

Being Thankful for Fleas (?)

With the advent of the Thanksgiving holiday upon us, it is good to be reminded that giving thanks in all things is commanded in the Bible. But sometimes we forget, or we may overlook the need to be thankful. But consider Corrie Boom for a few moments.

In her book *The Hiding Place*, Corrie Boom tells of how her and Betsie, her sister, were arrested by the Germans and taken from their home in the Netherlands in 1944. Their crime was hiding Jews in their home.

Corrie and Betsie had managed to smuggle a New Testament with them on their journey to the concentration camp in Ravensbruck, Germany. Even as they entered the facility they were able to keep hidden the New Testament. But as they entered the barracks they saw that it was filthy. The beds were side-by-side, three high with unwashed bedding that smelled very bad. But one of the most offensive things to Corrie was that the beds were infested with biting, bloodsucking fleas. Corrie asked Betsie how they could possibly live in such a place? Betsie reminded her of 1 Thessalonians 5:18, which says, “in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” She told her that they could be thankful that they were still together. They could be thankful for the meager food they received. They could be thankful that the New Testament had not be discovered and confiscated. Later they thanked God for the fleas.

As it turned out, the guards would not search under the bedding for contraband because (can you guess?) of all the fleas that resided there. So, after considering this, Corrie and Betsie also thanked God for the fleas who made it possible for them to keep that New Testament for their own reading and to conduct Bible studies with others who would listen.

There are so many (seemingly) little things in our lives that go unnoticed or, perhaps, we overlook the need to give thanks to God. Sometimes, what we may think of as a curse, may in fact turn out to be a blessing. Paul prayed to God three times that his thorn in the flesh would be removed. God answer by saying that His grace was sufficient for him (2 Corinthians 12:6-10). God had given this thorn to Paul so that he would not be “exalted above measure.” When Paul received the answer from God he then rejoiced in his infirmities. There was a purpose to God’s plan. Although we may not always see God’s purpose, we can rest assured that all things work together for the good of those who love the Lord (Romans 8:28). Therefore we ought to always give thanks to God in all things. It is God’s will that you do this (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Paul repeats this instruction in his letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 5:20), and to the brethren at Philippi (Philippians 4:6), and to the church at Colossae (Colossians 3:17). The Hebrew writer also gives this command in Hebrews 13:15.

What “fleas” have you complained about lately? What “fleas” have you thanked God for lately?

Steve Vice

