

“Be Thankful”

By John R. Gibson

The exhortation of Col. 3:15 to be thankful is only one of many places in Scripture where we are taught to give thanks. In addition to positive exhortations such as Col. 3:15, 17; 1 Thes. 5:18; 1 Tim. 2:1; et al, we are told that a lack of thankfulness contributed to the spiral of degradation described in Rom. 1:18-32. Thanksgiving is important and as our nation prepares to celebrate a national holiday dedicated to this, I want us to pause and think about some of the things that matter most.

While most associate the Thanksgiving holiday with food, and our bountiful supply of food should be a cause for giving thanks (1 Tim. 4:3-5), I want us to stop and think about some things most will ignore this Thursday, viz. the great spiritual blessings our God bestows on us.

Let us begin by reading Eph. 2:4-8 and being thankful that the Lord is “rich in mercy” and has shown a “great love” toward us. He has shown toward us “the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” How has His mercy, love, kindness, and grace been displayed toward us? Why are we to be thankful?

- Jesus came to be the sacrifice for our sins.
- In both His life and His death Jesus showed us how to live by His great example.
- Jesus was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is now our great mediator. Let us never fail to give thanks for the privilege of prayer which is made possible through the intercession of Jesus.
- We are awaiting His return from heaven when He will give to us the great reward He has promised.
- Along that line, we are thankful that as our outward bodies are wearing away, we can be inwardly renewed and looking forward to the new, glorious resurrection body. 1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 4:16—5:8
- The Holy Spirit was sent from heaven to reveal all truth to the apostles and prophets in the first century. John 16:12-13
- And not only did He reveal that truth, but He provided solid confirmation that it was the truth. Heb. 2:4
- We should be thankful for the providence of God that preserved the sacred writings and made them accessible in our own language.
- Our loving Father did not leave us to fight the good fight alone, but promised to stand with us and supply the armor we need. Eph. 6:10-19
- Along that same line of not being left to go it alone, in His wisdom He ordained that disciples band together in local churches and think of some of the things we receive from this blessing.
 - Other Christians edify or build us up through brotherly love, their presence, the uniting of voices in song, instruction, encouragement, warnings, rebuke, and even discipline when necessary.
 - Elders to shepherd and watch for our souls.
 - Deacons who serve the congregation and make certain that things operate smoothly.

- And in reality, while we have some men set aside to special tasks as deacons, we are blessed to be part of a group made up of servants.
- People who put in the effort to prepare themselves as teachers so that they can instruct us and our children in the ways of righteousness.
- Encouragement when we see young people baptized into Christ and standing for truth and holiness.
- Do we not have cause to be thankful when we see parents striving to bring their children up in ways of the Lord?
- Are we not encouraged to keep fighting the good fight when we see some of our fellow-saints here despite the discouragements of physical infirmities?
- Look around at the people of all ages, varying backgrounds, etc. and be thankful that in Christ we can all be one.

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks....” 1 Thess. 6:16-18

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