

Always

As is often the case, this time of year points us towards the idea of being thankful. *1st Thessalonians 5:16-18* in the ETRV says, ***“Always be full of joy. Never stop praying. Give thanks to God at all times. That is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus.”*** It is God’s desire that His disciples be thankful (Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 4:2). Part of the Christian’s prayer life needs to be that of expressing thanks to God. The challenge in this is that circumstances don’t always give reason to be thankful. So, what do we do?

In *1st Chronicles 16:7-36* we find a song written by David that can give us insight into how we can strive to always be thankful. First, we read these words in v8, ***“Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples!”*** Being able to reflect on how God has cared for us in the past, acknowledging His generous love, can empower us to be thankful. What caught my eye next is v23 which says, ***“Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.”*** When Paul expressed the words ***“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Romans 7:24)***, it was not to demean himself, but rather to remind himself of a reason to be thankful. That reason is Jesus Christ! No matter how horribly bad life may get, Jesus remains Savior...our Savior! This then leads to my final thought which is found in *1st Chronicles 16:34*, ***“Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever!”*** I realized something about my thankfulness as it relates to salvation. I see the day that Christ saved me; that is, when I obeyed the gospel. But I am reminded of His mercy, a mercy that cleanses me daily as I walk with Him (*1st John 1:5-10*). Christ didn’t merely save me; He saves me daily. Thank you, God!

I leave you with one final thought which comes from a familiar verse. Paul writes in *Philippians 4:6-7*, ***“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*** As one commentator said, “Constant joy and constant prayer should lead to constant giving of thanks to God.” And when these are deeply woven into our Christian walk, we will experience a peace unaffected by circumstances around us. Please Lord, help us all to find Your peace.

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