



The Good News

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Remembering Our Blessings

By Michael McCleary

We are fast approaching the American holiday of Thanksgiving. There are many people who are looking forward to turkey dinner, spending time with family, a week off school, time off from work, and football. While it's always nice to have a holiday that reminds us we should be thankful, we certainly understand that thankfulness to God for our blessings should not be consigned to just one day a year, but rather every day. To that end, let's consider two broad categories of blessings for which we should daily be eternally grateful to God:

Physical blessings: Paul writes to Timothy (I Tim. 6:17) to "*Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*" Paul does not condemn having riches or luxuries, but rather he reminds the brethren of three things: 1) Do not trust in physical possessions, but rather in God, 2) God is the One who has given these blessings in the first place, thus the implied 3) Be thankful for them and use them properly (v.18). We have so many physical blessings that we'd be hard pressed to remember them all. Some of the most basic essentials can easily be overlooked. We should be thankful for our food, for the roofs over our heads, the clothes on our backs, physical family and people who love and care about us, and all the abundance of luxuries we enjoy. Recent events have taught us not to take for granted even simple things, like toilet paper or paper towels. Ultimately, everything we have is from God, as Job observed (Job 1:21) "*The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD.*" We should always praise and thank God for the physical blessings He gives us every day.

Spiritual blessings: In the midst of the abundance of physical blessings, we must be careful not to

overlook, or consider secondary, the spiritual blessings we have been given through Christ. Indeed, the physical blessings would all be pointless if we didn't have the hope of Heaven. Paul reminds the Ephesians, (Eph. 1:3-4) "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.*" The spiritual blessings in Christ cannot be overstated, nor easily summarized. Everything from the plan of salvation that God planned before the world began, to sending Christ to die for us, to the written Word by which we can know His Will are contained in the list of spiritual blessings. Indeed, everyone interaction with man, and it's recording for us in the Bible, is meant to remind us of how consistent God is, has been, and will continue to be with His creation. Just the fact that we have a Creator who loves us and has made such allowances for us to be saved should inspire thanks and gratitude.

When we thank God for our blessings on Thanksgiving Day, as well as every other day, let's allow that gratitude to produce in us praise to Him and the determination to serve Him as He has commanded. For if we refuse to obey Him, it is the same as taking these wonderful blessings and shoving them in the garbage as if they mean nothing. True thanks demands praise and obedience to the One who gives us all things.