***Blessing, Glory, Wisdom, and Thanksgiving

RV135-01***

We are studying the tribulation converts in Revelation 7:9-17. This is segment number 4.

**The Heavenly Throne Room**

The apostle John here is experiencing a vision in which he finds himself transported into God's heavenly throne room. The time period when this takes place historically is after the rapture of the church, and during the tribulation era here on earth. John sees in heaven, God the Father on His throne; the Lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer Lamb of God; the four honor guard angels around the Father's throne; the 24 elders on their thrones, surrounding the Father's throne, and representing the church, the body of Christ; a multitude of elect angels; and, a host of tribulation martyrs – people who were born again during the tribulation as the result of the evangelistic effort of 144,000 evangelists, but who were slaughtered by the forces of the antichrist. So, they were martyred for their faith.

**Rejoice**

These tribulation martyrs rejoice in their possession of absolute righteousness, and of their release from the sufferings they have experienced on the earth. They have, of course, come into the tribulation era without salvation, so these people are particularly appreciative of it. We find that this whole company joins together in an expression of worship to God for His grace and salvation which He has provided for them.

**Worship**

Worship, we have pointed out, is the believer's expression of personal love and of personal appreciation for God whom he has not seen, but whose works he has experience. We are learning how to worship through our knowledge of the doctrines of Scripture because they teach us about the worthiness of God, and the result is our having a love for God that direct us and bring us into worship. Worship of God, we are told in the Bible, must be a spiritual enterprise – an enterprise of the living human spirit in the redeemed person coming into contact with God the Holy Spirit. Worship also must be in accordance with the truth of Scripture. Ritualistic liturgical church services are not worship. Just because you stand up and recite the Apostles' Creed together is not an act of worship. Because you repeat the Lord's Prayer together is not an act of worship. It has nothing to do with worshiping God. It has nothing to do, basically, with learning of His worthiness. We learn from the Word of God how great and how marvelous God Himself is. We live accordingly to what we learn – who and what He is. And every Christian then acts as his own priest in worshiping God.

We now begin at Revelation 7:12, where now this whole company of angels and human beings burst out in seven specific expressions that delineate their worship of God. Verse 12 begins with the word saying, which is the Greek word "lego." "Lego" is the word for verbal expressions, with an emphasis on the content. It is not so much concerned with the words that you use as such, but what those words mean. So, we're going to zero in on the significance of these seven words.

**Amen**

This is something that these people were repeatedly saying because it's in the Greek present tense, so it tells us that they're doing it constantly. It is active voice, which means that it was spoken by all these who were in the throne room. They all join together in one united voice. It's a spiritual principle being stated. What they are calling out is, "Amen," which is the Greek word "Amen." This word is one of those words that actually came from the Hebrew word "Amen," so it's just taking Hebrew letters and changing them into Greek letters; and, the Greek letters, we change into English letters, and that's how we get the English word "Amen." The three languages are related here, and in all of them, the word means "so be it." It's an expression of one's personal assent to an idea. Sometimes the Bible translates it with the words, "Verily, verily", or "Truly, truly." But it means, "It's absolutely true."

One of the things that will happen for all of us eventually in heaven is that we're going to discover what is true and what is not true. In the whole religious realm, everything is going to be straightened out. We're going to find out who's right and who's wrong. We're going to find out who's right about how to go to heaven, and who's wrong about how to go to heaven. We're going to find out who's right about the rapture, and who's wrong; who's right about the tribulation, and who's wrong; and, who's right about the relationship of these things, and who's wrong. And these people who are now in heaven, whose experience we have a preview of, have indeed already entered into finding out who's right. And what they have discovered, when they have come into heaven, has so open their eyes, and so raised their spirits that they shout, "Amen." What are they shouting "Amen" to? Their shouting "Amen" to all of the marvelous things that they're hearing in heaven that are being told them, and that are being explained to them. These people who are up in heaven are seeing something now about God and what they see, they express in these seven distinct words.

