



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

November 28, 2021

P.O. Box 416
129 S. Chamberlain Ave.
Rockwood, TN 37854
865-354-0855

Elders:

Kendall Bear
Dana Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Larry Brackett
Aaron Evans
Larry Hill
Steve McCreary

Minister:

Dale Barger

Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
Worship Service 6 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7 pm

Email:

rockwdcc@gmail.com

Website:

Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

Reaching Beyond Ourselves

Reach: (*verb* **1**) stretch out an arm in order to touch or grasp something (**2**) be able to touch (something) with an outstretched arm or leg (**3**) arrive at or attain; extend to (**4**) make contact with (**5**) succeed in influencing or having an effect on (from the *Oxford English Dictionary*)

In the Lord's church, we are to be very concerned about reaching beyond ourselves. It is the Lord's will that we do so. It is the work of the church. It should be a labor of love for us. Notice that we are to... ..

“**reach down**” in benevolence to help the less fortunate. As a church, we need to be compassionately doing good to all (**Gal. 6:10; Heb. 13:16**). As an extension of Christ upon the earth, we need to help others in His name. ...

“**reach up**” in worship of God. As a church, we need to properly and sincerely glorify God in our praise of Him (**John 4:24; Phil. 3:3**). When we gather together as His people, we should sing and pray with heartfelt expressions of joy and thanksgiving.

“**reach in**” in edification of one another. As a church, we realize that we are the family of God and it is important that we lovingly encourage one other (**Rom. 14:19; 1 Thess. 5:11**). When we strengthen our bond with each other, we strengthen the church.

“**reach out**” in evangelizing the lost. As a church, we are to always proclaim the saving message of the gospel of Christ to one and all (**Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Tim. 4:2**). The church that belongs to Christ should always be promoting Christ. Indeed, let us as a church always be reaching beyond ourselves by reaching in every direction: up, down, in, out, and all around. Let us be concerned about honoring God and doing His will with every extension we make. Let us be busy and active – reaching, reaching, reaching. And let us, like Paul, always be “...reaching forward to those things which are ahead” (**Phil. 3:13**). –

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In Everything Give Thanks

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). This statement Paul wrote to the church of Thessalonica is one that should be applied to our lives daily. During the holiday season, there is an emphasis on the need for being thankful. However, if we adopt the attitude Paul commanded, we will give thanks *“in every thing,”* at all times, and not just during Thanksgiving.

Notice that Paul admonished to *“give thanks.”* This term implies that God wants His children not only to feel thankful, but also to *“express”* gratitude and thanksgiving. Paul taught this same principle in writing to the church at Ephesus: *“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:20).* It will do us all good to *“give”* thanks to God through prayer.

By offering prayers of thanksgiving to God, we are reminded that we are dependent on God for all things. Every *“good and perfect”* gift is from God (James 1:17). Without His blessings upon our lives, we would have nothing. *“For in him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28).* Every breath, every meal, every ray of sunshine is from His bountiful hand.

Further, consider that Paul instructed us to give thanks *“in everything.”* He did not teach that we should be thankful *“for”* everything. Certainly, we should not be thankful *“for”* gang violence, child abuse, broken homes or divorce. Nevertheless, Christians can learn to be thankful *“in”* all circumstances. For the Christian, there is always a *“bright side.”* In all circumstances, there is the quiet confidence and calm assurance that comes from knowing God and being close to Him. The Father has promised that He will never leave or forsake His children (**Hebrews 13:5-6**). Finally, notice from the text that being thankful is *“the will of God in Christ Jesus.”* Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount that *“doing the Father’s will”* is necessary to go to heaven: *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).* *“Doing”* the Father’s will is vital! It is only by doing His will that we can enter into the kingdom of heaven. We might think that *“doing the Father’s will”* involves some *“great”* accomplishment that would dazzle others who heard of it. But Paul taught that simply being thankful in everything is part of doing God’s will.

In view of these thoughts, we should all realize the great importance of being thankful. If we have not been *“giving thanks in everything,”* then a change is in order. A day should not pass without every responsible person giving thanks to God for the countless blessings He provides.

Mark Lindley
Ripley, TN