

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Newsletter

The Lord May Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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To Whom Should We Give Thanks?

“O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever.
O give thanks unto the God of gods: for His mercy endureth forever.
O give thanks to the Lord of Lords: for His mercy endureth forever.”
(Psa. 136:1-3)

This is followed by the words: “O gives thanks unto the God of Heaven: for His mercy endureth forever” (Psa. 136:26). I remember many years ago I went to visit Mr. Frank Knox at his home. Before we parted he prayed, and of all that was said one expression remains. It was: “Our God and Heavenly Father, thank God that we are on speaking terms with Thee”. To be able to be in fellowship with God and at peace is wonderful. To be able to sit under His banqueting banner of love is wonderful, but to think that God actually deigns to allow me to speak to Him and He to pay complete attention to my words is a blessing beyond measure. We must never forget the glory of the One whom we speak. Our Lord taught His disciples to pray: “Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Lk. 11:2), then add to this the inspired words: “For God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few” (Ecc. 5:2). When we speak to God it ought to be with deepest reverence for we are speaking to the LORD, that is Jehovah; to “Elohim” that is God; to Adon that is Lord, but He is more. He is the God of gods, and Lord of lords, He is Jehovah and He is the El of Heaven. Paul adds another descriptive term: “God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Col. 1:3). How privileged we are to come in to the Holy of Holies and have a relationship, by grace, wherein we can call God “Father”.

Whither man agrees with it or not makes no difference, for despite his professions of intellectual greatness, he is not the product of blind chance, he is not dependent on mother nature, but on the kindly bestowments from a gracious and generous God. It is from this viewpoint that the book of Romans was written, for while it records man’s sin in a threefold way, it is interesting to observe that which was the first major sin. It is not some corrupt form of debasement but something which is so easily missed. It reads: “When they knew God they glorified Him not as God neither were thankful” (Rom. 1:21). It was because men thought he did not need God, and was not obligated to give God thanks that he “glorified Him not as God”. If only men knew the truth that Paul spoke to the Athenians on Mar’s Hill when he declared man’s dependance on God saying: “In Him we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28). It is for this reason people are not saved from the judgment of God and the Lake of Fire, for they will not be thankful to God for salvation. Man has the same attitude as Frank Sinatra when he sang: “I’ll do it my way”, or as Cain who presented to God

his works. The only way to be delivered from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10) is by acknowledging that I am without strength (Rom. 5:6) in making myself acceptable to God, I am condemned already (Jn. 3:18), therefore an individual does not have to wait for the final judgment, it has already been given. Salvation is obtainable by accepting God's offer of salvation, and when one receives this free gift (Rom. 6:23), they will give thanks.

How Should We Approach God?

This is not a question of "on what grounds?", for there is only one foundation for approaching God and that is in the acceptability and approachability provided for through the finished work of Christ. The question is dealing with: "what should our attitude be when approaching God?" Thankfully the Psalmist has answered our question: "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise" (Psa. 100:4). The word "glad" is used of:

- a) Aaron when he came and met Moses his brother, whom he had not seen for many years. (Ex. 4:14)
- b) The men of Bath-shemesh were glad / rejoiced when they saw the Ark. (1 Sam. 6:13)

With what delight we ought to approach God, and delighting in His company, speak to Him and give thanks. It is so very easy to sing: "Oh the pure delight of a single hour that before Thy throne I spend", but how can I stop prayer being a responsibility coldly fulfilled? I submit, as I appreciate the wonder of divine grace to me, I will enter into His courts with thanksgiving, and in the wonder of that which He has done, communication with Him will be a joy beyond comprehension.

What Should I Give Thanks For?

Sometimes we can become so accustomed to the blessings we have they become ordinary, or we can become dissatisfied with life. Lets face it, there are times when life can become very dark, hurts and slights from other saints. or because life did not turn out as we had hoped for. I know, for I have been there. We try to sing the hymn "Count your many blessings", but it is all so hollow and meaningless. Satan is a dirty fighter and if he gets us feeling "down" he will hinder us from seeing that which we have to give honest thanks for. I have been to countries where poverty was rampant, a full time servant of the Lord living in a house without coverings, and the studs are black with mold; a lady with her children sleeping on a mud floor, or standing outside, irrespective of the weather, and cooking a meal over two hotplates and no oven. We really do not know how well off we are and how little to be discontented with. The scriptures come to our assistance: "What can I give thanks for?" I shall never forget the first transatlantic flight I took with British Airways. When the meal came there was a little card on the tray with the words of Robbie Burns:

Some hae meat and canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat, and we can eat,
And sae let the Lord be thankit.