1. **Blessing**

The first one: they say, "Amen, it's really true. Then they shout out, in the course of worshiping God, the word "blessing." The Greek word looks like this: "eulogia."

* 1. **Praise**

The word "blessing" actually has three distinct meanings and "praise" is one of them. "Eulogia" really means "praise." When they shout, "Blessing," they're shouting out, "Praise." To bless someone then is to praise that person. What does praise imply? Well, when you praise somebody, you are expressing gratitude to that person for something. Someone does something for you. It's been helpful to you, and you praise him for the good job that he has done because you're grateful for it. It's a benefit to you. This is why we use this word "blessing" when we sit down and have a meal. We say that, "We're going to say the blessing." What we are doing is praising God who has provided that food. We praise God for who and what He is. When we call blessing, the word means, number one "praise," which is an expression of gratitude.

* 1. **Prosperity**

Number two, it also means "prosperity." When we bless someone, we also are wishing prosperity upon him. We bless him in some way so as to prosper him. If someone does something for you, and it's a benefit to you, you say, "You have blessed me. That was a blessing to me." What do you mean? You mean that in some way you have been prospered. God blesses Christians with spiritual and with material prosperity.

In Ephesians 1:3, we have this pointed out to us. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual prosperity; all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ." Furthermore, not only do we have those spiritual blessings, but God blesses us in the sense of prospering us with material blessings as well.

Hebrews 6:4-7 points this out where, we read, "For the earth, which drinks in the rain that comes often upon it, and brings forth herbs fit for him by whom it is tilled, receives blessing from God." The very provision of food and everything else of material things is something that comes to us because God is blessing us. He is prospering us. The words of a Christian which prosper another person are said to be words of blessing.

When we give money to God's work, we are said to bring a blessing. We are blessing God's work in the fact that we are prospering it. We are blessing it or bringing it a bounty. In 2 Corinthians 9:5, we had this pointed out to us: "Therefore, I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty (that is, your blessing) of which you had noticed before, that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty, and not as a matter of covetousness." This is the same Greek word that we have here for blessing. Here it is translated as "bounty." What are they talking about? Well, Paul is talking about an offering which he was collecting for the saints who are in dire need of food because of a famine in Jerusalem. And when he's talking about this bounty, he's talking about collecting money, and he calls it a blessing, because it is going to prosper those who receive it.

* 1. **Dedication**

Then, in the third place, when we say "blessing," we mean "dedication" – to bless someone in the sense of dedicating him to some purpose. We bless God in the sense of dedicating to Him the worship which He deserves. We again bless a meal, because what are we doing when we bless that meal? We are dedicating that meal to the nourishment of our body. 1 Corinthians 3:16 points out that we do that because: "We know that our bodies are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells within you." For that reason, the body is something that should be treated as a holy place. So, when we bless the meal, and we say, "Bless this food to our bodies," we are asking God to dedicate this food to the prosperity of our body.

We now bless the elements of the Lord's Supper, because on the one hand, we bless them in order to praise God for what they represent. We bless those elements in a sense that we want to prosper the fellowship of believers with one another, and also in dedication to the memory of Christ's sacrifice. So, you have all three of these elements at the Lord's Supper, when just before they passed the elements, they said, "Let's bless the elements." What do they mean? They mean they're expressing praise, prosperity, and dedication in relationship to what those elements represent.

God deserves, then, our blessing of praise; the prospering of His work; and, of our total dedication to Him. He deserves our praise; He deserves our efforts to prosper His work; and, He deserves our total dedication to Him. That's all we bless God. We blessing when we praise Him and express our gratitude. We bless him when we finances His work. We bless Him when we are dedicated to his service.

Well, the blessing which is heard in heaven is genuine blessing. There's a lot of blessings or praise here on earth, which is mere flattery for somebody's personal gain. But what these people are talking about here in heaven, when they are praising, it's not just cheap flattery. The Christian priest pronounces blessings upon others. You praise God for the potential, and what these people have become. You bless them for the prosperity of God that you wish upon them, and you bless them in order to dedicate them to God's plan for their lives.

