

Weary and Discouraged? Give Thanks!

Sunday Morning, November 20, 2016

After many years of bad economy, political and social changes, world instability, terrorism, moral decline, natural disasters, personal, relational and economic problems, and not the least the ever-increasing Christian persecution, we can become weary and discouraged. But through it all, as we look to God, He guides us and provides grace in every given need and situation. For this we are grateful with thankful hearts to God!

Consider with me what **(Hebrews 11:35b –38)** tells us:

35b Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—

38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

God honors our faithful obedience to Him by giving us great acknowledgment by referring to us as “those whom the world is not worthy”!

For this we praise Him with thankful hearts.

With a faithful obedient heart, God tells us in the next verse that we have obtained a “good testimony through faith” for this we can be thankful!

(Hebrews 11:39)

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,

It is a privilege to run with endurance looking unto Jesus as we are told in **(Hebrews 12: 1 – 3)**:

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

Find encouragement from the example of those who went before us and suffered. Remember Christ who endured much for us and do not grow weary or discouraged as a result.

This is the race of life we run in Christ by faith in Him will be praised by God the Father!

Look with me at **(I Corinthians 4:5)**

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

What an amazing honor! One that creates a heart of praise with a thankful heart!

Remember the wonderful promise of God to us found in **(Romans 8:31)**:

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

We do not have to be wearied and discouraged by all the things that come against us. Oh how thankful we are that no opposition can stand against us, because God is for us.

Because of this we can stand in faith in Him undefeated in any situation!

(II Corinthians 4: 8 – 9)

8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—

With grateful and thankful hearts we can praise Him!

No matter what challenges or difficulties in life we face, as Christians we should in everything and always, with humble and grateful hearts give thanks to God.

We are reminded of this in **(I Thessalonians 5:18)** in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

(Ephesians 5:20)

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

(Philippians 4: 6 – 7) 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer & supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Peace is the product of giving thanks to God.

When the late John Claypool an Episcopalian Minister lost his ten-year-old daughter to leukemia, gratitude was the only way he survived. He tells about that experience in his profound book, Tracks of a Fellow Struggler. After his daughter's death, John walked down three different paths. The first path was to say, "Well, it was just God's will. I have to accept it." But that was not helpful. He could not believe that God willed ten-year-old girls to die of leukemia. A second path was to try to find an intellectual answer as to why this happened. He tried to make sense of it. But that didn't work either. His daughter's death didn't make any sense. Finally, John walked the path of gratitude. He realized that life is a gift. We are not entitled to it. That we have any life at all is pure gift and pure grace. Therefore, John chose to be thankful for the ten good years they had together rather than being consumed with resentment for the years he did not have with her. This path of gratitude wasn't easy, but it was the only path which offered any help.

So do not grow weary or discouraged! Give Thanks! Your faithful obedience in life's challenges with a thankful heart will be praised by God our Heavenly Father – which gives us an even greater reason to be thankful!