

The Significance of Being Thankful

1 Thessalonians 5:18

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

Introduction

This month, in the USA, we celebrate a national holiday called, ‘Thanksgiving’. As you can imagine, it’s a day filled with overeating, lots of family and friends, some we would rather not be around, and football or some other televised sport. Does this sound like what you might experience in your day off from work?

Like most holidays, Thanksgiving has lost its true meaning, being hijacked by commercialism and the almighty dollar. Most of us are all caught up in the things of this world and do not realize the significance of being thankful.

I know you will say, “Speak for yourself, John”, and so I will. I look around me and see no real difference between Christians and non-Christians. The divorce rates are the same. The governing laws of our society protect gays, abortion and immorality. Society is being lulled into a state of death where faith is inappropriate and prayer is deemed foolish.

If you think I am wrong, and in some cases I just might be, but there is a way to find out. Try taking your own unscientific poll among your family, friends and co-workers. Survey your church members to see. Ask them one of these simple questions; “Is there anything to be thankful for in this world?” or “What are you thankful for this holiday season?”

Most answers will fall into a “Worldly” category. That is to say, the origin of one’s being thankful comes from something or someone other than God. The giving of thanks centers around the cares of this life and the focus of any thanks centers on family, friends, or things that make us happy. Here are some examples:

- I am thankful to be off of work.
- I am thankful for my family, supporting me.
- I am thankful for my good health.
- I am thankful for my job.
- An so on...

Most people do not honor or even acknowledge God as the source of blessing for which we are thankful. They instead, shower their thankfulness on people, places and things that they feel are important to daily living.

We are admonished by the scriptures to, "Be Thankful Unto Him", meaning Jesus. However, that cannot happen unless we really understand what He has done for us, that we should be so thankful.

If you do not know the character of God, how then can you appreciate or even recognize the move of His Spirit. The pay raise or promotion you got at work will be seen as a result of your efforts alone and not from the hand of God. So will most other things in life. You will miss seeing the hand of God in your life and end up having no reason to be thankful unto Him.

The Blame Game

Some Christians even blame God for things that happen. Have you ever heard someone say, "Why did God allow this or that to happen? I have actually said it myself. If God is all-powerful, why doesn't He do something about it?"

I got over my "Stinking Thinking" years ago when I realized that God is all-powerful and does intervene into the affairs of man but He gave us the right and privilege to think, make intelligent choices and generally have "Free Will" to govern our own affairs. We are held to our decisions. It's not God's fault if we get drunk and run over a kid, playing in the street. It is our "Free Will" to do foolish things and we will one day stand alone before the judicial system of man and/or the judgment seat of God to give account.

In order to be thankful, we must know Him. Who? Jesus. What's He like? Why does He do what He does? Who is He anyway? How can we be thankful to someone we do not know? Most Christians that I have met express a shallow thanksgiving that stops at salvation and some even tack on to that their own works. Their hearts are not full of grace but rather fear of life and continual confusion because they have only believed to gain fire insurance.

Lets take a look at who we are thankful to and for what.

- **His mercy endureth forever.**

He is merciful, slow to anger. He has not dealt with us according to our sins. His loving kindness is better than life. His mercy is new every morning. **Who is He?** A God that is merciful, knowing that we were formed from the dust of the earth. His character is that of mercy. If you feel inadequate, sinful, or downtrodden, knowing that God is merciful or full of mercy draws you closer to Him and builds a trust and appreciation for who He is in relationship to you. Will He be merciful to you? You Bet He Will.

- **I will never leave you or forsake you. I will be with you always.**

What does that say about Jesus? Is He the type that will stand and fight for you in a clinch? Or run away at the first sign of trouble? If we believe that He is there and never leaves, then why are you so fearful and afraid of every little trail and

circumstance that pops up in life? Should we not be praising His name and thanking Him for taking the time out of all eternity to stay right by our side during good and bad times? True faith comes from the belief that He is in fact by your side and ready to act on your behalf. The problem with most of us is that we forget to call upon Him as our counselor, making foolish decisions and end up in a mess.

- **While we were lost and dead in our sins, Christ died for us.**

What manner of man is this that would be a sacrifice for my sins unto God, the Father? Who asked Him to do that? He alone opened the door for me to approach God and to be accepted by Him. He alone shed His own blood that I might live and have that life more abundantly on this earth and in heaven. What manner of man is this? He is my Savior, my friend and the one in whom I trust. He is the one to whom I am eternally thankful.

- **God is Love**

Can a God that is described, as being "LOVE", be responsible for all the sorrow, hate and sin in this world? What is Love anyway? Now the fruit (or character) of the Spirit is LOVE, PEACE, JOY, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE, against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22).

Love and hate do not exist in the same place. Joy and sorrow do not either. The same can be said of longsuffering and short temperedness and gentleness opposed to anger, peace opposed to confusion, and so on.

Get the point. God has a definite character that distinguishes Him from all others and what makes Him who He is. Knowing Him fuels our appreciation and desire to be like Him. It also keeps us from false doctrines, misunderstandings and the snares of the devil. If God is for us, who or what can defeat us? He is greater than man, evil spirits, sickness, disease, unemployment, or anything else. Yes, we are more than conquerors through Christ, Jesus, our lord.

Thank you Jesus for who you are. Knowing you helps me to be able to face tomorrow with all its trials and difficulties as well as even having the courage to stand up against the enemies of my soul who so desperately seek my demise.

Let us be thankful unto Him, Jesus, our Lord and Savior and let us praise His name for being who He is.

Until Next Time

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