

Grateful for Grace

Psalm 9:1-2

INTRODUCTION

This next week we celebrate a holiday that really has either been overwhelmed by Christmas or is completely underappreciated on its own merit. I saw a calendar the other day on Facebook where Christmas started November 1st with three days blocked out for Thanksgiving, and then returning quickly back to Christmas.

Before we get awestruck that people are taking the Lord's birth that seriously, we must remind ourselves that the truth is most people don't celebrate Christmas for Jesus. They celebrate it for the commerce, the gifts, and more importantly themselves. We have diminished the holiday that reminds us to be grateful for the gift that is Christmas.

This morning I want us to consider gratitude, and what we are most thankful for in our lives. The most important for the believer which should cheer our hearts and return us to a sense of real perspective is God and His grace. We must pause our lives long enough in this hurried society of chaos and confusion to restore our soul to sanity through our hearts being grateful.

Psalm 9:1-2

I will thank Yahweh with all my heart;
I will declare all Your wonderful works.

I will rejoice and boast about You;
I will sing about Your name, Most High.

J.I. Packer

“We need to discover all over again that worship is natural to the Christian, as it was to the godly Israelites who wrote the psalms, and that the habit of celebrating the greatness and graciousness of God yields an endless flow of thankfulness, joy, and zeal.”

David Jeremiah

“No matter what our circumstances, we can find a reason to be thankful.”

Kay Arthur

“God is in control, and therefore in EVERYTHING I can give thanks - not because of the situation but because of the One who directs and rules over it.”

Why Should We as Believers Be Grateful?

I. Set Free Because I'm Forgiven

Psalm 103:8-14

The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger and rich in faithful love.
He will not always accuse us
or be angry forever.
He has not dealt with us as our sins deserve
or repaid us according to our offenses.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is His faithful love
toward those who fear Him.

As far as the east is from the west,
so far has He removed
our transgressions from us.

As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.
For He knows what we are made of,
remembering that we are dust.

John 8:36

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

II. Salvation to know God

John 8:21-24

So he said to them again, “I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.”²² So the Jews said, “Will he kill himself, since he says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?”²³ He said to them, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”

1 John 4:19

We love because he first loved us.

Ephesians 2:5-10

You are saved by grace! Together with Christ Jesus He also raised us up and seated us in the heavens, so that in the coming ages He might display the immeasurable riches of His grace through His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast. For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.

J.I. Packer, Knowing God

“Once you become aware that the main business that you are here for is to know God, most of life's problems fall into place of their own accord.”

III. Sustained in Turmoil

John 16:33

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

J.I. Packer, Knowing God

“I need not torment myself with the fear that my faith may fail; as grace led me to faith in the first place, so grace will keep me believing to the end. Faith, both in its origin and continuance, is a gift of grace (*Phil 1:29*).”

2 Timothy 1:8-12

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,¹⁰ and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,¹¹ for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher,¹² which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

IV. Strength to Overcome

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

Romans 8:37

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Philippians 4:11-13

For I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me.

John 16:33

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

V. Space with God for Eternity

John 14:1-6

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

CONCLUSION

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“It is only with gratitude that life becomes rich!”

Holy God,
Forgive our recklessness
Our arrogance and our lack of awareness.
Too often we take life, liberty, and most importantly Yourself for granted.
May you receive praise for you are a good God
Even when goodness seems to disappear around us, You still are here.
May our hearts and minds be wrapped in gratitude for all that You have given us,
Things we know and all the things You’ve done for us that we don’t know.
May thanksgiving not be a holiday, but a way of life, an attitude, our personality, our existence in light of Who You are.
May the cross not just be a mere symbol of the past, but the where all meaning to life is born, where love and truth, mercy and justice, and above all grace intersect in the reality of life so that each day has purpose.
May we not just be followers for mercy, but also be givers of grace to those we come in contact with so that you may be glorified above all things.

IN JESUS NAME AND BY HIS AUTHORITY,
Amen