

## 'THE REALLY GOOD LIFE'

*(The Life of Christ Series)*

The Gospel of Luke

### 'Tis the Season to Be Thankful'

*"...In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*

**1 Thessalonians 5:18**

Thanksgiving is the gateway to Christmas. This week we give thanks for God's overflowing blessings in our lives as Christians and one month later we celebrate in great thankfulness for God's good and perfect Gift of Himself in the Person of Jesus (*1 Timothy 3:16*). In between is a whole season of 30 days and nights in which believers have an opportunity to express *thanks* as a lifestyle, not merely on occasion as usual. In fact, this is the true *spirit of Christmas* in that, as God gave Himself in the Person of Christ to us, likewise we may give back to Him the *presents* of ourselves for use in drawing even more souls to Jesus and thereby causing greater thanksgiving and glory to God (*2 Corinthians 9:14-15*).

A thankful person is hard to find in these days of discontent, covetousness, and insatiable passion to get more for self. To meet someone who is continually thankful is such a blessing in this angry world we live in today. Thankful people are happy, positive people who prove by the way they are that they truly know the Lord. Their calm acceptance of everything that happens to them as God's wise and sovereign plan, the first three *fruits of the Spirit* – **love, joy, and peace** radiate from them in all circumstances whether good or difficult. And by their gracious attitude toward others, thankful brethren yield the second set of *fruits of the Spirit* – **patience, gentleness, and goodness**, proving that they see the people in their lives as divine appointments either for them to bless or to be blessed by God through them.

Finally, thankful brethren truly understand that everything happening in their personal lives is from God's good and loving hand thus they are obliged to maintain **faith, meekness, and self-control** (the 3<sup>rd</sup> set of the *fruits of the Spirit*). Thus, the spiritual genetics of a thankful Christian are the nine elements of Spirit-fullness (*Galatians 5:22-23*). It is impossible for someone not filled with the Spirit to be thankful and it is impossible for a Spirit-filled Christian to not be thankful (*Ephesians 5:18-21*).

During these next 4 weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas, let the fruit of the spirit flow through you and be the daily test of your true spiritual health. Thanksgiving flows easily through a Spirit-filled soul. Let continual *thanksgiving* be your early Christmas present to God, others, and yourself. During the next 30 days purposely say or write '*Thanks to God for \_\_\_\_\_*' several times a day and watch Him bless you with a 'bumper crop' of fruit of the Spirit for your obedience in doing so. It really is "**His will for you in Christ Jesus**" (*1 Thessalonians 5:18b*).

Just one more thing to think about– you'll notice that **1 Thessalonians 5:18** is preceded by '*Rejoice evermore*' (*1 Thessalonians 5:16*) and '*pray without ceasing*' (*1 Thessalonians 5:17*). Notice these three verses are all one sentence. Like a biblical trinity of attributes '**joy, prayer, and thanks**' are in a unity like the Triune Godhead (*one essence revealed in three distinct but co-equal entities*). You will be a joy to your heavenly Father, a prayer partner with your mediator, The Son, and an instrument of thanks for the Holy Spirit.

If you are continually thankful between now and Christmas, it will be manifested outwardly as a steady flow of *rejoicing, praying and thanksgiving*. '*Tis the season to be thankful* – so get started now and make this the very best Christmas ever for yourself and everyone around you. Don't be surprised if 30 days of being thankful alters your personality to be that way all the time. **PtL**

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise.

Be thankful to Him and bless His Name..."

Psalm 100:4-5

## Fine Dining with The Savior (The Lord's 'food for thought' to chew on)

Luke 11:37-12:1

**Synopsis:** What a great day it had started out to be! The disciples yearning for teaching on how to pray, Christ's brilliant teaching on prayer and two creative parables on it, plus the healing of the demon possessed mute (and blind / *Matthew 12:22-23*) man. But when the man was healed, he apparently said something *prophetic* about Jesus Who did it, that caused the bystanders to ponder about the possibility of Jesus being the long-expected Messiah (*Matthew 12:23*).

To all the religious leaders witnessing the situation, it was blasphemy to say that about Jesus, so they all blurted out that Jesus' powers to heal were from the devil (*Beelzebub, a local pagan god*) (*Matthew 12:24*). The beautiful day now changed as Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for the unpardonable sin of *blasphemy of the Holy Spirit*, His true power Source (*Luke 12:10*). Others tempted Him further by requesting a *sign from the heavens* to follow up the healing miracle they had just witnessed.

Christ refused any further signs except one yet to come – His own resurrection (*the sign of Jonah*). Jesus then warned them in a parable that their stubborn refusal to believe was turning off the spiritual enlightenment He was trying to give them. As Jesus concluded the parable, one of the religious leaders invited Jesus to a meal (*really a set-up to trap Him*) at his place. Jesus accepts the invitation and...

### Etiquette of Religious Legalism on 'Cleanliness' (Jesus' spiritual etiquette for spiritual hygiene)

*"And as (Jesus) spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat. When the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner. Then the Lord said to him, "You Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but the inward part of you is full of greed and wickedness. Foolish ones! Didn't He Who made the outside make the inside also? But rather give alms (gifts) of such things as you have, then indeed all things are clean to you."* **11:37-41**

### Serving 6 Orders of the 'Woe is Me' Special (6 'truth' courses religious hypocrites can't swallow)

*"But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe the mint and rue and all manner of herbs and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone. Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over them are not aware of them."* **11:42-44**

*"Then one of the lawyers (scribal scholars of Mosaic Law) answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also." And He said, "Woe to you also lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets and your fathers killed them ...Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves and those who were entering in you hindered."* **11:45-52**

*"And as (Jesus) said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to vehemently assail Him and cross-examine Him about many things, lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him."* **11:53-54**

### An After-Dinner Tip to The Twelve (Beware of religious hypocrisy / leaven)

*"In the meantime, when an immeasurable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, "Beware the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy..."* **12:1**