



Today's Sermons

Morning: Two Royal Invitations
Evening: The Words of the Wise

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How Many Churches Are There?

HOW MANY CHURCHES ARE THERE?

➔ **ACCORDING TO MEN** ... There are hundreds splintered into thousands of branches

➔ **ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE** ... There is **ONE CHURCH!**

- The church is His (Christ's body).
Ephesians 1:18-19 - "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body ..."

➔ **The Church is the Body . . . And the Body is the Church.**
Colossians 1:18 - "And He is the head of the body, the church . . ."
Colossians 1:24 - " . . . For the sake of His body, which is the church."

➔ **The Church is the Body . . . And the Body is the Church.**

- There are as many bodies as there are churches. There are as many churches as there are bodies. Thus, How many are there?
- Answer: **Ephesians 4:4** - "There is one body . . ."

➔ Since the church is the body and the body is the church, and since the Bible says there is "one body," the rightful conclusion is that there is **ONE CHURCH!**




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Times of Services:
Sunday
Bible Study:.... 10:00am
AM Worship:..11:00am
PM Worship:....6:00pm
2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday
Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program
Sunday:.....7:30am
"Back to the Bible"
AM 580 WSKS
93.5 FM

**We Extend A
Warm & Cordial
Welcome
To All Our
Visitors!**

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO GOD IN PRAYER

Roger D. Campbell

The heart of every child of God ought to be filled with gratitude for all that God has done and continues to do for us. Do you recall the occasion when Jesus healed ten lepers? (Luke 17:11-19). Incredibly, only one of the ten gave glory to God and returned to thank Jesus for the compassionate miracle that He performed. What was it that Jesus then said? "*Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?*" If it irks us when people fail to show the common courtesy of expressing appreciation for something done for them, how much more do you suppose such ingratitude disgusts the Giver of all good and perfect gifts? (James 1:17).

Christians are told, "*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him*" (Colossians 3:17). Our thankfulness to God should be manifested in our attitude, conduct, and speech. We further read in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18: "*Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*" Yes, it is God's will that we pray, and it is also His will that we express our thanks to Him.

When should we express gratitude in our prayers? Constantly. "*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving*" (Colossians 4:2). The Psalmist wrote, "*I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth*" (Psalm 34:1).

But what is there in my life and yours for which we

Continued Inside

can express our thanks to Jehovah? In this study we want to take a look at the example of one of Jesus' followers, the apostle Paul. In those areas in which he imitated the Christ, we need to imitate him (1 Corinthians 11:1). Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote, "*Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you*" (Philippians 4:9). For what specific things or people did Paul express his gratitude to the Lord?

Paul gave thanks **for his food**. We see an example of this when he was a prisoner on board ship to Rome. "*And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat*" (Acts 27:35).

When Paul eventually got off that ship and grew ever closer to Rome, he gave thanks **for the chance to meet with brethren** in that area. "*And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us . . . whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage*" (Acts 28:15). What were Paul's circumstances at that time? He was still in chains.

Paul gave thanks **for God's grace**. "*I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ*" (1 Corinthians 1:4). He also expressed gratitude for the victory that we have in Jesus. "*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Corinthians 15:57). In similar language, he wrote, "*Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ . . .*" (2 Cor. 2:14).

Paul was grateful **for his own personal salvation**. "*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord . . .*" (Romans 7:24,25). At the same time, he also gave thanks for the salvation that others enjoyed, writing, "*But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

Paul expressed gratitude to God **for the fact that the church in Philippi had financially supported his work of preaching the gospel**, and he gave such thanks even though he himself was a prisoner as a result of preaching that saving gospel! "*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now*" (Philippians 1:5). In a similar fashion, the apostle gave thanks for the faith of others, saying, "*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world*" (Romans 1:8). We specifically read of Paul expressing thanks for the faith of Timothy (2 Timothy 1:3-5). Paul was near to death at the time (2 Timothy 4:6-8), yet he had not lost his sense of appreciation for Timothy's faith nor any of God's other blessings.

We further read that Paul thanked God **for the faith and love of other saints**. "*We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints*" (Colossians 1:3,4). Have you and I recently expressed such a sentiment? Paul informed others that he thanked God for three major items that abounded in them: their faith, love, and hope (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Paul later wrote to the same congregation, telling of his thanks for the spiritual growth which he saw in the members there: "*We are bound to thank God*

always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth" (2 Thessalonians 1:3).

Here are a few observations about the gratitude that Paul expressed in his prayers:

1. While we are instructed to make our requests known to God (Phil 4:6), it is also true that there is more to praying than just asking God for what we desire. The common question, "What did you pray for?" usually carries with it the idea, "What did you ask God to give you?" Jesus told us to ask, so asking is appropriate. However, from Paul's praying example we can see that expression of gratitude should also be a constant portion of our prayers.

2. Paul gave thanks for all blessings, both physical and spiritual.

3. In addition to giving thanks for those blessings that he personally received, Paul also gave thanks for the blessings that God bestowed upon others, as well as the fine qualities and faithful service that others showed. Obviously, the apostle's thoughts and prayers were not totally focused on himself, but rather included others as well. Do you suppose there is a lesson in this for you and me?

4. Paul's expression of gratitude to God was not a "one-and-done" deal. His giving of thanks was an ongoing practice.

5. To say the least, Paul often found himself in circumstances that were not ideal. At times, those situations were downright difficult and unpleasant. Yet, he never wavered in his thankfulness to God, and he never failed to express it. If you and I have somehow allowed ourselves to cut back on our expression of thanks just because not everything in life is going like we would prefer to see it happen, then we need to dig deep into the prayer life of Paul and learn to express sincere gratitude to God, *regardless* of what we are facing in life.

Brothers and sisters, we really do have *so* many things and people for which we can give thanks, do you not agree? We are blessed in *so* many ways, and it is only right that we express our thanks to God for those blessings. Paul's example of gratitude is one that we would all do well to emulate.

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"The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, ²⁹ Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"
(John 4:28-29).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Sept 2 – Men's Business Meeting & Ladies' Class
- Sept 9 – Preach-N-Eat & 1:30 Worship
- Oct 5-6 – "Emerging Church" Seminar w/ Kevin Rutherford
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell