

Text: Philippians 1:1-11

Title: Testing My Mettle: Forming Christ-like Character – Through Thanksgiving and Prayer

Thesis: Because God has redeemed us in Christ, our Spirit-filled lives should be characterized by thankfulness regardless of circumstance and prayer that seeks God's glory.

I. Introduction

II. Thankfulness (3-8)

- a. E – Paul was writing to a church that was being threatened with disunity, yet he was still able to say that he was thankful for them: thankful for their partnership in the gospel (Kingdom focus instead of kingdom focus); thankful for their salvation and progression in holiness; thankful for their fellowship and support.
 - i. Thankfulness goes beyond our circumstances, goes beyond what we, in our fallen state, can adequately determine as good or bad, good or evil.
- b. I – William Dembski – “As Christians, we thank God for the Cross. Yet, if we can thank God for the Cross, the ultimate instrument of torture and death, for what can we not thank God? The living God, who brings good out of the Cross and is able to bring good out of all of life's circumstances – regardless of how we, from our fallen vantage, regard them as good or evil – is always worthy of our thanks and praise.”¹
- c. A – Stop trying to be your own judge of what is good or bad in your life, and instead learn to look at things from God's perspective, and trust in the One who “works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.”

III. Prayer (9-11)

- a. E – Two-fold prayer by Paul for the Philippians
 - i. That your love may abound... so that you may approve what is excellent
 - ii. That you may be pure and blameless... filled with the fruit of righteousness.
 - iii. What a difference between this and what is normally prayed for!
- b. I – Jonathan Leeman – “Our prayers reveal what our hearts want. They reveal how we regard God, His glory, and His power.”²
 - i. Leeman – “Christians should pray for the sake of God's name. Our Holy Spirit-indwelled hearts will desire that God's glory be displayed on the earth... Even when we lift up our requests, we are praying that God's name would be hallowed.”³
 - ii. “Christians should also pray that God's rule and will would be done on the earth.”⁴
 - iii. “Pray Scripture, or according to Scriptural priorities and patterns. Let the words and agenda of Scripture reverberate into your individual and corporate prayer life.”⁵

¹William A. Dembski, *The End of Christianity* (B&H Publishing Group: Nashville, 2009), 186.

²Jonathan Leeman, *Reverberation* (Moody Publishers: Chicago, 2011), 166.

³*Ibid*, 167-168.

⁴*Ibid*.

⁵*Ibid*, 170.

- iv. There's a significant gap between the prayers of Jesus or Paul and the prayers of most Christians or churches. "No doubt it's good to pray for health concerns, and jobs, and home sales. But the heart which is growing with the prayer, 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven' is praying for much, much more."⁶
 - c. A – Start focusing our prayer life – in the power of the Spirit – toward things much more significant! Seek first His Kingdom!
- IV. Conclusions

⁶Ibid, 171-172.