

The Sin of Ingratitude

Psalm 100

Introduction

1. Ingratitude can be seen in the actions and behavior of many people today's society, from children to adults, both the rich and the poor, and even in Christians.
 - a. Children are often ungrateful to parents for the blessings provided to them.
 - b. Husbands and wives often fail to appreciate each other and their efforts.
 - c. Many are discontent with what they have, and so are filled with jealousy.
 - d. Some Christians fail to be thankful to God and for one another.
2. Are we genuinely grateful to God for who He is and for His benefits to us or is our show of thanks just that (cp. Matt. 15:8; Ax. 8:21; Heb. 3:12).

I. Ingratitude Defined

- A. Webster's says: "Want of gratitude or sentiments of kindness for favors received; insensibility to favors, and want of disposition to repay them; unthankfulness...abhorred by God and man".
 1. Ingratitude is, therefore, the bankruptcy of an individual of a warm emotion or feeling by the receiver of a benefit, for the benefit received, or towards the one by whom the benefit was received.
 2. Charles Spurgeon once said, "*I cannot say anything much worse of a man than that he is not thankful to those who have been his benefactors; and when you say that he is not thankful to God, you have said about the worst thing you can say of him*".
 3. It is a source of great displeasure to be on the receiving end of the ungrateful attitude that we are quick to condemn it in others, but not in ourselves (cp. Luke 6:41-42; Rom. 2:1)!

II. Ingratitude Illustrated

- A. Jesus' healing of the ten lepers with the return of thanks by just a single soul is a perfect illustration of the sin of ingratitude – Luke 17:11-19
 1. "There are three kinds of leprosy, distinguished by the appearance of... spots - the white, the black, and the red leprosy. These spots, though few at first, gradually spread until they cover the whole body...But, though the "appearance" of the disease is at first in the skin, yet it is deeply seated in the bones, and marrow, and joints of the body...A leprous person may live twenty, or thirty, or even fifty years, if he received the disease at his birth, but they will be years of indescribable misery. The bones and marrow are pervaded with the disease. The malady advances from one stage to another with slow and certain ruin. "Life still lingers amid the desolation;" the joints, and hands, and feet lose their power; and the body "collapses," or falls together in a form hideous and awful. There is a form of the disease in which it commences at the extremities: the joints separate; the fingers, toes, and other members one by one fall off; and the malady thus gradually approaches the seat of life. The wretched victim is thus doomed to see himself dying "piecemeal," assured that no human power can arrest for a moment the silent and steady march of this foe to the seat of life...Moses gave particular directions by which the real leprosy was to be distinguished from other diseases. See Lev. 13. The leprous person was, in order to avoid contagion, very properly separated from the congregation" (Barnes).
 2. In view of this devastating disease upon oneself, family and social contact it is striking that only one of the ten was grateful enough to return and thank the Lord for his cleansing.
 3. "This man, sensible of the power of God and grateful for his mercies, returned to express his gratitude to God for his goodness. Instead of obeying 'at once' the 'letter' of the command, he 'first' expressed his thanks to God and to his Great Benefactor" (Barnes).

III. Christians Should Have and Develop the Spirit of Gratitude

- A. The spirit of gratitude is the spirit of thankfulness that the scriptures encourage us as Christians to both possess and develop (Eph. 5:20; Col. 2:7; 3:17).
 1. **Eucharisteo**; "to be grateful, that is, (actually) to *express gratitude* (towards); specifically to *say grace* at a meal..." (Barnes). "To be grateful, feel thankful... give thanks" (Thayer).
 2. The import of this is that the one who is not thankful is ungrateful, and without thanksgiving in his or her heart; thus, an issue of the heart, our thoughts and faith in God (cp. Ps. 50:23; 103:2).

3. Defined by Webster, gratefulness is, “An emotion of the heart, excited by a favour or benefit received; a sentiment of kindness or good will towards a benefactor; thankfulness. Gratitude is an agreeable emotion, consisting in or accompanied with good will to a benefactor, and a disposition to make a suitable return of benefits or services, or when no return can be made, with a desire to see the benefactor prosperous and happy. Gratitude is a virtue of the highest excellence, as it implies a feeling and generous heart, and a proper sense of duty”
- B. In the scriptures, ingratitude is a characteristic of the wicked and a sin (2 Tim. 3:2; Rom. 1:18-23 cp. Num. 11:4-6).
1. The fact that ungratefulness is included in a list of some of the most egregious sins demonstrates its enormity and abhorrence to God.
 - a. “Ingratitude has always been regarded as one of the worst of crimes. It is said here that it would characterize that wicked age of which the apostle speaks, and its prevalence would, as it always does, indicate a decline of religion. Religion makes us grateful to every benefactor - to God, and to man” (Barnes).
 2. Ingratitude was a primary cause of a Gentile world steep in idolatry as it refused to acknowledge the Creator and His multiple blessings (cp. Acts. 14:16-17).
 - a. Ingratitude is often proof of pride in one’s own self and achievements as demonstrated in those ‘professing to be wise, but became fools’ and in us if refuse to acknowledge the source of our blessings (cp. 1 Cor. 3:7).
 - b. Many feel the urge to pant themselves on the back for their personal achievements rather give God the credit (cp. 1 Chron. 29:10-14; Ps. 115:12).
- B. Therefore, we are to develop a spirit of gratitude primarily as ingratitude is sinful and displeasing to God; but also for the many reasons we have to be thankful.
1. We need to be grateful to God as our Creator and Benefactor, for all His physical and spiritual blessings towards us (cp. Eph. 1:3; Jas. 1:17)
 - a. In Him we live, move and have our being (Acts 17:24-28)
 - b. He created us and gave us life (Job 33:4 cp. 1 Tim. 6:17)
 - c. He sent His son in love for us (Jn. 3:16)
 - d. He made us fit to be citizens of His kingdom (Col. 1:12-14)
 - e. He has provided us the local church (Col. 3:15 cp. Eph. 4:11-16)
 - f. He uses our trials to bring out the best in us (Jas. 1:2-3 cp. Heb. 10:34)
 - g. He has reserved an inheritance for us in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-4).

Conclusion

1. All of us should endeavour daily to be thankful to God for the many blessings we receive and to express our gratitude and appreciation to Him for who He is and what has done for us.
2. Let the spirit of gratitude be evident in all areas our lives, with respect of our families and friends, for each other, and for opportunities and blessings temporal and eternal, giving thanks to God our Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17).