

2012 Thanksgiving Sermon
"Reading the Hearts of Camp Hill"
by Doug Hamilton

It is no secret that Christianity and thankfulness go hand in hand. We are reminded in *Phil 4:6-7* *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*⁷ *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* God is the basis of thanksgiving, for it is in Him that we can center our thankfulness. When we do this, then and only then are we afforded His peace which guards our hearts and minds through Christ.

Paul reminds the Corinthians in *2 Corinthians 3:2-3* *You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men...* The heart of the Christian is like a letter, not written on paper or stone with ink pen or a chisel, but with the Holy Spirit of God. To me there is no greater exhibition of this than in being thankful to God. Over the past couple weeks we have been collecting some feedback from the congregation on what they are thankful to God for. I spent many hours reading them and you have exposed thankfulness to God in your hearts.

The 2012 Camp Hill Top Ten Thankfulness List

Three Way Tie for Ninth

- 1Thes 5:16-18 Rejoice always;¹⁷ pray without ceasing;¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- We are to be thankful not for some things, but everything. There was a three way tie for ninth when it came to the summaries of your lists.

#9 Our Nation:

- Rayma Boccio stated that she thanks God for the USA and that it is the country she still most wants to live in.
- Eddy Shaw thanks God for having been born in a country to which she has the freedom to worship God.
- Sandy Dyche says she thanks God "that we live in the great country of the United States of America, though it comes at the cost of many lives, we have freedom of religion.

#9 Pets:

- Isabel Radczenko thanks God for her pets and teachers. Notice which one was listed first.
- Alyssa Miller thanks God for horses, her horseback trainer and Eagle, the dog that kept her dad safe on the police force for all those years.
- I thank God for our cat Tootsie because her purring and snuggling after a hard day always cheers me up. I sometimes thanks God for Mitsy as well.

#9 Employment

- There were many that simply mention "my job". This is always a standout when the economy is poor.
- Dave Miller mentioned much about his family, which was expected. It was what he said about his job that stood out to me. He thanks God for "secure employment that allows him to help others". Why that stood out to me was because all of us have a job that allows us to help others if we so desire.

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#8 The Church Leaders

- 1 Tim 2:1-2 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties {and} prayers, petitions {and} thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority (including church leaders).
- There were many on the list that mentioned thankfulness to God for their leaders.
- Jill Pierce said she thanks God for the elders and her wonderful preacher named Doug. I am surprised more people did not say that??? :)
- Eddy Shaw said she thanks God for having elders who strive to do a good job for God.
- Sharon Miller thanks God for "Our eldership and their wives for all of the sacrifice that they make for the souls of the church family."

#7 Creation

- Genesis 1:31 God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.
- 1 Tim 4:4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude;
- Jennifer Marrs said she thanks God for all the spices to flavor so many different dishes.
- Anastasia thanks God for the beauty of nature and the five senses that He designed in us.
- Ethan wrote thanks for his church family, my family, food, water, Jesus, Earth and babies.
- Lana Radczenko thanks for the creative spirit of man at the hand of God in thankfulness "for the many authors, artists, song makers and game developers."

#6 Health

- *Col 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with {an attitude of} thanksgiving;*
- Mildred also said she thanks God that she has lived as long as she has and still does not need glasses.
- Faynelle thanked God for giving her the health to be able to take care of Warren during his illness.
- Sue Smith ended her thanks list "Medical treatments-Health- people willing to serve in the medical industry."
- Joe Gildow thanks God everyday for his health. When you lose most of your health is when you appreciate your health the most.

#5 Food, Clothing, Home

- 1 Tim 6:8 And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.
- Jane Patrick thanks God for finally having a garage after 63 years so she can get in and out of the car without being rained on.
- Serena Fry thanks God for the "basic needs in life like shelter, food, clothing and clean water." She also thanks Him for all the less important things like pizza, ice cream and music.

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- Some of the things that Bianca thanks God for are "my house, my car, my school, food and clothes."
- Tracy Probst even took a bit father with thanks for his job, indoor plumbing, color vision and music.

#4 The Christian Peripherals (Bible, worship and classes)

- Heb 13:15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.
- There were many that were thankful for items related to the Bible, worship and classes.
- Hannah Collette thanks God for good friends, Bible classes, church and songs.
- Ed Dyche thanks God for his faith in God and the historical resurrection of Jesus Christ. He thanks God for his faith in the Bible.

Two way tie for second place.

#2 Church Family

- Col 1:3 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,
- Barbi Dyche said she was thankful for the Lord's church not only in Camp Hill, but everywhere we travel there is a body of Christians to meet with. She is thankful for the congregation that has welcomed Corbin into their lives while he is off at college.
- Lou Boccio thanks God for the church family by saying, "I am thankful for the church family of Camp Hill and the rest of the great brothers and sisters in Christ that we have come to enjoy.
- Jackie Probst, besides mentioning her family in detail, also wrote thanks to God for "opportunities to fellowship with other Christians, a Christian school completely devoted to my children's walk with God..."
- Jay Corbett thanks God for the church family, "for the many mothers and father, brothers and sisters, and the children I have here." He thanks God for all the activities they do together as a church family."
- Jennifer Crowden not only named her three wonderful grandsons and her loving husband Darren, but also for "Joe Gildow and how God is working in his life, spiritually and physically".
- Tim Williams thanks God for the children of the congregation, the teachers and all the people who are encouraging others in the congregation.

#2) Family

- Ps 127:3-5 Behold, children are a gift of the LORD; the fruit of the womb is a reward."... "How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them..."
- Prov 5:18 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth.
- Lori Deitch thanks God for her wonderful family, that they are Christians and healthy (especially the new grandbaby). She is also grateful for her strong Christian parents who showed her all the wonderful blessings that come with putting God first in their lives.

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- Bryan Hower was thankful for parents who are always there for him unconditionally. He was also thankful for being able to be a parent through the good times and the bad.
- Kiara Allen wrote in her thanks, "I am thankful for my father because he sets the standard of what kind of husband I should seek. I am also thankful for my brothers because they teach me to be patient with people."
- Alene Deitch thanks God for all her children, her 14 grandchildren and the 10 great grandchildren.
- Jason Collette thanks God for all the challenges in Rachel's disabilities, for they have taught him more than he thought possible.
- Sidney Miller thanks God for her mom and dad "because they take very, very good care of me." She thanks God for her sisters "because they make me laugh."
- Grant Deitch send me his list in the mail. I must be frank, his list was by far the most exhaustive. The section that stood out to me the most was on the family. One of his many sentences on this was "I thank God for the man that asked my dad and mom to church, Bill, the one who studied with mom and dad. For my parents to see the word of God and the willingness to change their childhood belief. For them to raise me in the church..."

#1 Christ, God, the Holy Spirit and Salvation

- Rom 6:17-18 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.
- 1 Cor 15:57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Cor 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.
- Jordyn Miller thanks God for the opportunity to go to heaven, because Jesus gave his life for ours.
- Jeanne Blaine started her list out with thanksgiving for God's love, the salvation and freedom of Christ, the church and life in form God in general.
- Mildred Cantrell had at the top of her list thanks to God that her name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life.
- Caycee Miller closes her thanks to God that even though she feels weak at times, she knows that God is molding her into the Christian that she is meant to be.

In Summary:

As a congregation, the thankfulness you have in your hearts to God makes it evident. You are thankful for all things, but the majority of your thankfulness reveals what is most important to you. The top three items of thanks among the congregation, the church family, your earthly families and salvation through God was mentioned twice as much more than all the others combined. Your priorities are right on target. Be thankful for all, but especially for your salvation, the salvation of your family and your spiritual family.