So, these people in heaven are shouting out blessing to God in their expression of worship. Because of what God has done for them, they can indeed praise Him. They know fully what has been done, so they are ready to praise Him. They are ready to prosper God, and they are ready to dedicate their all to Him, as indeed they have already done. That's why they're in heaven to begin with – because their lives have been put on the line.

1. **Glory**

The second word that they burst out with together is the word "glory," and that's the word "doxa." This word refers to recognizing something which is impressive about a person which gives that person influence or status. You bring glory to a person by recognizing and pointing out something that is impressive or something that is a matter of status that he has. It's the idea of pointing out the quality that sets that person apart from others. It exalts him.

You can understand why they're shouting out to God here, "Glory," because indeed God is an impressive person. He is one of influence and status, and they are recognizing His separateness. Here it refers specifically to the divine essence which is possessed by God. It is God's essence that makes Him unique in the universe. This essence is reflected in the beauty of the dazzling light which surrounds God.

Giving glory to God, then, is recognizing His perfect character, and so declaring Him to be unique in the universe. You cannot, in the English language, say that something or someone is the most unique person you've ever seen: "This is the most unique event I've ever experienced." The word "unique" means that there is only one-of-a-kind. Therefore, you cannot attach the word "most" to it. It's either unique, or it's not. There's no other substitute. There's nothing to match it. So, God, when you say, "He is unique," you have said it all. There is nothing to compare to him.

So, Christians are to live, we are told, to the glory of God by recognizing God's unique character. No one else in all the universe is like God our Father. The Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself is deity, and who reflects the same essence that the Father possesses, we are told in 1 Corinthians 2:8, is the Lord of Glory: "Which none of the princes of this age (the human authorities and leaders of this age) knew. For having known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. The glory of Jesus Christ, which reflected His essence of deity, was, of course, clearly shown in the Mount of Transfiguration.

The devil comes along, and he does not want us to be aware of the glory of God; that is, the uniqueness of God. He does not want us to be thinking about the essence of God that totally separates God from every other personality in the universe. So, the devil goes around deliberately blinding people on this subject of the glory of God, and the glory of what God has said. For this reason, 2 Corinthians 4:4-6 tell us: "In whom the God of this age (that is, Satan) has blinded the minds of them who do not believe, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them, lest the gospel of the glory of Christ should shine unto them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves, your servants, for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shown in our heart (the bright, illuminating, dazzling light of the glory of God) to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

So, it is no wonder that people go out into eternity that takes them into the lake of fire because they do not understand that Jesus Christ, as the unique person, the one who has glory, is the one that they must deal with, and with none other. And no one else can help them, because the Bible tells us that it is the Lord Jesus Christ who brings a believing sinner into the glory of God. That's what all of us want to do. We all want to come in to where God's glory is, and that's in heaven.

1 Peter 5:10 says, "But the God of all grace who has called us into to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." Here Peter says, "A time of suffering, a time where the going is tough, but I want you to know that the God of all grace, the God who gives us what we do not deserve, has called us into an eternal glory through Jesus Christ." So, He is the agent that will take us into seeing the glory that these martyrs are so praising God for in their worship in heaven.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself glorified God the Father by completing the mission to which He had been called. In John 17:4-6, the night before His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus pointed this out: "'I have glorified you,' He says to the Father, "on the earth.'" How? "I have finished the work which You gave Me to do." There is a clue. Here is a point of doctrine. Here's a principle of truth. One of the ways that you and I glorify God is by doing the job that he gave us to do as Christians – the job that He gave us to do as members of His family. And that job includes the vocation by which you earn your money; through which you indeed do serve God by that vocation; and, through everything else that you do with your time. That includes the decisions you make as to how much time you put in on this, on this, on this, and where you invest your life directly into God's work. "I have glorified You," the Jesus said, "on this earth. I have finished the work which You gave Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me with Your Ownself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." The glory that Jesus had shielded, He now said, "Father, now bring Me back to where My glory will again be visible. I have manifested Your name unto the men whom You gave Me out of the world. They were Yours. You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your Word."

