—

—But—2ndly—

II. Thanksgiving is the abounding disposition of the believer’s grounding and growing—2:1-7

→ As Paul continues—

—in his letter—

—having described—

—the supremacy—and—sufficiency—

—of Christ—

—and—

—the struggle—

—of his own—labor—

—on their behalf

—Paul begins—

—to admonish the Colossians—

—He calls them—

—to continue—

—being grounded—

—and—growing—

—in Christ—

—as they have learned him—

—2:1-7—” *Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*

—Thanksgiving—

—is—the abounding disposition—

—of our grounding—and—growing—

—in Christ—

—because—

—just as our being qualified—

—to participate—

—in Christ—

—is by the grace of God—

—so also—

—is our rooting—

—and—

—building—

—As we mature in Christ—

—rather than—

—abating—

—thanksgiving—

—abounds—

—as by the knowledge of the truth—

—we understand—

—more—

—of Christ—

—as we understand—

—more—fully—

—and—appreciate—

—more—deeply—

—that—

—all—

—of the Christ-like life/ our worthy
walking—

—is—a work—of grace—

—At no point—

—does the Christian life—become—

—a matter—

—of—our—merit—

—the Christian life—is—never—

—begin—

—in/with/by—

—the Spirit—

—be perfected/completed—

—by the flesh/works—

—The Christian life—

—at every point/ the worthy walk—at every step—

—is a work—

—of grace/ Divine favor—

—it is—

—the out working—

—of the working—

—of Christ—

—Paul makes this point—

—as he continues—

—in view—

—of what Christ has done (2:8-15)—

—Paul says—

—2:16-3:4—*“Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.*

20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— 21 “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” 22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

3 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

—As we are grounded—

—and—grow—

—in Christ—

—thanksgiving—abounds—

—because—

—we understand—

it is—all—

—a work of God’s grace—

—it is all—

—by the divine—enabling—

—it is all—

—what God has provided—to us—

—in Christ—

—Yes—

—there are commands—

—to obey—

—Yes—

—there are works—

—to perform—

—but—

—this is not a ground—

—for boasting—

—but—

—for giving thanks—

—because—

—it is—all—

—by Divine—enabling—

—it is—all—

—by the Spirit’s empowering—

—It is—all—

—by God’s working—

—Col.1:29—

—1 Cor.15:10— “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

Trans—So—

—thanksgiving is—the appropriate—disposition—

—of the believer’s worthy walk—

—because—

—God—

—in Christ—

—God has delivered us—

—from the kingdom of darkness—

—into the kingdom of light—

—Thanksgiving—

—is—the abounding disposition—

—of our grounding—and—growing—

—in Christ—

—because—

—it is by the grace of God—

—that we are—rooted—

—and—built up

→ Thirdly—

III. Thanksgiving is—the all-pervading disposition—of the believer’s body life—3:12-17

→ Col.3:12-17—*“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

→ In the life of the Body—

—thanksgiving—

—is the—all-pervading—

—disposition—

—Notice—

—Paul speaks of thanksgiving—

—with respect—

—to their relations—

—to one another—

—with respect—

—to their--

—worship of God—

—with respect--

—to their working/service—

—What role—

—does thanksgiving—play—

—in their relations—

—with one—another—

—As he sums up—

—his instructions—

—regarding—

—these relations—

—he says—

—vs.15— "***And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.***

—He gives—the simple/ straightforward—command—

—*"be thankful"*—

—Why—

—be thankful?

—What is the role—

—of thanksgiving?

—They are—thankful—

—to God—

—They are—thankful—

—for—one another—
—every member—
—of the body—
—is—there—
—by divine—appointment—
—every member—
—of the assembly—
—is—a gift of God—
—to that assembly—
—whoever/whatever—
—they may be—
—they are the instrument of God—
—for grounding—
—and—growing—
—that body—
—in Christ-likeness—
—Every situation—
—that arises—
—in their life—together—
—as a body—
—is—a gift from God—
—(even the challenging ones)—
—it is an instrument—
—for grounding--and--growing them—

--in Christ-likeness/ Conformity—to Christ—

—And—

—when it is all about—

—conformity to Christ/ the in-working and out-working of
Christ-likeness—

—whoever/ whatever—works—that—

—is an occasion—

—for thanksgiving—

**—Thanksgiving—is—the all-pervading disposition—when
everything is understood as working our good and God's glory—**

→ But—

—not only—

—in the relations—

—of the Body—

—but also—

—in the worship of God—

—He says—

**—vs.16— *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and
admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns
and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.***

—thanksgiving—in worship—

—is—evidence—

—that the truth of which we sing—

—is truly touching our minds—

—and—hearts—

—when our hearts—
—are—lifted up—
—in gratitude to God—
—for His grace—to us—
—in Christ—
—then we can—confidently—say—
—that we are worshipping—
—in Spirit—
—and—in truth—

*O, for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise;
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace.*

—How can we—
—truly—sing that—
—without—
—being thankful—
*Relentless love pursued my heart, though I would hide;
Was unreturned, yet undeterred by pride.
Till by a grace unsought my rebel soul was caught
Redeemed by love that could not be denied.*

—How can we sing those words—
—without thanksgiving—
—welling up—in our hearts?

—Thanksgiving—is—the all-pervading disposition—of our worship—
because the God we worship—is—the God of infinite grace—

→ But then—

—How does thanksgiving—impact—our labor/ works of service?

—He says—

—vs.17—***“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”***

—Doing—everything we do—

—with thanksgiving—

—gives everything we do—

—a God-ward orientation—

—We do it—

—because of Him—

—We do it—

—by Him--

—We do it—

—for him—

—Doing everything—

—(every work/ act of service)—

—with thanksgiving—

—we are—acknowledging—Him—

—in everything—

—everything—

—takes on—

—a Godward—

—orientation—

Trans—finally—then—

IV. Thanksgiving is—the accompanying disposition—of the believer’s prayer life—

—Not only—

—is thanksgiving—

—the appropriate—disposition—

—of the believer’s worthy walk—

Not only—

—is it—the abounding disposition—

—of the believer’s grounding and growing—

—Not only—

—is it—

—the all-pervading disposition—

—of the believer’s body life—

—But—also—

—thanksgiving is—

—the accompanying disposition—

—of the believer’s prayer life—

—Col.4:2—

—***“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”***

—What is—

—prayer?

—Prayer—

—is—many things—

—but—

—in the context—

—of faithful Christian living/ the endeavor to walk in a manner
worthy of Christ—

—prayer is the occasion—

—of confessing our need/ our complete/ utter
inability—to do that—

—in our own strength—

—prayer is the opportunity—

—to express—our complete—

—dependence—

—upon God’s provision—

—by prayer—

—we acknowledge—

—before Him--

—that—

—apart from Him--

—we can do—

—nothing—

—we acknowledge—

—that—

—faithfulness—to Christ—

—is—wholly—

—by the powerful working—

—of his energy/strength—

—in us—

—Prayer—is—

—an entreaty—

—for that strength/enabling—

—and—

—with that—

—prayer is an occasion--

—to recall—

—and—to rehearse—

—before God—

—the many and varied ways—

—in which the unfailing
faithfulness of God—

—has provided—

—in the past—

—and—with that—

—comes—

—thanksgiving—

—We continue—

—steadfastly—in prayer/ pray—without ceasing—

—because—we are ceaselessly—in need—

—of his steadfast love—and—faithfulness—

—we are—ceaselessly—in need—

—of his enabling—

—for—victory—over sin—over the world/ flesh/devil—

—we are ceaselessly—in need—
 —for his wisdom—
 —to know the path of truth and life—
—we come to him—
 —on our own—
 —behalf—
—we come to him—
 —on one another’s—
 —behalf—
—we come—
 —in confidence—
—and—
 —therefore—
 —we come—
 —with thanksgiving—
—thanksgiving—is—already—there—
 —as we approach God—
 —for the things—
 —that we need—
 —because we know—
 —that—praying—
 —according to his will/ what pleases
 him—
 —we have—
 —what we ask for—

**—Thanksgiving pervades—and—permeates—our prayers—because
the one to whom we pray is—faithful—and—true**

Conclusion—

—thanksgiving—

—is the quintessential—

—Christian—disposition/ the disposition/ attitude—

—that pervades and permeates—

—our entire experience--

—in Christ--

—because—

—our entire experience in
Christ—

—is—all—

—of grace—

—thanksgiving is—the appropriate—disposition—

—of the believer’s worthy walk—

—because—

—God—

—in Christ—

—God has delivered us—

—from the kingdom of darkness—

—into the kingdom of light—

—Thanksgiving—

—is—the abounding disposition—

—of our grounding—and—growing—

—in Christ—

—because—

—it is by the grace of God—

—that we are—rooted—

—and—built up—

—thanksgiving—

—is the all-pervading disposition—

—of the believer’s body life—

—because--

—every aspect of that life—

—our relations/worship/service—

—is an encounter—

—with the grace of God—

—Thanksgiving—

—is—the accompanying disposition—

—of the believer’s prayer life—

—because--

—the One to whom we pray is—

—faithful and true—

—On this—

—400th anniversary—

—of the first Plymouth Thanksgiving—

—be the occasion--

—of our—own—

—renewed—

—appreciation—

—of thanksgiving—

—as the quintessential—

—Christian—

—disposition—

Benediction—2 Corinthians 13:14—*“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”*