

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

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

No. 44

October 2015

Thanksgiving

Introduction

Several weeks ago my wife and I were invited to a friend's home for a delicious meal. There was roast beef, baked potatoes, carrots, and lots of flavorful gravy. Afterward I thanked her for the delicious meal and for inviting us, and she thanked me for the desserts which I had made. Now why did we thank each other?

I have a friend called Judy, she is a first class baker and cook. About a year ago she decided to cut back on the work and offered about 40 kilos of flour, 30 kilos of sugar, and a liter of pure vanilla to me. She did not have to give it to me, but she did and again, I thanked her.

These incidents have two things in common, thanks was given, and a work or offer was made for which we were dependent. The lesson is very clear. We only give thanks when we are dependent on that which another shows toward us or does for us.

When the question is asked, "What ought I give thanks for?", we may have to stop and think for a second. You see, so many things are taken for granted, a clean bed, a roof over our heads, a few dollars in the bank, health and strength, a clear mind, a family that cares for us, and strange as it might seem, the ability to help others, especially when we know they are just using us. When that happens it is so often a time of crisis, and suddenly we are thought of. Knowing the kindness of our hearts they turn like a little child looking to his mum or dad expectantly. As I consider my many blessings I find the words of the old hymn are still true, "Count your many blessings, name them one by one". Sometimes it can be a phone call to or from someone just to say "Hi". Perhaps taking someone out or being taken out for a coffee, being kindly to a little child. Sadly, so many blessings can become "ordinary" that we scarcely think of them as matters for which we ought to give thanks.

It was in Washington, D.C. on October 3, 1863 President Abraham Lincoln made the following declaration:

"The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy."

Sadly, we have forgotten that: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). Like insolent children who think they are the center of the universe, we take these blessings and oftentimes ignore and fail to give God thanks for His bounteous blessings upon us.

Thankfulness in Romans

When Paul began to write the Epistle to the Romans, he quickly recorded the steady downfall of man in depravity and the response of God toward man’s insolence. In reading the passage, the first major sin is the depriving of God His due glorification and the result is, “neither were thankful” (Romans 1:21). It was not some hideous sin such as overt violence or murder, it was “unthankfulness”. They refused to accept the following facts:

a) God is:

- i) We live in a world where many of the professed intelligentsia deny the existence of God. There is little value in pointing out the evidences which abound on every hand because as the proverb states:

*“Convince a man against his will,
He’ll hold the same opinion still”*

God is too big, too intimidating for man to grasp. To be held accountable to such an one is frightening for He knows every thought of every human of all time, and with a brain and intelligence which never confuses issues, He will judge each individual. There is no real hiding from Him so man devises a way to, by satanic infusion of thought, deny His existence. The fact is, a person can only deny that which is real or factual. No one ever denies there is an Easter bunny or Santa because they are not real. There is no such a thing as an atheist because by His denial of God for it indicates that he knows God is. Only a fool would spend time and energies fighting against a fable. It is interesting that scientific men such as Nicholas Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, Michael Faraday, Albert Einstein, Galileo Galilei, Rene Descartes, Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, Michael Faraday, Gregor Mendel, William Thomas Kelvin, Max Planck, Albert Einstein, and Allan Sandage all believed God is. Add too this, great poets, writers, artists and philosophers: William Shakespeare, Lord Byron, Charles Dickens, Goethe, John Stuart Mill, J. R. Tolkien, Bach, Handel, Leonardo Da Vinci, Beethoven, C. S. Lewis, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, and Mozart.

- ii) I believe God is because I have seen His handiwork in the wonders of creation from which man learns and cannot copy. Man learnt to make aircraft wings as they are by studying the flight of birds! Bats have a sensor system that far excels anything man can produce. The greatest computer man can make cannot function with the perfection of the human brain.

- iii) Does God exist? The evidence abounds with it and only a fool lives in denial of that fact.

b) God gives

- i) When in Eden, Satan intimated that God was a stingy God who held humanity back from their full potential. He insinuated that if God really loved he would give whatever was needed to enable man to be all that he could be, but by not allowing man to eat of a certain tree, he did not want to be a full success. He indicated that true happiness and freedom only came from disobeying God and by taking the forbidden fruit. Foolishly, man took the fruit and at that moment became a slave to sin. He lost his freedom and harmony with others, becoming a self centered being who blamed others for his own wrong doings.

I am thankful that God gives.

- a) He gives man the privileged opportunity to be brought back into full harmony and fellowship with Himself. The holy apostle wrote: “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16) and gives abundantly. All one has to do is read of the adjectives connected with his kindnesses. For instance, apart from the “much more’s” of Romans 5:9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 20) we read:
- i) Regarding wisdom: “He giveth to all men liberally” (James 1:5).
- ii) To undeserving sinners He offers: “The exceeding riches of His grace” (Ephesians 2:7)
- iii) When an individual ceases from their own doings and accepts His offer of salvation, He gives, “life abundantly” (John 10:10) and “exceeding great and precious promises” (2 Peter 1:4).

- b) There can be no questioning that the greatest gift God ever gave was that of His beloved Son. God held nothing back. He gave such an outstanding gift that the Holy Spirit caused it to be written: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The old hymn says:

Thou did'st not spare thine only Son,
But gave Him for a world undone
And freely with that blessed One
Thou gavest all.

Man is accountable to God

- a) God has clearly stated there is coming a day when all men will be judged: "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). It will be without bias, and since God is no respecter of persons, culture, clime, country and are of no consequence. Be the individual male or female, royalty or a pauper, a saint or sinner, all will stand before Him awaiting His evaluation of their life, and whither they accepted Christ as Saviour or spurned Him. For those who are unsaved they will stand silent for they know their guilt. For the saved they will give an explanation of how they have used the abilities He gave to them. That which intensifies the solemnity is that He knows everything in detail. He forgets nothing and knows the motive for every activity. Every thought, action, and reaction, every imagination, and contemplation is known and nothing will be missed. Whither man likes it or not, he is accountable to God.

Man ought to be thankful.

- a) Every human being ought to get down on their knees and sincerely thank God for the multiplicity of blessings which are taken for granted. Paul preached: "In Him (God) we live, and move, and have our being" (that is our very existence) (Acts 17:28). Every iota of strength and every ability comes from Him.
- b) However, beyond the temporal blessings of life I ought to be thankful:
 - i) To God for His abounding love which caused Him to send His only Son into the world to go to Calvary, and there endure the executed judgment of God that ought to have fallen on me. I stood as a condemned criminal having broken His laws, defied His commands, blasphemed and belittled His Name, and yet He loved me. I had no time for Him and question why He would let dark things happen to me, as if He were unloving and uncaring. Yet, despite my attitude, He willingly gave His only Son to be a sacrifice for my sins.
 - ii) To the Lord Jesus that He was willing to leave the glories of Heaven and live here on planet earth for some thirty-three years, and then on the cross at Calvary, be willing to swap places for me, taking the punishment for my sins, and offering me salvation.
 - iii) For ever telling me before hand that there was a place of bliss called heaven and a place of eternal woe and darkness, grief and suffering, called Hell. He did not need to tell me that, but I am thankful He did.
 - iv) For giving me this opportunity to bow, and casting as worthless all my "good works" and "religious rituals" and depending on Christ alone, receiving Him as my personal Saviour, thus, saving me from the penalty of sin.

Conclusion

As I look over the past months and years, the countless blessings I have, both temporal and spiritual, I truly have so very much I ought to be grateful for. May the God of Glory help me to honestly say, "Thank you for all your blessings to me and those I love, but most of all for the gift of Salvation through Jesus Christ your Son".

..... Rowan Jennings

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