

THANKSGIVING

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving in your heart.” —PSALM 100:4

Thanksgiving is the healthiest of all human emotions. It is known to be a gateway to a wonderful freedom, and produces more positive energy than any other attitude in life. Thanksgiving is biblical and celebrates the fact that every year the seasons work in providing enough harvest for our daily food. Deuteronomy 16:15 says, “The Lord your God will bless you in your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.”

There are three kinds of thanksgiving we can express to God:

Natural thanksgiving: Thanking God for every day comforts that are so often taken for granted; the roof over our heads, the clothes we wear and even our morning coffee. We need to thank God for the countless little things, never lacking for a moment in the knowledge that all we have is God-given.

Unnatural thanksgiving: Thanking God in troubling situations; a failing marriage, a lost job, illness or tragedy. It isn't thanking Him for those situations, but in turning them over to God, we thank Him for His presence and sufficiency in them. God is never outwitted by anything that threatens us and our security lies in Him, not our situations. In Brennan Manning's book, 'Ruthless Trust', he says, “The foremost quality of a trusting disciple is gratitude.”

Supernatural thanksgiving: On the night of Christ's arrest, knowing His death was imminent, He gave thanks before

distributing the bread and wine. Christ gave Himself over to those who were going to kill Him, because He had put His trust in the purposes of God. This is giving thanks when there is that deep inner conviction that God to whom we entrust ourselves in every situation is working out something good.

Paul writes, “Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 3:18) If we give thanks in all circumstances, what is exempt from that? What doesn’t fit into all circumstances? And how can we grumble in our thankfulness? In everything, when giving thanks to the Lord for His presence, provision and purpose, we discover within our hearts that sanctuary of peace found only in Christ Jesus.

We’ll experience a God who is not out there, distant or idle, but a God who is present and active within us. This isn’t pie-in-the-sky, make believe stuff. This is feet on the ground, living in a real world with all its traumas and brokenness, trusting wholly in God. The language of the Christian faith isn’t ‘please’, but ‘thank you’, and it’s gratitude in all situations that blesses other people, pleases God, and makes us much happier people.

PRAYER: Lord, thank you for all the wonderful blessings I’ve received. Most of all, thank You for your presence in my life. You are my rock and all I need.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I living everyday with thanksgiving to God, regardless of my circumstances?