

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

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

No. 104

October 2020

What Have We To Be Thankful For?

Introduction

Many years ago at a Bible Conference in the British Isles there were a number of Bible teachers whose lives were focused on the Scriptures. During a question and answer period someone asked the question, "Is God in control of our daily lives, not controlling by removing our free will, but by constantly working for our good and ultimate spiritual blessing?" After some general statements made by others, one dear brother, greatly revered, just sat in silence. Then someone calling him by name asked, "What are your thoughts?" This saint of God was badly crippled, dreadful eyesight and had multiple health complications. Answering he said, "If I did not believe I have a God who is always caring for me as an individual, I would be devastated". (I am trying to quote as close as possible)

I wonder?

Recently I watched a documentary on India. Part of it dealt with the religions in that country and how people would go to the Ganges to get spiritually cleansed. They were in sincerity doing what they honestly believed. Across the world humans offer sacrifices to their gods of wood, stone, silver, mountains etc., in the hope of appeasing their god and gain his blessing. Others strive for acceptability with God by seeking to do the best they can. They are not careless sinners, but ones like my grandma who was a very good neighbor, tried to keep the ten commandants, was as honest as the day is long and cared deeply for her husband and children. In character she was gracious. I never heard her swear nor tell a dirty joke. She was forever helping people even when it meant a lot of work and expense for herself. She did not have much for grandpa was a drunk. If ever there was a lady who would have warranted Heaven by good works, that was my grandma. I wonder if any readers are like that, absolutely ideal as a wife, mother, neighbor and friend no matter how inconsiderate others are to them.

I wonder how people would react if they knew the gospel and understood that when the Lord Jesus said, "It is finished", He meant every word of that, there was nothing left to be done. The ancient writer informed us, "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him" (Eccl. 3:14). There is nothing that can be done to merit salvation, for everything we do and are is corrupted by sin. God said, through the prophet Isaiah, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isa. 64:6).

Let's imagine, if God were to have you stand before Him in five minutes time and ask you one question, "Why should I let you into my Holy dwelling place?", how would you answer? Standing there you observe two doors before you, one

labeled “Heaven” and the other labeled “Hell”. Once you have given your reason why you ought to be let into Heaven, one of the two doors opens and that is it. There is no second chance to give your answer and no modifying it.

If you answer:

- a) “I believe in God”, wrong answer
- b) “I always went to church and sincerely sought to do the best I could”, wrong answer
- c) “I never had time to think about it” or, “I was hurt by a person who said they were a believer and they turned me off”, wrong answer
- d) “I accepted that which my minister had said”, wrong answer

For every one of the above answers, the door to Heaven would remain fast shut and the door to Hell would open.

Not being satisfied and trying to get into Heaven and escape Hell, the individual asks God, “Why am I not going into Heaven?” The Lord would answer, for several reasons:

- a) You refused to obey me when I commanded all men to repent (Acts 17:30).
- b) You deliberately continued to try to do the best you could even though I said, “Not by works” (Eph. 2:9).
- c) You willfully rejected my free gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23) and the sacrifice of My Son as your Substitute (Isa. 53:4-6).

Things to be thankful for:

There are thousands who can be thankful to God for:

- a) Having clarity of mind in that not only have they heard the gospel message, but understood it.
- b) Warning in advance that there is an eternity where each of us will live and never to die, in either Heaven or Hell.
- c) Knowing that there is a way of escape from eternal damnation and the individual can know in this life they will never be in Hell.
- d) Knowing in advance that when the moment comes for their last breath, one who has accepted the Lord as their personal Saviour will immediately go to be with the Lord Jesus in Heaven.
- e) That while still in this body and having presence of mind, an individual has the opportunity to accept the offer of salvation.
- f) The Holy Spirit who seeks to prick the conscience reminding them at every sickness or death that there is an eternity to come.

What have I to be thankful for?

The answer to this question deals with two perspectives; the present and the future.

- a) While I am alive and despite being house bound due to the virus, I can thank God for a goodly measure of health, a sound mind and nice place to call home. I have a clean bed and warm blankets for when the weather gets cold. The blessing of having easy access to gas or electricity to heat my home and car, cook my food, and clean water to drink. The ability to play music, to hear the birds in the springtime, to taste delicious food, to see the beauty of the mist in the morning or the sunset over a shimmering sea, the stars in their brightness, the ability to speak and be understood, to hear and enjoy conversing with other people; money in my hands to pay my bills or provide for my family and others by buying groceries, and the blessing of touch when I can feel the comforting loveliness of being held by someone close.
- b) In the spiritual realm, God can be thanked for the still open offer of salvation. The pledged assurance by God that “All who come to Him He will never cast out”, that God still says, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18). Almost the last word in the Word of God is “Come”, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). Those who are saved can thank God for being able to have scriptures in our mother tongue; to approach God, and being His child, can call God “Father”; give thanks for daily food, guidance in the day and protection all the day and night; for the blessed assurance of eternal salvation and the assured knowledge we shall never perish for none and nothing can pluck us out of the hands of Christ and God (John 10:28-29). The words of the old hymn are still true:

Come to the Savior now, He gently calls to you;
In true repentance bow, let Him your heart renew.
Christ came that you may know salvation, peace, and love,
True joy on earth below, a home in heaven above.

Come to the Savior now, all who have wandered far;
Renew your solemn vow, for His by right you are;
Come like poor wandering sheep returning to His fold;
His arm will safely keep, His love will ne'er grow cold.

Come to the Savior now, He offers all to you,
And on His merits you can plead for life anew.
No vain excuses frame, respond to Christ today!
None who to Jesus came were ever sent away.

Come to the Savior all, what're your burdens be;
Hear now His loving call, "Cast all your care on me."
Come, and for every grief, in Jesus you will find
A sure and safe relief, a loving friend and kind.

. . . *Rowan Jennings*

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