So, it is the Lord Jesus Christ who glorified the Father by completing His mission. And so too do we glorify the Father by completing our mission here on earth. Remember that you're going to stay on this earth while it is possible for you to fulfill the mission. When you do something, or when you get to the point where you cannot fulfill that mission, you will immediately be taken to heaven. That is why it is a matter of great concern for us not to keep moving in a direction that is contrary to the will of God for us. Things get harder. We break down in every way: spiritually; physically; and, materially, and we find that our lives are a drag and a loss.

It is very important to say, "What's my mission? What's my spiritual gift? What's my capacity? And then we must invest it. It is important not to be tricked into the sometime, someday, down-the-future syndrome where you think, "I'm going to get with it." Some of you are sitting on your haunches, and you should not be. You are not glorifying God by not getting into the operation, and doing the things that need to be done, that you have the time; the gift; and, the energy to do. The Lord glorified His Father by completing His work. These martyrs glorified their Father by going through their experience of martyrdom. So, they can indeed rightly call out, "Glory to God in the highest," exalted His essence. We Christians are, in short, called to do everything to God's glory.

1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether, therefore, you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." It's just as simple as that. Whatever you're doing in life, even down to sitting and having a meal, do it to the glory of God." Eat in such a way that it is to the glory of God. Treat every aspect of your life, whatever you participate in, so that it's to the glory of God. How do you do that? It's through doing what you're doing to fulfill His call for you.

When I was a Boy Scout a few years ago, I learned a principle that the Scouts had, and that is that you eat to live; you don't live to eat. That is a good principle to remember. A lot of people forget that. But the point is that you do everything in order to expedite your mission. That's why you eat. That's why you live. That's why you breathe – to find what God has prepared of works for you to do. And if you don't do them, your reward is lost, and He brings up the second team to do the job, and His will is fulfilled. Christians are to live for the Lord's glory.

So, giving glory to God means to exalt Him with praise for His character and for His words. Paul expresses this in Romans 11:36 when he says, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things to whom be glory forever. Amen." We are to exalt God for the fact that: of Him; through Him; and, to him are all things. That's very clear. Everything that's operating in your life is for God, unless you foul it up. It is to be for His glory.

1. **Wisdom**

They move to another word: the word "wisdom." This is the Greek word "sophia." "Sophia" is a word that means "insight into the true nature of things." People who have wisdom are people who know how things really are. God has true discernment for making right decisions. He has that always. Whereas human wisdom is foolishness. 1 Corinthians 3:19 warns us about that when it says, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, 'He takes the wise in their own craftiness." People without God, these ignorant intellectuals, people who have good IQs but no spiritual discernment, think they're all so smart. God says, "You're a bunch of fools, and I trap you in your own foolishness." Only God has "sophia." Only God has true and genuine wisdom. You will never be able to crank up wisdom out of your own IQ.

Why are these people standing in heaven and praising God for His wisdom? Because He gave it to them. Because out of all the mass of humanity in the tribulation era, God put into their heads His divine viewpoint wisdom that led them to make the right decision about the gospel. Now they know how indebted they are to Him. God has absolute wisdom. Therefore, He is the source of all true values in life. These cannot be discerned by the efforts of human reason. Human reason just does not have that kind of insight.

In Romans 11:33, Paul breaks out in a doxology that expresses this awe with the wisdom of God when he says, "Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out." But His ways are not past finding out for you as a Christian. It is past finding out for you within your human reasoning capacity. But He's already told you what His wisdom is, and it's right here in Scripture. And the more you know of the specifics of the Word of God, the bigger smarts you have in knowing what life is all about, having the discernment to make the right decisions.

