

CURSES!

Joe Slater

“Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight” (Prov. 26:2).

Has anyone ever cursed you? I don’t mean did they “cuss you out”? In modern times, we refer to nasty, vulgar language as cursing. But Scripture uses the word with a different shade of meaning.

Goliath “cursed David by his gods” (1 Sam. 17:43). The giant didn’t resort to gutter language, but invoked his gods to bring down harm upon David.

In a humorous way, we could say Little Jimmie Dickens sang about a curse with these silly lyrics:

*May the bird of paradise fly up your nose
May an elephant caress you with his toes
May your wife be plagued with runners in her hose
May the bird of paradise fly up your nose!*

Biblically, to curse someone is to call upon God to send disaster upon them. As David fled from Absalom, an enemy named Shimei cursed him (2 Sam. 16:13). But God didn’t honor Shimei’s curse; it did not alight. David was unharmed.

The Moabite king Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel (Num. 23:7), but the Lord wouldn’t allow it. So instead, Balaam taught Israel to commit fornication and worship idols, which brought God’s wrath upon them.

Jesus warned His disciples and, by extension warned us, that people would hate us and curse us (Matt. 5:44). Should we worry? No, for curses with no legitimate ground will not alight (will not happen). Should we curse them in return? No, Jesus said to love them, bless them, pray for them, and do good to them. This demonstrates the same love God has even for His enemies (Matt. 5:45). Let’s love like God loves!

Are You Reclining, Whining, or Shining?

It seems to me that there are three kinds of church members. Let’s briefly examine each and, as we do so, please honestly examine your part in the church and see which you are.

****There are those who recline.** They just sit back and watch everything going on around them. They are never more involved than “warming the pew” from time to time. God wants us involved with the church because, *“He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer”* (Proverbs 18:9).

****There are those who whine.** Sadly, other church members may be active, but they are involved with other members’ business. They seem to spend the majority of their time and resources complaining. God wants us to focus on harmony and make sure we *“do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned”* (James 5:9).

****There are those who shine.** Gladly, there are church members who possess a great attitude and are working heartily for the Lord. They are busy doing the Lord’s will and singing along the way. They are shimmering examples of faithfulness and fruitfulness. *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”* (Matthew 5:16).

Paul had instructions concerning all of these in Philippians 2:14-15, *“Do all things* (that’s the opposite of reclining) *without complaining or disputing* (that’s the opposite of whining), *that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world* (that’s being a shining example).”

So, Christian, are you reclining, whining, or shining?

--Edd Sterchi (Campbellsville, KY)

Thanksgiving Leftovers

What do you do after the turkey is unstuffed and you are stuffed? What do you do after the parades and bowl games have ended and your guests have gone home? The internet is filled with inventive recipes for dealing with the remains of your Thanksgiving meal, from Turkey Pumpkin Chili to Cranberry Turnovers to Sweet Potato Waffles. In the wake of our annual Thanksgiving holiday the question of what to do with those leftovers should be the least of our concerns. Come Monday morning we will enter a world that is convinced that they have sufficiently paid all obligations to be thankful until Thursday, November 28, 2019.

But we know that God commands us to be thankful every day. The apostle Paul wrote: "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). This year, as we look back on the Thanksgiving holiday, what should be the real Thanksgiving Leftovers? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Thank God for our family and friends. Don’t take them for granted but rather cultivate those precious relationships year round

2. Thank God for His abundant blessings. The very fact that there are Thanksgiving leftovers proves that we are truly blessed.

3. Thank God for His church. This is our spiritual family. We ought to take advantage of these precious relationships of people who care.

4. Thank God for His Son. He gave everything so that you can enjoy all blessings through Him.

5. Thank God for the Bible. It gives us wisdom and direction for how to live a life that pleases Him.

6. Thank God for today and, should it come, tomorrow.

--David Bragg (Greensboro, NC) via Bulletin Gold