

THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

“... give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” —1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

Thanksgiving Day in the United States became an official Federal holiday in 1863, when, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national day of “Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens”.

Emotionally and physically an attitude of thanksgiving is a vital contribution to our well being, but spiritually it is indispensable if we are going to experience God’s working in our lives. We can relate everything to ourselves with God as a sleeping partner where we act in His name, but rely on our own resources. Or we can come from a position of knowing we have totally inadequate resources, giving thanks in advance to God, and trusting Him in all circumstances for what He will do.

Throughout the New Testament, it is never recorded that Jesus said ‘please’ to His Father. In the prayers of Paul, he never once says ‘please’, but is always giving thanks. He tells us in Ephesians 5:20, “...always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” ‘Please’ is tenuous, uncertain, but ‘thank you’ expresses confidence in God and dependency on Him. To believe Him is to trust Him and to trust Him is to thank Him. This is the spirit of thanksgiving which characterizes an effective and fruitful Christian life.

Giving thanks to God is the simplest key available to every one of us in every situation. Jesus did not relate situations to Himself, but to His

Father because He knew, “By myself I can do nothing.” He is saying, “Father, this is your business. Thank You that You are competent in this situation and I trust You.” Before the feeding of both the 5,000 and 4,000 people, it says of Jesus, “He gave thanks.” At the tomb of Lazarus, He said, “Father, I thank you that you hear me,” and Lazarus walked out of the tomb. One of the most remarkable times was in the Upper Room the night of Jesus’ arrest. Knowing He would hang on a Roman cross the next day, He took the bread and wine, and gave thanks. He was expressing dependency on His Father, not that He would be relieved of the task that lay ahead, but that His Father’s will be done in it.

When giving thanks to God we are expressing our complete dependency on Him and His utter sufficiency. It acknowledges His presence and sovereignty in all things. We give thanks for everything because in every situation, with confidence and gratitude, we are transferring the responsibility to God. ‘Thank You’ is the language of faith, and a key ingredient to activating the work of God in our lives.

PRAYER: Dear Father, we are blessed by You in countless ways. Thank You for your sufficiency in all things and I pray that everyone turns to You with confidence and gratitude.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I giving thanks to God for His sufficiency in every situation?