

Reasons to Be Thankful

Luke 18:9-14, John 5:24-25, 1 John 3:1-2, Psalm 32:8

I. Introduction:

A. Thanksgiving 2020

1. Who could have imagined the events of this year:
 - a. A pandemic would paralyze the nation. We'd wear masks & sanitize our hands.
 - b. The majority of our church attendance would be online.
2. Who could have imagined that freedoms we have taken for granted for so long would be curtailed and in some cases taken away in a matter of months?
 - a. Businesses, movie theaters, sporting venues & performing arts venues closed.
 - b. Social gatherings forbidden. c. Schools closed or restricted.
 - d. Hospitals, nursing homes, & long care facilities off limits to visitors.

B. Reasons to be thankful

1. In the midst of changes & uncertainties, there're biblical reasons to be thankful.
2. Particularly for a born-again child of God, joy, peace, & security aren't dependent on worldly things. Jesus said that the world will one day be burned up, but God's promises, His word will be here forever. (**Matthew 24:35**)

C. Four Reasons to be Thankful

1. Here are 4 biblical reasons why those who are saved should be thankful, regardless of their circumstances in this life. This message is derived from more than 1 primary text.

II. First Reason: The Unmerited Grace of God (Luke 18:9-14)

A. Parable of unmerited grace

- *In Jesus' day, the Pharisees were the epitome of religious conformance & performance.*
 - *Pharisees thought they were saved and on their way to heaven, based on 2 things.*
 1. – They were Jewish.
 - a. They belonged to the chosen race, God's chosen people. Abrahamic & Davidic covenants are theirs. God's promises regarding the coming kingdom are theirs.
 - b. They thought the lineage gave them special favor with God regarding salvation.
 2. – Their religious fervor
 - a. The Pharisees obeyed the law to the most minute detail.
 - b. They obeyed religious laws they invented & passed down through the generations.
 - c. They believed their religious conformity made them righteous before God & guaranteed their entrance into heaven.
 - d. Harsh Condemnation of Others: Because of their self-righteousness, they were harsh critics of everyone else. They condemned Jews they deemed sinful.
- B. The Contrast - *Two greatly contrasting men went into the temple to pray.***
1. – A Pharisee
 - a. The most outwardly righteous person in society.
 2. – A tax collector
 - a. Jew who worked for despised Romans, collecting taxes from his own people to give to the Romans. No one in society was considered a greater sinner worthy of hell.
- C. Each man prayed. - *Then Jesus shared the prayer of each man.***
1. – Pharisee

- a. The Pharisee's prayer was all about the things he had done.
- b. He recounted for God all religious things he'd done for which he expected God to give him credit: - I am not an extortioner, unjust, an adulterer, or worse a tax collector. - I fast 2x a week. - I faithfully tithe of all I have.
- c. Problem: The man had indeed sinned & was guilty in all these areas. He had forgotten the covetousness & immorality in his heart.
- d. He forgot all he owned belonged to God & he was but the steward of it.
- 2. – Tax collector (Luke 18:13)
 - a. Broken over his sin, the tax collector had no thought of the good verses the bad deeds in his life. This man knew he was a sinner and made no plea.
 - b. He threw himself completely on the mercy of God.
- D. **Tax Collector Justified (Luke 18:14)**
 - 1. The Pharisee went away in the same state he entered, lost!
 - 2. Tax collector received mercy for his sin & went home justified before God.
 - 3. Message: Repentant tax collector was forgiven & saved based on love & grace of God.
- III. **Second Reason: Eternal Life (John 5:24-25)**
 - A. **Those who hear God's Word- *Hearing means two things.***
 - 1. – Receive it
 - a. That means to agree with God's analysis of our condition which is to be forgiven of sin we must throw ourselves on the mercy of God. (**Romans 3:23**).
 - 2. – To Act upon it
 - a. To act upon it means to confess our sin & by faith in Jesus ask for His forgiveness. Many hear & understand God's Word, but they never act upon it.
 - B. **Those who believe have "everlasting" eternal life.**
 - 1. All who are saved by faith in Jesus have eternal life right now.
 - 2. To leave this body is to be immediately with Jesus. We who are saved will never die.
 - C. **From death to life**
 - 1. The saved have passed from death unto life. Their sin's judgment was paid for by Jesus
 - 2. He died on the cross in their place so they can have His life. Jesus arose from the grave on the third day as proof that He has won the victory over sin and the grave.
- IV. **Third Reason: Born into God's Family (1 John 3:1-2)**
 - A. **Statement of amazement**
 - 1. John begins verse 1 w/ statement of amazement. God's love has been bestowed on us.
 - 2. How amazing God would love wicked men and woman with unconditional love.
 - B. **Love manifested in spiritual birth**
 - 1. By faith in Jesus we are: - Forgiven of sin - Granted eternal life, & - Spiritually birthed
 - 2. As God's sons & daughters, we may approach Him as "Abba." (**Rom. 8:14-17**)
 - 3. Heirs & Joint Heirs with Jesus: meaning privilege of sharing in our Lord's glory when He brings in His kingdom. It also means we have the privilege to share in His suffering.
- V. **Fourth Reason: Guidance in This Life (Psalm 32:8)**
 - A. **In need of instruction**
 - 1. After we're saved, we need instruction as we live in frail bodies susceptible to all sin.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit teaches & guides us to understand and obey God's word.
 - 3. We can be thankful God teaches & watches over us in this life's journey (**Rom. 12:1-2**)
 - B. **I will guide you with my eye.**
 - 1. God watches over His children every moment. He guides us all throughout this life.