You and I probably all know individuals who make moves in life; they make decisions; and, they take actions, and we shake our heads in disbelief. We cannot believe that anybody could possibly be that dumb. Hardly a week goes by but what I have the experience of hearing that: "So-and-so has decided to do this," or "He has gone and done this." I say, "You're kidding. I cannot believe that anybody could have that little wisdom to have made a move with such a lack of discernment."

Well, what's the problem? The problem is that that individual does not have a conduit, a connection to God's wisdom, even though that's exactly what the Lord has set up for us to have. God's wisdom is to be found in the doctrines of Scripture which He has shared with the human race. So, Colossians 3:16 points out to us: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly (the doctrines of Scripture) in all wisdom (because you have that Word of Christ richly in you), teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." You can teach people. You can admonish people. You can even put it together in a musical context. You'll be a great benefit, and indeed a great blessing, if what you're conveying is wisdom. But if all you're conveying is human viewpoint foolishness, then you're not providing anything of value, and nothing for which they will rise up and call you blessed. But if you give people wisdom, even if they won't listen to you; even if they have to go out there and get themselves shot out of the water; and, even if they have to get bruises and scars all over their lives, sometime in the quiet moment when they're thinking, they'll remember, "You know, I didn't have to do this. This didn't have to happen to me. I had good divine viewpoint, wisdom, and advice. I just ignored it. I was just negative to it.

The Word of God says, "It is not smart to scoff at doctrine." I know that a lot of people do scoff at it, and a lot of people make fun of us, because we so stress the doctrine of the Word of God. But Proverbs 14:6 says, "A scoffer seeks wisdom, and he doesn't find it." The guy who turns his nose up about learning the doctrines of Scripture – he's going to go through life trying to know what the smart thing to do, and he's not going to know. Wisdom (reality) will elude him: "But knowledge is easy unto him that understands." Knowing what to do is easy for the Christian who has God's viewpoint in his mind. It's easy to make the decision. It's easy to know how to act, if you have the basic guidelines.

God's wisdom solved our sin problem. Therefore, He deserves our recognition for that alone. It is God's wisdom, then, that will enable you and me, as Christians, to live our lives in terms of eternal values. It's God's wisdom that'll give you the perspective on how to use your money.

One of our young married adults came to me this week and said, "I've learned indeed how the Word of God is true when it comes to handling money. We came to the paycheck this week, and we were strapped. And my wife says, "Do we put the church offering in, or do we take care of the bills?" And he said, "We'll do the church offerings first." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Here's the promise: "And all these things shall be added unto you." So, he said, "We did the offering, and then we were really nervous about these other things closing in on us that had to be met. We managed to stretch it out for two more weeks, and another paycheck came in. And we treated it the same way, and we're right on the line. Then, out of the blue, comes some money that I didn't expect to get for some long period of time." And he says, "Suddenly, there it was in the mail. We had done the right thing with God, and God had come through and kept His promise: I'll never leave you nor forsake you.

He had wisdom. He decided to act on wisdom, and his wife had enough wisdom to act with him. And they came out as winners. That's what we're talking about. God gives you the wisdom to have perspective on your money; to have perspective on your recreation; to have perspective on your politics; to have perspective on your sex; to have perspective on your social life; to have perspective on what you read; to have perspective on what you look at; and, to have perspective on what you listen to. It takes real wisdom.

Are you aware of how much garbage people have to share with you? Are you aware of how much people would like to get to your ears so they can pour their nonsense into them? How often do you stand and listen to somebody's slander; somebody's gossip; and, somebody's inanities and trivialities. Something that you have to ask yourself is: what difference will this make 100 years from now? Wisdom will tell you when to cut it off. Certainly, wisdom will give you guidance as to how you speak. The Bible warns that you'll be accountable for how you use your tongue.

