

**November Teaching Theme: Wisdom**

讲员 Speaker: FenFen Xie

题目 Topic: We Always Thank God

经文 Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10, 5:16, 18

**Monthly Theme:** This month we will be looking at the idea of “Wisdom” through the lens of the three major wisdom literature books in the Bible: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job. These books are all seeking to address the same type of questions from a different vantage point. “What kind of world are we living in and what does it mean to live life well in this world?” For us to understand the full picture of Biblical Wisdom we have to examine all three books side by side. We have already taken a look at Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job. As we transition to our Advent season, this week we are going to spend some time in reflection on the Christian posture of thanksgiving. The concept of Thanksgiving is found throughout the Bible and is most pronounced in the Psalms and Paul’s Epistles. A life of thanksgiving fits within the vision of a life of Wisdom found in Scripture.

**Resources:**

[Sermon Video](#)

PPT File Attached to Email

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 & 5:16-18. What observations do you make and what stands out to you? Summarize the Passage.
2. 帖城教会当时面临什么样的挑战和压力？在你的目前信仰中，面临什么样的挑战和压力？What challenges and pressures did the Thessalonian church face at that time? What kind of challenges and pressures do you face in your current beliefs?
3. 帖城教会面临压力时，用什么方式来回应？保罗是如何肯定和夸奖在他们面对压力时的信仰表现？联系自己和教会，面对保罗的夸奖，你认为我们缺少什么，不论是个人还是教会层面？When the Thessalonian church is under pressure, how does it respond? How did Paul affirm and praise their faith performance in the face of pressure? Contrast yourself and the church, facing Paul’s praise, what do you think we lack, whether it’s personal or church level?
4. 一个基督徒要学习感谢，感恩，保罗的提醒，对你有什么启发？特别在感恩节期间，你会向上帝感谢些什么？A Christian should learn to give thanks, living a life of gratitude. What inspiration does it give you? Especially during Thanksgiving, what would you thank God for?
5. Read Philippians 4:4-7 together. What observations do you make and what stands out to you? How would you summarize the passage?
6. What does Paul say the key to “not being anxious about anything” is? Why do you believe the combination of prayer with thanksgiving is so important? What are you thankful for? What is Paul thankful for, given his context? Compare and contrast, where we center our thankfulness.

**Important Notes (Pastor Will):**

**Paul & the Thessalonian Context:** Similar to many of Paul's congregations (including in Philippi), the Thessalonian church was under much suffering for their proclamation that Jesus is King (Lord). In many of Paul's letters, we find the joined together themes of joy, prayer, and thanksgiving despite the perilous suffering both him and his congregations continually faced. In this letter, Paul's thankfulness is for the faith/loyalty of the Thessalonians church, driven by their continued enduring allegiance to King Jesus alone, even under persecution.

**Key to Pauline Theme "Joy, Prayer, Thanksgiving":** In both letters, we are examining in the discussion today (along with many others), Paul uses the Jewish 3-fold Piety formula found throughout the Psalms: Rejoice in the Lord, Pray Always, and Thanksgiving. Absolute "Joy" is - or at least should be - the distinctive mark of the follower of Jesus. Christian joy is not the temporal kind, which comes and goes with one's circumstances; rather it is predicated altogether on one's relationship "with the Lord," and is thus an abiding, deeply spiritual quality of life. Christian Joy, however, does not mean the Christian lacks or negates other emotions as some would wrongly apply these commands. God has created us as holistic beings with the fullness of emotions important to our being. Christian Joy, however, is a larger emotional disposition in light of the broader perspective we have on life in Christ Jesus. The Christian experiences this kind of Joy by continually being in a posture of prayer and thanksgiving, as these spiritual disciples tap us into a new perspective on life and our circumstances. We see in the letter to the Philippians, Paul can rejoice because "**The Lord is Near.**" This both speaks to Jesus' nearness to us in the present through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and to King Jesus being near in the sense that he will soon return and make all things right. From this place, I can live with profound hope even in lament and deep joy and thanksgiving even in the midst of suffering. Thus, Paul can be "**content in all things.**"

**Paul & Philippian Context:** Paul wrote this letter from one of his many imprisonments. As we see in the middle of the letter, Paul was unsure if he was going to live or die in prison. From this place and Paul's life experiences of suffering being on mission for King Jesus, Paul has a heart of thanksgiving placed in being content in all circumstances. Paul is able to do this because he has a great, eternal perspective on life through his walking with Jesus. Philippi was a Roman colony in Macedonia that functioned as a military outpost and thus was filled with patriotic idolatry, nationalism, and persecution for those who refused to give their allegiance to Rome and to Caesar. Thus, the church in Philippi suffered much for proclaiming Jesus was King (Lord) thus Caesar was not.

