

Happy Thanksgiving

“Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6). The holidays are supposed to be a time of family, of good times and of blessings. This Thanksgiving season may not be all of that. There will be tables missing loved ones. Some may have tables less filled than in years past due to financial reversals, unemployment, or other issues with which they have to deal. Many may wonder whether they have anything about which to be thankful this Thanksgiving, living an uncertain life in an uncertain world.

The above Scripture reminds us, however, that we can always be thankful. The issue is one of perspective. I certainly wouldn’t want to minimize the tragedies that have plagued us, as a nation or as individuals. I wouldn’t want to make light of the pain anyone may feel but having God to petition and in which to trust is something for which we can always be thankful. Not only is He our Creator, but God is also our Sustainer (Colossians 1:17). Is it even possible to imagine what life would be like without His constant provision and care over the universe? How many of life’s trials come because of humanity’s choice of sin, and yet, God hasn’t abandoned us. He provides for His creation’s needs in general (Matthew 5:45) and specifically for us as His children (2 Peter 1:3). What a wonderful promise He offers in Romans 8. “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (8:38-39).

There are events and issues that are a real concern. Many hearts are truly burdened for a variety of reasons, but in Christ there is hope. Satan wants to rob Christians of their joy by focusing only on the problems. While we don’t deny or ignore problems, we can still be thankful – thankful for the many blessings we still have. We need to be thankful for having a God who cares, loves, and provides for us (1 Peter 5:7). Christians need to be thankful that they can go to God in prayer at any time, knowing that He listens. No one has to tell us to enjoy the good times, but if we can have a heart that offers thanks, even in the midst of difficulty, then God offers us something more. The verse following Philippians 4:6 is most encouraging. “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (4:7). This is what so many desperately want, and yet so few ever find. Will you look at life from God’s perspective, being thankful no matter what the external circumstances may be and find His offer of peace? “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

By Robert Johnson