There's a great contrast, then, between man's wisdom, produced by his nature, and God's wisdom, which is produced by his divine viewpoint. James 3:15-17 summarizes that contrast for us what it says, "This wisdom (that is man's human viewpoint wisdom) descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and maniacal. For where envy and strife are, there is confusion in every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above (from God) is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

The Bible is telling us that this is the way smart people are. Smart people are pure people. They're clean: inside their heads; and, outside in their actions. They're peaceable. Their peacemakers. They are not people who are trying to stir up strife. They're gentle. Even when they ought to clobber you, they are still gentle. And they're easy to be intreated. You can appeal to them. They're reasonable. You can ask them to do something that may be a better way to do it. They're certainly full of mercy. They exercise kindness when you have done something out of line, and they're full of divine good works. They produce good fruit. They're without partiality. They treat everybody fair and even. They're even-handed with people. They're not nice to some, and ugly to others for one reason or another. They treat people with an even hand. And they're not going to be hypocrites. They're not going to put on some kind of a front so that you think that that individual is something that he isn't – that he thinks in some way that he doesn't think, because he's trying to use you or to get something out of you. There's a great contrast between man's wisdom and the wisdom of God.

1. **Thanksgiving**

Let's look at one more. Then they shout out to God, the God of all wisdom. One of the great ones is thanksgiving. This is the Greek word "eucharistia." This word means "gratitude." Here it refers to the giving of thanks. There is a variety of reasons for which we human beings should give God thanks.

* 1. **Food**

We ought to give God thanks for the food he gives us. John 6:11-23 tell how the Lord gave thanks over the food. Acts 27:35 calls upon us to give God thanks for the food. It is a good thing to begin a meal, and to thank God for it. It is a good thing when you have small children coming up in your home to teach them how important it is to thank God for their food. If you do that, you must be on your guard, because if you have small children, you will discover that after you have trained them that only pigs muscle up to the trough without thanking God for the food, they will remind you when you don't. You will be sitting there, and you all be talking, and maybe you're in a restaurant, and you're all moving along into the meal, and all of a sudden that little voice will chirp up and say, "Oh, we forgot something. What we forgot to pray." Everybody has to put everything back down; fold their hands; bow their heads; and, do their praying, which is the way that ought to be. That little squeaky voice ought to speak up and say, "We forgot something." The Bible says that we ought to thank God and express gratitude for the food that we have.

That is not easy for Americans to do, because Americans don't starve. But once you have been in a society that experiences starvation, then you'll have an appreciation for what it is to have food. There are parts of the world where people simply expect to die, on a regular basis, at an early age, and expect to see their children die, because they know that there's not going to be a food supply for them.

* 1. **Answers to Prayer**

The Word of God tells us that we should thank God for answers to prayer. John 11:41 expresses that idea.

* 1. **Physical Healing**

We certainly should thank God when we have physical healing. When the body is not working right, and God comes through and He fixes it, that is certainly a legitimate reason for thanksgiving. Luke 17:15-16 describes that kind of an expression of thanksgiving.

* 1. **Positive Volition**

The Bible also tells us that we should be thankful to God for people who are positive to what they have been taught from the Word of God. People who are teachers in Sunday school and in training union are people who should thank God when they have a positive response to what is being taught. Of course, if you are a Sunday school teacher or training union leader, you should be very much aware of the fact that every time that you stand up before that class, eternal consequences are at hand. That is especially true for those of you who have the younger people. You are making an impact upon minds when minds are still able to be influenced. What you have to say is going to be long-remembered after you have forgotten that particular class session. So, when somebody reaches out and shows that they're paying attention, and that they're having a responsive attitude toward the Word of God, that's time to thank God.

1 Thessalonians to 13 says, "For this cause also we thank God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God, which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which is effectually works also in you that believe." So, thank God for the people who respond in your class.