#### Reflections on Q6:

The key in the passage to live life without anxiety is found in "prayer with thanksgiving." This combination of prayer and thanksgiving is key to freedom and peace in the life of the believer. In prayer and thanksgiving, God reorients our perspective on the situation. As I have said before, prayer is not about changing God or making him attune to our needs but about God changing us - our perspectives, our attitudes, our understandings, and ultimately our character that is displayed in our actions towards others. Thus to be Christian is to be constantly in a humble posture, always open to change (especially in prayer, but also in conversation with others). Prayer is not truly prayer until we are willing to let God change us.

Recall, that Paul's context is suffering. His own life was characterized by thanksgiving in the midst of suffering and he could not imagine a Christian life that was not a constant outpouring of gratitude to God. As we see in his letter to the Romans in chapter 1, a lack of gratitude and thanksgiving is the first step to idolatry.

Let me quickly read to for your Romans 1:21-22:

**“21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools...**

Thanksgiving does not mean to say “thank you” in advance for gifts to be received; rather it is the absolute basic posture of the believer. Often our “thanksgiving” is distorted as it is solely surrounding things we idolize, like wealth, career success, or safety. It is not that we shouldn't be thankful for these things (quite the opposite!), but when our thanksgiving is only in the context of these things, we further lift up our wrongly directed affections and idols, ultimately shaping our identity for ill. Paul's context of suffering helps us understand the depths of thanksgiving he is referring to - thanksgiving for a God who bestows grace upon us, who walks with us in suffering, provides for our needs, and will ultimately return to make all things right.

### **Sermon Summary (Elder Yin):**

总要感谢

11/24 谢芬芬牧师

经文5:16, 18

“保罗、西拉、提摩太写信给帖撒罗尼迦在父神和主耶稣基督里的教会。愿恩惠、平安归与你们！我们为你们众人常常感谢神，祷告的时候提到你们，在神—我们的父面前，不住地记念你们因信心所做的工夫，因爱心所受的劳苦，因盼望我们主耶稣基督所存的忍耐。被神所爱的弟兄啊，我知道你们是蒙拣选的；因为我们的福音传到你们那里，不独在乎言语，也在乎权能和圣灵，并充足的信心。正如你们知道，我们在你们那里，为你们的缘故是怎样为人。并且你们在大难之中，蒙了圣灵所赐的喜乐，领受真道就效法我们，也效法了主；甚至你们作了马其顿和亚该亚所有信主之人的榜样。因为主的道从你们那里已经传扬出来。你们向神的信心不但在马其顿和亚该亚，就是在各处也都传开了，所以不用我们说什么话。因为他们自己已经报明我们是怎样进到你们那里，你们是怎样离弃偶像，归向神，要服事那又真又活的神，等候他儿子从天降临，就是他从死里复活的那位救我们脱离将来忿怒的耶稣。”

帖撒罗尼迦前书 1:1-10

“要常常喜乐，不住地祷告，凡事谢恩；因为这是神在基督耶稣里向你们所定的旨意。”

帖撒罗尼迦前书 5:16-18

一，祷告中感恩

1，背景

帖前教会信多神，和中国民间宗教很象。帖前说，你们以前离弃偶像，向神灵求，带着自己的心愿去求神灵，求平安和稳妥。满足自己的愿望。帖前的教会是保罗所植的教会。帖撒罗尼迦所属的地区是属地方管

理，没有罗马军队进驻，但罗马有决定管理的要求，如不付要就被罗马政府接管。罗马的要求是只要你们能做到平安稳妥，罗马可让自我管理。所以很多当地的居民都希望能得平安和稳定。

徒17：“但那不信的犹太人心里嫉妒，招聚了些市井匪类，搭伙成群，耸动合城的人闯进耶孙的家，要将保罗、西拉带到百姓那里。找不着他们，就把耶孙和几个弟兄拉到地方官那里，喊叫说：「那搅乱天下的也到这里来了，耶稣收留他们。这些人都违背凯撒的命令，说另有一个王耶稣。」”

