

"Enter Into His Gates With Thanksgiving And Into His Courts With Praise."

LIVING THANKFULLY

By Orville W. Jenkins

By far and large we take too many things for granted. The majority of us are in this category, forgetting many of our benefits and blessings all too quickly; and, if for no other reason, we need an annual thanksgiving season to remind us of our many obligations to God and to all those who have contributed to make life what it is.

In Acts 28:15, God has recorded for our benefit these words: "Paul . . . thanked God, and took courage." In order to appreciate these words fully, we must remember the setting. The Apostle Paul was a prisoner of the Roman government and was enroute to the city of Rome, there to appear before Caesar. On his journey the apostle suffered untold miseries and hardships; one boat on which he sailed was wrecked, but without loss of life to any of its occupants. He and his companions landed on the Isle of Malta in the dead of winter and, because of the inclement weather, were forced to spend three months there.

Finally, in the early spring they set sail again and eventually arrived at the Bay of Naples. From there they marched on foot to Rome, some 140 miles away. When they were forty miles from the city, a band of Christians came out to meet the Apostle; and when they were thirty miles from Rome, another band of Christians came to greet them. It was at this juncture, The Three Taverns, as Paul met this second group of Christians, that he could contain himself no longer. Although under the watchful eye of the Roman guard, and though doubtless bound with chains, the Apostle paused and offered thanks to God for His providential care and for these loyal fellow followers of the Christ. Doubtless in that band gathered to greet him were those whom he had formerly known; and Paul, remembering the past with all the benefits, encouragements, and assistance of those Christians, gave thanks.

All of us have many things for which we should be thankful. Regardless of our state or condition in life, we, like the Apostle, need to pause in our business of living and offer sincere thanks to our Heavenly Father. God has been good to us, and not only should we feel thankful, but the majority of us should express in a concrete way our feeling of appreciation and thankfulness.

But Thanksgiving is more than just a day or a season; it is more than offering glib words or preparing and partaking of a delicious meal. Thanksgiving emanates as the result of a personal inventory. The Apostle Paul surveyed the present, remembered the past, and then "thanked God." Paul remembered the goodness, mercy, protection, grace, and victory that God had provided in his life, then "thanked God." Thanksgiving was "thankful living." to the Apostle, for he declared: "For in him [Christ] we live, and move, and have our being." This was his concept of the Christian life, and from this deep concept came his genuine spirit of thankfulness.

On one occasion a lawyer approached Jesus and asked, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus answered that lawyer, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

There are three Greek words which are employed to denote love. One of these is the word **eros**, meaning lustful passion; this word is not used in the New Testament. The second of these Greek words is **philia**, meaning intimate friendship; this word is used several times in the New Testament. The third and by far the strongest word is **agape**, meaning love which has understanding, concern, and a desire to help. **Agape** is used repeatedly throughout the New Testament, and is the word

giving. "Paul . . . thanked God" because he remembered the glorious, transforming grace of God in his own heart and life.

The Apostle's observance of the past and remembrance of the deliverance and goodness of the Lord not only made him thankful, but also it enabled him to face the future with assurance. "Paul . . . thanked God, and took courage." Undoubtedly there were many things looming on the Apostle's horizon which would have discouraged even the stout-hearted; but, filled with thankfulness for the past and present, Paul took courage.

Ours is a world filled with uncertainty and fear. We listen to news reports with apprehension; we scan the headlines with hesitancy. The horizon of our future looms large with many baffling and discouraging factors too, but surely the Lord would have us offer thanks and take courage. Paul realized that before him was the city of Rome, and in Rome was the Caesar before whom he must stand trial; but he thanked God, and "took courage."

Although the future may be dark and uncertain, we can recall the leadership and protection of the Lord unto this present hour, then take courage toward the future. As we pause this Thanksgiving, remembering God's providential leadership, mercy, and grace, there should come a calm and an assurance into each of our hearts, giving courage and strength for the future!

—Herald of Holiness, Nov., 1950

WHAT HAVE THEY SEEN?

And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates (Deut. 6:9). A lady had just parted with some friends who had been guests for a few days. She had been happy in having them see her new home and fine furnishings. Sitting down for a moment she noticed her Bible which had not been open during the friends' visit. Opening the Bible, as it were, at random, her eyes fell on the words of God to Hezekiah, "What have they seen in thine house?" Hezekiah had had visitors. He, too, had been proud of his house, but somehow he had not represented God to his visitors and God had penalized him. Do our guests see a family altar in our homes? Do we wait for a "blessing" at our meals? We cannot possibly leave God out of our family program night and morning, whether we have guests or not.—The Garden of Prayer.

MEN NEED GOD—GOD NEEDS MEN

"Son, go work today in my vineyard"

(Matt. 21:28)

Wanted, men and women to work in God's vineyard. There is steady work for all who will apply. The work is hard, much of it knee work, and means sacrifice and self-denial. The pay is not in earthly store but in heavenly manna. There will be only one great payday, and that lasts as long as eternity. There have never been any layoffs, so this is a lifetime job. Apply in person any time, anywhere at the throne of God.—Selected.

- Thanksgiving -

Thanks be to God, our Father dear,
Who reigns above, but yet so near;
Yea, deigns to rule and reign within
Each trusting heart, and saves from
sin.

Oh, let our praises ever roll;
The joy bells ring within the soul;
May peace and rest have constant
sway
Within our hearts this Thanksgiving
Day.

For life and blessings every hour,
For Christ who reigns and gives the
power
To conquer trials, sin and shame—
Oh praise His blessed, hallowed
Name!

Yea, let us come within His gate
With glad Thanksgiving, true and
great;
Remembering always it was He
Who brought salvation full and free.

—Mrs. T. M. Bodenhorn

which Jesus used in speaking to this lawyer. This is the love which demands my all and my best, a complete surrender and my absolute allegiance. It is this kind of love that serves as the basis for a right relationship with God; and when one has a right relationship with God, the result is thankful living.

It is only that philosophy of life which has a basic concern and love for God and for others that is genuinely thankful. It is experientially true that this kind of love cannot be willed upon one's self as one may choose. This love relationship which transforms us from selfish, narrow, small people into free, joyful, thankful individuals comes from a power outside of ourselves. Unredeemed man needs the transforming power of the Saviour. When we yield ourselves to Jesus and know the power of His redemption, love, grace, and salvation, then we have the experience of love in our hearts which is the basis for genuine thanks-