

## Thankful or Arrogant

It's obviously good to be *thankful*. We need to be appreciative of the blessings- both *spiritual* and *physical*, that God so richly bestows upon us. We can never be too grateful for our salvation through the abundant love, grace, and mercy provided by Jesus the Christ. Likewise, the "*rains from heaven and fruitful seasons*" that *satisfy our hearts with food and gladness*" (Acts 14:17) give *witness* to the *goodness* of our abundantly benevolent God. "Counting our many blessings" and "naming them one by one" is an impossible and humbling but wonderful task! But...

We can also become *entitled* and *arrogant* about such things. Remember the Pharisee in Luke 18:10-12? He was also "thankful"! He expressed prayerful gratitude and counted among his blessings that he was "***not like other people***" - he wasn't a ***swindler*** or ***unjust*** (morally unrighteous), an ***adulterer*** (sexually impure), or "***even like this tax-gatherer***" (no, he was a true patriot who loved *his* nation!). I'm confident that he was actually "thankful" for these presumed "blessings," though it seems to have been in an arrogant way, and with a heaping helping of entitlement to boot!

This kind of "Phariseeism" is still alive and well, unfortunately, even among us "brethren." We can easily become arrogantly thankful that we- unlike vast majority of the world in which we live, "have, know and believe the truth" (I've heard such included in prayers offered in worship services). It's a short trip from there to ***seating ourselves in the chair of Moses***" as the providers, purveyors, and arbiters of "truth," cf. Matt.23:2ff! With that kind of entitled perspective, it's also a short trip to disdainfully "looking down our noses on" the moral failings of others – perhaps in blissful ignorance or rebellious arrogance of our inadequacies and sins (cf. Matt.7:1-5) just like the Pharisee mentioned above. And of course, even if we do acknowledge a few "mistakes" of our own, we can always find reasons to be smugly dismissive of them since, after all, we're not *cheaters* or *homosexuals* or *adulterers* and are (of course) loyal lovers of our nation and true patriots, cf. John 11:48.

Be careful brethren, for "*God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble,*" Jas.4:6! It is oh so very easy to fall into the trap of thinking that we "*know His will, and approve the things that are essential*" so as to become "*confident that you (we, PCS) yourself (ourselves, PCS) are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature*" as the very "*embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,*" Rom.2:18-21! So, "*Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you,*" Jas.4:10... and the same goes for me too! (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at [southportcofc.org](http://southportcofc.org))