使徒行传 17:5-7

那时怕暴动。保罗传福音造成有人不信的要暴动。保罗说为你们感谢神。虽然保罗也被攻击，不信的人认为基督徒是造事者。

## 2. 感谢的真义

保罗在祷告中感谢神。祷告当时很普遍，和当地的多神宗教很象。当时的祷告以救地方宗教的多神保佑为主，没有感谢的成份。但祷告来感谢神却是很不平常。因为感谢原文是起誓和分别为圣

感谢：记得我是谁，记得我和世界为不一样，我和神是有约的人，有所约束和义务，以前我们祷告求圣灵满足自己的欲望，现在去祷告是要提醒自己我是谁。不是上帝满足我们的欲望，而是提醒自己是神的一部分。提醒我们的感恩不仅停在口上，而是记得我们和神有盟约的。保罗表扬帖前教会做到了祷告感谢。在耶稣基督里不断的記念

“在神—我们的父面前，不住地記念你们因信心所做的工夫，因爱心所受的劳苦，因盼望我们主耶稣基督所存的忍耐。”

帖撒罗尼迦前书 1:3

## 二，感谢的内容

功夫劳苦忍耐是否神要我们記念吗，不是。

工夫：又译挣扎。或者被打。

劳苦：总是有东西搅扰着你

坚忍：面难困难时一直撑着

而是信心爱心盼望这是保罗赞扬的。

因在耶稣基督里，信徒才可以做到信望爱。耶稣是上帝拯救我们的管道。是我们可以享受救恩的器皿。在.....里能更感受到神的同在。

### 举例1

许志伟：为什么我拥有的东西不能给我真正的价值的感觉呢？

作为世界的成功人士却得肝癌而在神里得医治。47岁奉献自己给神。

他说余下的一生，我只有两件事要做：紧紧跟随上帝，并且把神的福音告诉大家。

74岁去逝，

功夫劳苦忍耐会过去，在基督里虽死犹在。

### 举例2

戴德生的墓碑

希11：4“亚伯因着信，献祭与神，比该隐所献的更美，因此便得了称义的见证，就是神指他礼物作的见证。他虽然死了，却因这信，仍旧说话。”

希伯来书 11:4

受了很多苦难，一切都过去了，但信望爱永存

### 举例3

保罗.说

"我认得一个在基督里的人，他前十四年被提到第三层天上去；（或在身内，我不知道；或在身外，我也不知道；只有神知道。）"

哥林多后书 12:2

问题

你是在基督里的人吗？

We Always Thank God

1 Thess 1:1-10, 5:16,18

Pastor Xie

Maybe the earliest book Paul wrote "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NIV

Maybe the most familiar to Christians

The importance of thanksgiving

1. Thanksgiving with prayers

Paul prayed and gave thanks for you, People in Thessalonians, similar to we Chinese, believed multiple gods,

"How you left idols"

For the people prayer is familiar—pray to your God

"On the side of" + "to request"

to pray w our requests

For 5:3 peace and safety (security)

God is there to satisfy our desires

Paul founded the church of about 50, in the city w population of 100,000, Thessalonica was the second largest city in Mesopotamia

Roman let the local government to manage the city, no tax, no Roman soldiers, the royal family still enjoyed the privilege, the requirement of Roman to the city was peace and safety — no riots

The signs of "Angle of fertility" filled the city

Acts17 Paul arrived at Thes., his preaching of the good news of Jesus caused riots

Acts17:5-6 mob and Jason's adversity

The scarcity of Christians in the city

Paul had to leave the city, Christians were attacked in the city b/c they thought they were the reason of riots

Paul prayed and gave thanks—emphasize thanks! (Rare for the locals to link the prayers and thanks)

Paul reminded the church the meaning of thanks:

1. Oath (covenant w God)

2. Set apart for the holy

Thanksgiving is to remember who we are, our covenant w God, we are set apart from the world

Paul reminded them, they were not same as before,

not just praying for our own request to our god,

Like driving out your gear at neutral when pray,

Pray and be thankful In His will

2. To remember in Jesus Christ

Remember before our god and father

Instead of our work, labor, endurance—our struggle stress; bother, beating; holding on/hanging there

But Paul praised love, hope, to have faith in Christ

In Christ means we are vessel of god

In church worshiping is different from online worship

Only after we are in Jesus Christ, we can respond w hope & love

Examples of

人生奋斗——许志伟

James Huston Taylor

Heb 11:4 Even he died, because of faith, he is still talking

Be a man in Christ

Faith, love and hope live forever