

Thankfulness

Joe Slater

We all know we ought to be thankful every day, not just the fourth Thursday of November. Nevertheless, as with New Years resolutions, it's entirely too easy to forget to give God the thanks we owe Him for the countless blessings we enjoy by His grace.

Long ages ago most Gentiles turned their backs on God. *"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). Failure to be thankful constitutes only one of the numerous qualities characteristic of people who don't know God.

As Paul languished in a Roman dungeon awaiting execution he warned his son in the faith, Timothy, about *"perilous times"* that the young preacher would soon face. *"Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, **unthankful**, unholy . . ."* (2 Timothy 3:2). The list goes on at length, but you get the drift. Unthankfulness keeps some quite unsavory company!

Christians, of all people, ought to be characterized by thankfulness. We have even more reason than the psalmist to exclaim, *"what shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?"* (Psalm 116:12). Gratitude isn't a debt that can be paid, but we certainly can and should express our thanks and praise.

41 Is Coming

In the Bible, it rained for 40 days and 40 nights. Day 41 came, and the rain stopped.

Moses hid in the desert for 40 years. Year 41 came, and God called him to rescue Israel.

Moses went up on the mountain for 40 days. On day 41, he received the Ten Commandments.

The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. In year 41 they walked into the Promised Land.

Goliath taunted Israel for 40 days. Day 41 came, and David slew him.

Jonah preached that Nineveh would be overthrown in 40 days. The Ninevites repented, and on day 41, God stopped His plan to destroy them.

Jesus fasted and was tempted for 40 days. On Day 41 the devil left Him.

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples for 40 days. On day 41, He ascended into Heaven.

All this to say...don't quit. The rain will stop, the giant will fall, and you will enter your "promised land." Don't give up at 40.

41 is coming.

--Chelsie Zurcher Wren (via Facebook) adapted

When someone plays Beethoven badly, it doesn't mean Beethoven was a bad composer.

When someone lives the Christian life poorly, it doesn't mean Jesus isn't worth following.

God doesn't say you should be like Christians; He says you should be like Jesus Christ.

There's a big difference.

--Bob Russell (via Facebook) adapted

The Power of Example

Who is watching me? All Christians should consider this question and realize that the appearance and perception we project to others is of vital importance. In 1 Peter 2:11-12, the apostle says, *"Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles (unbelievers), that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation."*

It almost goes without saying that Christians must resist temptation and fight against sinful desires. In verse 11, Peter is saying, in effect, "Don't act like everyone else." Rather we are to conduct ourselves in such a manner that unbelievers will take notice. Described as "good works" in verse 12, then in the following text, Peter describes at least six ways in which our example can influence others so that they will give God the honor and glory He deserves.

- Be Good Law-abiding Citizens (2:13-16)
- Honor and Respect Those in Authority (2:17)
- Be Good Employees and Employers (2:18-20)
- Live an Exemplary Christian Family Lifestyle (3:1-7)
- Practice Unparalleled Unity within the Church (3:8-12)
- Follow the Example of Christ (3:18-22; 4:1-2)

Finally, the power of our example must be based on supreme love. *"And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins"* (4:8)

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX) adapted