* 1. **Eternal Life**

The Bible tells us that if you find that you were born again, you should be aware of the fact that the reason you are born again is because God has chosen you to that eternal life. I would find it very much in order, I think, to thank God for the fact that he did provide that. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 puts it this way: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God has, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." God chose you, and we thank God that you responded to the doctrine that we gave you – here, in reference to salvation, and everything else. Thank God that you were chosen.

* 1. **Spiritual Progress**

Also, thank God for the spiritual progress that Christians making. Paul did this in 1 Thessalonians 3:9, when he said, "For what things can we render to God again for you, for all the joy with which we joy for your sakes before our God. It is a moment of great happiness to see young people, as well as adults, who will respond to the Word of God, and start making spiritual progress. And it is a time of great disappointment when we get into close contact with people, like in summer camp, and we see people who must live under a certain pressure situation, and then we must find ourselves disappointed in somebody that we thought more highly of than the experience proves to merit. We discover that this person does not have the spiritual character; he does not have the spiritual caliber; and, he does not have the spiritual progress that we had hoped. We see instead something considerably less. That's not a joy. But when we see people who indeed match up to our hopes, Paul says, "That's a very great joy, and I thank God for that."

* 1. **Grace**

1 Corinthians 1:4 says that we ought to thank God for the grace that He extends to us. That's certainly understandable.

* 1. **Money**

2 Corinthians 9:11 points out that we should thank God for the Christians who put money in the offering box: "Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causes through us thanksgiving to God." Paul is talking to these Corinthians believers. He is talking about their being enriched so that they can be bountiful in their giving, in this offering which he is collecting, and which, when they do give in a gracious, bountiful way, just sends up reams of thanksgiving to God.

I remind you that God is not unmindful as to who caused that thanksgiving to Him. God is pleased with that, as a sweet-smelling savor, that gratitude is being expressed. When you have acted with your funds in such a way that there is going up to God, as incense, the praise and the thanksgiving for what you have done, and for you as a positive responder to the Word of God, God also remembers that you're the one to whose credit He must place that sacrifice that He has received of phrase.

* 1. **Opportunities of Christian Service**

We are also to thank God for opportunities of Christian service. In 1 Timothy 1:12-13, Paul says, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has enabled me in that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." There are Christians who have opportunities for service, and they are not grateful for that. They are ingrates. They are not appreciative of the fact that God has opened doors of opportunity for service.

* 1. **Victory over Death**

Another thing that we should be thankful for is the fact that we have victory over death. 1 Corinthians 15:57 says, "Where is your victory, grave? Where is your sting?" Thank God that it isn't there. Sooner or later, you'll be glad to thank Him for that victory.

* 1. **God's Plan of Salvation**

Colossians 1:12 says to thank God for the salvation that He has provided.

* 1. **God's Holiness**

Psalm 97:12 says to praise God for His Holiness. It's nice to have a holy God. That's the kind of God you can trust.

* 1. **Godliness**

Romans 1:8 says, "To thank God for an example of godliness that we see in other Christians.

* 1. **Personal Salvation**

2 Corinthians 9:15 talks about thanksgiving for our personal salvation.

* 1. **The Zeal of Christians**

There is one other thing that we ought to be more thankful for probably than we are among ourselves. 2 Corinthians 8:16 says that you ought to thank God for the zeal of other Christians in their service for the Lord: "But thanks be to God who put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you." Paul is explaining his care and his concern for the Corinthians Christians, and then Paul says, "And I thank God that he took my young man, my associate Titus, and He gave them the same concern and zeal for the work with you that I have. And I appreciate that. We have lots of people around this ministry who not only serve the Lord, but they do it zealously. They do it with creativeness. They do it with imagination. They do it with consistency. They pay attention. They come prepared. They come ready to serve the Lord. They don't do it just by going through motions. If that's the kind of service you have, then do us a favor; give us back the class; give us back the slot; and, enable us to see the that people who are in those places that are doing it with the zeal for which we can thank God.

There are certain characteristics about Thanksgiving and we will look at those characteristics next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1984

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