

From Pastor's Desk...

## Give Thanks in all Circumstances; It's the Will of God

William Shakespeare once said, "I cried once when I had no shoes but, I stopped crying when I saw a man without legs." Life is full of blessings, sometimes we don't value it. There are people around us with complaints and concerns who fail in recognizing the will of God. They become pessimistic throughout life and become a burden for themselves and others. On the other side people who never allow situations to control their life believe in God, who is in control of life.

1. Remember the commandment of the Lord to have a thankful heart. Give thanks to the Lord for God is good and His love endures forever (Ps. 136:1). The Israelites were delivered from slavery, provided with supernatural food and protected from all enemies. They were expected to be grateful to the creator and sustainer.
2. Recognize the authority of Jesus which rescued us from the dominion of Satan and brought us to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ (Colo. 1:13). Spiritual deliverance is the key for a joyful life. The joy of salvation which is the result of forgiveness from sins makes a Christian distinctive in a community. The deliverance from the power of Satan enables us for a victorious life too.
3. Cultivate an attitude of gratitude throughout life, not for a season. It involves true repentance, baptism as an outward expression of our inward change, praise, prayer and worship, a disciplined life, and so on. Saul's conversion accounts should be an eye-opener for all. He surrendered to God on the way to Damascus, prayed earnestly to fulfill the will of God (Acts chapters 9, 22, 26).
4. Thank God during challenging circumstances, for He works everything for good (Acts 16:22-40). The prayer and praises of Paul and Silas during challenging situation in the midnight resulted in the supernatural intervention. Here, God 'works everything for good' involves the deliverance of the servants of God from the prison and also the transformation of the Jailer who wanted to commit suicide. He and his household heard the word of God, believed and were baptized.

The popular worship song, "Give thanks with a grateful heart" was written by Henry Smith in 1978. He suffered from a degenerative condition that eventually left him blind. His pastor's sermon in the church on the reference 'how Jesus made himself poor to make others rich' resulted in composing this awesome song. Though the song is not credited to him in many albums, it stands high in our hearts to thank God in all challenging situations.

God bless you.

In His glorious service,

Rev. Dr. K. P. Mathew

(Senior Pastor, IPC Hebron, Los Angeles)

## Pay Attention to the "Little" Detail

Jiju John (Malayalam Worship Leader).

November is a favorite month for many because of the holiday season, Thanksgiving in particular. It is the time of the year when giving thanks is a top priority. Thanksgiving Day is a call to rise above all our disappointments and instead, appreciate the blessings that the Lord has poured out upon each of us.

We all are familiar with the hymn "Count your Blessings". Each verse of the hymn reminds us that no matter what the situation we go through, if we count our blessings we will be "surprised". God gives us so many blessings each and every day in our life. Sometimes we may even overlook the little things that cannot be avoided to live on this beautiful earth. In the pursuit of physical blessings, we seldom think about the many spiritual blessings that money can't buy. We need to develop an attitude of gratitude.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 says 'In everything give thanks to the Lord; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus'. Here, Apostle Paul invites us to give thanks in every circumstance. But, how can we? How can we give thanks in all circumstances?

Jesus Christ is our example in this. The Author of Hebrews reminding us that Jesus Christ endured the cross and despised the shame by looking the joy set before him. Rather than focusing on the cross, Jesus focused on the future joy that would result from it.

A believer has to follow the examples of Jesus Christ by looking forward to the future glory set before him, and thus he can cultivate a habit of gratitude in every life situation he may experience. Every day won't be perfect but focusing on who we are and what we are going to receive is a good motivation to be thankful to God and our fellow beings who support our daily living.

There is always something to be grateful for, no matter how negative or desperate things may seem.

I came across this story while I was preparing this article.

A blind boy sat on a street with a sign "I'm blind, please help". He only got a few coins. A man was walking by took the sign and wrote some words and gave it back to the boy. Soon a lot more people were giving money to the boy. The man returned to see the boy that afternoon. The boy asked him what did you write? The man said "I only wrote the truth, but in a different way." "Today is a beautiful day, but I cannot see it". Both signs spoke the truth but the first sign simply said the boy was blind while the second sign conveyed everyone how grateful they should be to see.

Let's acknowledge every little miracle in life. Every day is a gift; every breath is a gift. There are no guarantees of anything, and we can take nothing granted in this life.

**LET'S GIVE THANKS!**