

Giving Thanks

As we consider the unmerited favor God extended to man, it should bring us to a condition of soberness. To think of the bitter end we had before us, and then to learn that God loved us enough to give His Son in our place, is a concept we can hardly comprehend.

What would you do today if someone gave up the life of their son so you might live? Would you be grateful? Would you be thankful? Would you tell others of the great gift you had received?

The events of Luke 17:11-19 reveal the attitude of God toward those who have been cleansed. The scriptures related the story in these words: "And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

What type of response would have been given if we had been the recipient of such a great gift? Would we not more likely be as those mentioned in Mark 7:32-36 of whom it is said, "And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;"

Luke 17 expresses one great principle that should govern our lives: gratitude. Gratitude is defined as "quality or feeling of being grateful or thankful." (American College Dictionary)

When the Lord made inquiry concerning the other nine lepers, did he not say, "Were there none found that returned to give glory to God?" i.e., 1391. doxa, dox'-ah; from the base of G1380; glory (as very apparent), in a wide application (lit. or fig., obj. or subj.):--dignity, glory (-ious), honour, praise, worship.(Strong's)

We, too, are called upon to be grateful for the things given to us of God. The Psalmist was well aware of this principle when he stated in Psa. 100, "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."

What are some of the things for which we are to be thankful? The list is without end but hopefully these suggestions will suit to stimulate our thinking in other areas:

1. Acts 17:35 - Paul gave thanks for food.
2. Col. 3:17 - Our whole being is to be directed by our Savior. Whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, we are to do to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31) and in so doing the peace of Christ will rule our hearts and we are to be thankful, vs. 15.
3. 1 Thess. 1:2 - We are to be thankful for faithful brethren. When was the last time you thanked God for the brethren that have exhorted and strengthened you over the years?
4. Psa. 106:1 - "Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."
5. Psa. 119:62 - "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments."
6. 1 Thess. 5:18 - "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."
7. Acts 17:25,28 - "he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things...for in him we live, and move, and have our being." Life itself comes from God. Should we not be thankful? (Psa. 100:3-4)

Being thankful to our God for all he has blessed us with should not be one of our short comings. For you see, not only do we enjoy the physical benefits but most important, 1 Peter 3:7, we are heirs of the grace of life.

"For the grace of God hath appeared bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works."

Are you grateful for the opportunity to "lay hold on the life which is life indeed?" (1 Tim. 6:19) If so, let it be manifested in your speech, in your life, and in your thanks to the God of heaven. ret