

In Everything Give Thanks

By Raymond Elliott

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 the apostle Paul wrote, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” A preacher by the name of Martin Rinkhard wrote the lyrics of the song, “Now Thank We All Our God” to be used as an expression of gratitude by his family at meal time. The unusual background of this song of praise was that it was written during the “Thirty Year’s War” when the preacher was conducting as many as forty funerals a day, including that of his own wife. Yet in spite of war and plagues, he was able to give thanks to God for his blessings. This true story amazes me but it does not surprise me. It seems that in times of extreme and difficult circumstances, people who believe in God can find in their heart expressions of gratitude.

In contrast when a nation is greatly blessed with a bounty of material and physical substances there is a tendency of man to forget the source of such blessings. It was said that the Lord sent two angels to earth to gather the petitions and thanksgivings made by His followers. Both angels returned to heaven in distress. The angel bearing the petitions was truly weighed down with his burden. The other angel bringing the prayers of thanksgivings was nearly empty handed. The lesson is obvious and clear. Most of God’s children are more apt to make requests, petitions and supplications rather than the giving of thanks.

The nation that is greatly blessed with a bounty of material and physical substance is most likely to forget the source of such blessings. The writer James declared that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (James 1:17). The psalmist encourages us by his response from being a recipient of God’s blessings in this manner, “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people.” “I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, And I will call upon the name of the Lord” (Psalm 116:12-14, 17).

The children of the Heavenly Father should remember daily the blessings that flow from His bountiful hand of grace. Especially, there should be an awareness of “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). Everyday is Thanksgiving for the redeemed. However, it is good that families and friends can be together on the national day of Thanksgiving. Let us never forget the sacrifices made by our forefathers and loved ones to ensure us of the liberties and freedoms we now enjoy and experience. “O, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!” (Psalm 107:8). “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms” (Psalm 95:2).

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!”

Thanksgiving Thoughts

By Johnny Hester

From time to time I am reminded of the need to examine my personal prayer life. With Thanksgiving week approaching, this seems to be an opportune time to do so again. In a recent mailing I found a quote from the late G.K. Wallace.

Brother Wallace was highly esteemed as a preacher, educator and author. It was my privilege to attend one of his Bible course offerings at Freed-Hardeman College back in the mid-sixties. The following is a quote from his autobiography:

“Prayer is misunderstood by many of us who call upon God. We think of prayer simply as a fire escape. Prayer to us is something to be used only in an emergency. Prayer is to be used by us only when sickness and sorrow come into our lives. We should understand that God did not give us the privilege of prayer to be used only in time of trouble. It is not simply a ‘fox-hole’ comfort” (G.K. Wallace, *Autobiography and Retirement Sermons*, Sermon on “Prayer,” p. 165)

Brother Wallace’s observations regarding prayer reminded me of the inspired words of the apostle Paul found in Ephesians 5:15-21, “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all thing to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

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