Yes, we not only ought to give thanks for food but for bodies that can take the energy the food provides and use them for the glory of God. But, there ought to be thanks for other things such as:

- a) The remembrance of His holiness. (Psa. 30:4)
- b) The blessings of life for by Him we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28)
- c) For you beloved. (2 Thess. 2:13)
- d) Thy righteous judgments. (Psa. 119:62)
- e) For deliverance. (Psa. 18:48-49)
- f) "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for or because His mercy endureth forever." (1 Chron. 16:34; Ezra 3:11; Psa. 106:1; 107:1; 118:1, 29; 136:1)
- g) For putting me into the ministry. (1 Tim. 1:12)

Due to space we can only consider the first of these: "Give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness". It would be easy to miss that the holiness of God is:

- a) The only attribute of God which is in triplicate. We never read: "Gracious, gracious, gracious"; or "Righteous, righteous, righteous; but we do read: "Holy, holy, holy" (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). Holiness is the balancing beauty of the Lord. That is, it balances: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other". (Psa. 85:10).

- b) The only attribute described as being beautiful:
 - i) “Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. (1 Chron. 16:29)
 - ii) “And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. (2 Chron. 20:21)
 - iii) “Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.” (Psa. 29:2)
 - iv) “O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. (Psa. 96:9)
- c) It is the only attribute which encourages the hearts of his people to sing.
 - i) “Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.” (Psa. 30:4)

The scriptures speak of:

- a) His Holy Arm:
 - i) “Sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvelous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.” (Psa. 98:1)
- b) His Holy Promise:
 - i) “For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.” (Psa. 105:42)
- c) His Holy Name:
 - i) “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name” (Psa. 103:1). It is wonderful to appreciate that the word “Holy”. It is not only used as an adjective but also a noun so that we can read: “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones (Isa. 57:15); “His works are holy.” (Psa. 145:17)
- d) His works are holy
 - i) “The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works” (Psa. 145:17)

In Psalm 30:4, the aspect of God’s holiness is His unbiased justice. The first part of the second chapter of Romans gives to us an unveiling of the justice of God. It is “according to truth” (Rom. 2:2). Man will be judged “according to their deeds” (Rom. 2:6); man will be judged “according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16). With God, all His balances are equal. There is no favoritism and this Judge cannot be bought. When it says: “judged according to my gospel”, it means that individuals will be judged according to their response to the gospel.

In considering the intensity of His holiness, my heart is bowed in awe, thanksgiving and worship as I am grasped by the riches of His grace, and the fulness of the vicarious sufferings of Christ at Calvary.

Giving thanks to God is not a characteristic only of those who are on earth, for we read of thanksgiving in heaven. (Rev. 4:9; 11:17).

When the seventh angel sounds (Rev. 11:15) there follows a scene of majestic superlativeness. There was a time when the children of Israel were around the altar and they gave a great shout. It was after Moses and Aaron had gone into the Tabernacle and came out and blessed the people. Adding to the glory of the moment, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people and then fire came out from before the Lord, and consumed the sacrifice on the altar. Then we read: “when all the people saw, they shouted” (Lev. 9:22-24). It was the shout of praise and delightfulness of gratitude. They were acceptable by God. The people shouted when the foundation of the house was laid (Ezra 3:12). When God created the earth: “the morning stars (which was the sons of God or the angels) shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). These were shadows of that which is in Rev. 11:17. These are “great voices” in one harmonious sounding of praise, set in contrast to when there was “silence in Heaven” (Rev. 8:1). The long awaited time has arrived, the Kingdom of our God and His Christ, the rule of the Beast and false prophet are about to be a thing of the past, and He shall reign, forever and ever. Psalm 2 is about to be fulfilled, when the Son is established as Sovereign (Psa. 2:7-8); as “Governor among the nations” (Psa. 22:28); as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16). This world is going to be the arena where we will see: “Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour” (Heb. 2:9) in the place of His humbling and rejection. God’s purposes for His Son to rule (Psa. 110:2) and “the whole earth will be full of His glory” (Isa. 6:3; Psa. 72:19); “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and

from the river to the ends of the earth” (Psa. 72:8); then “all the trees of the field shall clap their hands” (Isa. 55:12); and creation will be released from its bondage (Rom. 8:19-21). It is not to be wondered at the four and twenty elders fall on their faces and give thanks.

A small glimpse of what that day will be was when King George visited the South Sea Islands. On Whit Sunday (the Sunday of the feast of Whitsun, which in the christian year is seven weeks after Easter) 1862, gathered together with the King were some one thousands natives from Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. The service began with the singing of Isaac Watts hymn, “Jesus shall reign where’er the sun”. These people, very many of them rescued from the savage world of cannibalism and heathen darkness, met and unitedly sang:

Jesus shall reign where’er the sun does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Behold the islands with their kings, and Europe her best tribute brings;
From north to south the princes meet, to pay their homage at His feet.

There Persia, glorious to behold, there India shines in eastern gold;
And barbarous nations at His word submit, and bow, and own their Lord.

To Him shall endless prayer be made, and praises throng to crown His head;
His Name like sweet perfume shall rise with every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim their early blessings on His Name.

Blessings abound wherever He reigns; the prisoner leaps to lose his chains;
The weary find eternal rest, and all the sons of want are blessed.

Where He displays His healing power, death and the curse are known no more:
In Him the tribes of Adam boast more blessings than their father lost.

Let every creature rise and bring peculiar honors to our King;
Angels descend with songs again, and earth repeat the loud amen!

. . . . Rowan Jennings

Gratitude
Appreciation *Thankfulness*