

In Everything Give Thanks

July 9, 2007

One of the reasons the Hebrews of long ago wandered in the wilderness of Sin was their continual murmuring and complaining. Most of them were a thankless people who would rather have been enslaved in Egyptian bondage under Pharaoh than to have been guided by the eternal God in heaven. God was disgusted with the way His people were treated by the slave-driving Egyptian taskmasters. He loved and cared for His people and only wanted to bless them by His providential hand. In His omniscient manner, God brought up a leader by the name of Moses who unwittingly was trained by God's sovereign hand. Over a period of time God began using Moses in such a way as to deliver His people from bondage. Through Moses God was going to direct their paths, sustain their lives, and make every provision necessary to deliver them to a land where they could reap the wonderful blessing of a loving, compassionate Heavenly Father. All they needed to do was trust and obey Him. He was going to lead them to a fertile land which the Bible describes as "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass" (Deuteronomy 8:7-9). Due to their lack of faith and disobedience what could have been achieved in but a few days took 40 years.

Today, do we not live in a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills? Do we not live in a land of wheat, barley, corn, beans, vines, fruit trees, and more? Do we not live in a land where bread is not scarce and where we lack nothing? Isn't this really a land of richness and fertility? While the years separate us from the Hebrew children, the attitudes and demeanor are often quite similar - we too often complain and murmur! Some complain about the inconvenience of standing in line at a convenience store; some complain about the abnormal time it takes to get a hamburger at a fast-food restaurant; some complain after three years of continual abuse of the TV remote when suddenly the AAA batteries die and one has to manually change channels by actually getting off the couch to do so; some complain about not having enough money to pay for the newly built home, the new car, hobbies, entertainment, electronic toys and other miscellaneous gadgets.

Aren't we providentially guided and blessed with much more than the earthly blessings of living? No doubt we truly are! We not only have been

blessed with the necessities (food, shelter, and clothing) promised by God if we but seek first His kingdom and righteousness (Matthew 6:33), but we have been blessed with the very luxuries of life as well; and both of these we have in great abundance!

Incomparable to temporal blessings, we are indeed blessed with all the spiritual blessings that are found only in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3). Here are a few upon which to reflect: the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14), the hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2), being an heir of God and joint heir with Christ (Romans 8:17), and being adopted into the family of God (Ephesians 1:5). What about the awesome mercy (Ephesians 2:4), power (Ephesians 1:19-20), wisdom (Colossians 2:2-3), holiness (Hebrews 12:10), long-suffering (2 Peter 3:15), love (1 John 4:9-10), and compassion (Romans 9:15) of God? And then there is the revelation of God's Holy Word (Ephesians 1:9; 3:3). O, how thankful we should be for the Word's power to change people's hearts and lives (Hebrews 4:12), and for the fact that it can shape and mold us into that which we ought to be in Christ (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Are we thankful for the wonderful ability to petition the Father in Heaven through prayer (Proverbs 15:8, 29)? What about being a member of the body of Christ, the church, by which the wisdom of God is manifested (Ephesians 3:1-21)? Being a citizen in the Lord's kingdom should ever bring praises of thanksgivings from our lips (Colossians 1:12-13).

Here are a few more spiritual blessings to continually reflect upon with a thankful heart: Jesus who is our mediator (Hebrews 9:15), our intercessor (Hebrews 7:25), and High Priest (Hebrews 9:11); being recipients of the riches of God's amazing grace (Ephesians 1:7; 2:7); for sanctification (2 Thessalonians 2:13), justification (Romans 5:18), and reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-19); for the sweet fellowship which can be enjoyed (1 John 1:3) by all who continually walk in the light as He is in the Light (1 John 1:7), for all the many prayers that have been answered according to the divine knowledge and will of Heaven (1 John 5:14-15)!

To name everything with which God from His bountiful hand has blessed us, we readily admit, this paper could not contain them all. When one begins to think about every blessing, seen and unseen, known and unknown, and all that is comprised, expressed and embraced in the great and wonderful scheme of redeeming fallen man, it becomes quite humbling to say the least. It should cause us all to "enter into his gates with thanksgivings, and into his courts with praise; and be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Psalm 100:4). In everything, in every circumstance, be thankful for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (1 Thessalonians 5:18)!

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