

Eternal Thanksgiving

Steve Berger November 22, 2020

Today — I'm not talking about giving thanks forever, although we will, I'm talking about giving thanks in every circumstance and season of life because God is doing an eternal work in us!

The Bible says some outlandish sounding things about the giving of thanks!

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- **in** everything give thanks — in every circumstance and season.
- this is God's will for us — keeps us from getting arrogant, keeps us from getting bitter. (*gets more outlandish*)

FOR —

Ephesians 5:20

...giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...

- **for** all things — pleasure and pain both. Pleasure is easy, pain is difficult... **requires eternal perspective and valuing the eternal work of God at work in your life!** (not about isolating “bad” but expanding to see the greater good). This positions us to offer eternal thanksgiving!

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Listen — *Paul never denies his suffering, he just looks beyond it to the glorious work God is doing in the midst of it and it causes him to offer eternal thanksgiving!*

Notice — you see Paul giving thanks in all things and for all things in **Acts 16:25** while he's in prison in Philippi — singing hymns and praying — free from bitterness, has eternal perspective, values future glory, *God works a miracle of deliverance for him.*

What miracles might we experience in our lives if we learned to give eternal thanks in all things and for all things?

Jesus is our ultimate example of giving thanks in and for all things.

Luke 22:19-20

And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."

**Jesus took the bread and the cup,
knowing it would soon be His very own body and blood...
and gave thanks, in all things and for all things!**

How??? He knew it was about to produce eternal salvation for us, He valued that, so He was able, in the temporal, to offer eternal thanksgiving!

Hebrews 12:2

...looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross...

See — the joy of eternal salvation for mankind allowed Him to endure the suffering of the cross in the moment.

Application — if we are ever going to learn to give eternal thanks, we are going to have to learn to value the eternal work of God in our lives and what it is producing... it is conforming us into the image of Jesus, Romans 8:29, and preparing us for future glory, Romans 8:18.

- Being conformed into the image of Christ, through pain or pleasure, prosperity or poverty, all things are working together for my good!
- Good doesn't always mean happy, temporary ease. Good can mean heartbreaking, eternal glory. He's worthy of eternal thanksgiving in all!

You can give eternal thanks due to God's eternal goodness toward you.

Ephesians 1:3-14

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, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

- Blessed with Every Spiritual Blessing — vs.3
- Chosen — vs.4
- Holy — vs.4
- Blameless — vs.4
- Loved — vs.4
- Adopted — vs.5
- Favored — vs.6
- Redeemed — vs.7

- Forgiven — vs.7
- Heavenly Gathering — vs.10
- Sealed Holy Spirit — vs.13
- Guaranteed Inheritance — vs.14

**None of these glorious blessings
have anything to do with our temporary, earthly circumstances!
Offer eternal thanksgiving for them!**

**We can be eternally thankful in all things and for all things
because no things can undo or overcome God's eternal blessing in our lives!**

Close with another eternal thanksgiving summary from Paul.

Colossians 1:12-13

giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love...

qualified, delivered, conveyed = eternal thanksgiving!

Discussion Questions

1. According to Ephesians 5:20, what is the will of God for your life?
2. Have you experienced a “miracle of deliverance” in the middle of your suffering?
3. Discuss: At the Last Supper, Christ gave thanks for the bread and the cup, knowing it would soon be His very own body and blood.
4. What is the circumstance in your life right now where you need to “give thanks anyway”?
5. Discuss: If we are ever going to learn to give eternal thanks, we are going to have to learn to value the eternal work of God in our lives and what it is producing (*Romans 8:18, 29*).

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