

The Necessity Of Thankfulness

By: Keith Keyser

“Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” Romans 1:21

“It is good to give thanks to the LORD, And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High.” Psalm 92:1

Given that He is their Creator and Sustainer, human beings ought to naturally overflow with thanksgiving towards God. Sadly, man’s everyday existence does not conform to this most basic principle. In fact, unthankfulness is at the root of man’s problems. Romans 1 lists a catalogue of odious sins; heading the list is the failure to “glorify” God as God – i.e. giving the Almighty His rightful honor as sovereign Lord over the universe. Secondly, the verse says they were not thankful towards Him (Rom. 1:21.) Therefore, it is apparent that ingratitude is a most grievous iniquity, for it is listed before various types of perversion, violence, and other ills that most in society would recognize as bad.

Many Reasons For Gratitude

Why should people be thankful? Firstly, because God is the author of life and made them to know Him and live with Him for all eternity. When man chose to violate God’s word in the garden, he was severed from this life. As God said to Adam and Eve: if they disobeyed Him by eating, they would surely die (Gen. 2:17.) The death sin produces is physical, spiritual, and – if not remedied by receiving the gift of salvation in Christ – it becomes an eternal condition known as the second death (Rev. 21:8.)

Despite the adverse affects of the fall on human bodies and physical life, day to day existence in this world is contingent upon God giving us every breath and maintaining every heartbeat. Daniel the prophet pointed this out to the Babylonian king Belshazzar: “The God who *holds* your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified” (Dan. 5:23.) In presenting the gospel to the skeptical Athenians, Paul brought forth this truth as well, pointing out that “in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28.) Yet, so many humans live as if God does not exist – or act as if He exists for their pleasure, not the other way around. In spite of this, He providentially gives people what they need to live and maintains the universe in the proper equilibrium for sustaining life (Acts 14:17.)

Eternal Thankfulness

In addition to being thankful for physical life, those who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior can also thank God for spiritual life. This life begins at conversion and is characterized by a living relationship with the triune God. Believers daily thank Him for saving them by not sparing the Son from the horrors of the cross (Rom. 8:30-32.) Furthermore, they are thankful for

Christ's glorious resurrection which declares His triumph over sin, the grave, death, and hell. They may thank God for a new standing in His sight: accepted in the Beloved, declared righteous, and eternally secure by His promise and power (Eph. 1:6; Rom. 5:1; Jn. 10:27-30.) Christians can also be grateful that the Lord Jesus will one day return for them and call them to meet Him in the air, transform them into glorified bodies, and take them home to live with Him in the Father's house for eternity (John 14:1-3; 1 Thes. 4:13-18.) This Thanksgiving, let everything that has breath give thanks unto the Lord – especially those who have eternal life in Christ.