

“WITH THANKSGIVING”

PSALM 28:7

*THE PREPERATION OF THE HEART BELONGS TO MAN;
BUT THE ANSWER OF THE TOUNGE IS FROM THE LORD.*

PROVERBS 16:1

*THE FINAL OUTCOME OF THE PLANS WE MAKE IS IN
GOD’S HANDS. IN DOING THE WILL OF GOD REQUIRES A
PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN OUR EFFORTS AND GODS DIVINE
CONTROL. THERE MUST BE A CHECK IN OUR **spirit**. THE
RESULTS ARE ALWAYS IN GOD’S CONTROL, BUT OUR
PREPERATIONS ARE VITAL TO HOW GOD USES US FOR
HIS GLORY. THIS MAKES HAVING A GRATEFUL HEART
NECESSARY AND NOT OPTIONAL.*

IT’S HOW WE WORSHIP.

IT IS HOW WE PRAY.

IT IS HOW WE LIVE.

IT IS HOW SERVE.

IT IS THE WAY WE GIVE.

*EVER SINCE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD, HIS INVISIBLE
NATURE, NAMELY, HIS ETERNAL POWER AND DEITY, HAS BEEN
CLEARLY PERCEIVED IN THE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE. SO
MEN ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE FOR, ALTHOUGH THEY KNEW GOD,
THEY DID NOT GLORIFY HIM AS GOD OR GIVE HIM THANKS.*

(ROMANS 1:20-21)

IT OUGHT TO BE OBVIOUS. BUT IT ISN'T, DUE TO THE SINFUL INSENSITIVITY AND FORGETFULNESS OF OUR HEARTS. MANY OF GOD'S GREATEST ATTRIBUTES AND MOST AWESOME AND LOVING DEEDS PASS IN ONE EAR AND OUT THE OTHER WITHOUT CAUSING THE SLIGHTEST RIPPLE OF EMOTION WITHIN OUR HEARTS. SEEING WE DO NOT SEE AND HEARING WE DO NOT HEAR. WHEN OUR HEARTS ARE IN SUCH A CONDITION, WE NEED TO BEG GOD (LIKE PAUL DID) TO OPEN THE EYES OF OUR HEARTS THAT WE MIGHT KNOW (THAT IS, REALLY KNOW AND FEEL) THE HOPE TO WHICH HE HAS CALLED US, AND WHAT ARE THE RICHES OF HIS GLORIOUS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS, AND WHAT IS THE IMMEASURABLE GREATNESS OF HIS POWER IN US WHO BELIEVE. (EPHESIANS 1:18-20)

BUT EVEN WHEN GOD GRACIOUSLY REMOVES THE SCALES FROM OUR EYES SO WE CAN BE MOVED BY HIS GREATNESS, WE ARE STILL PRONE TO STRAIGHTWAY FORGET WHAT WE HAVE SEEN.

THE RESPONSE THAT MAGNIFIES GOD IS THANKSGIVING!!

THEREFORE, WHEN GRATITUDE SPRINGS UP IN THE HUMAN HEART TOWARD GOD, HE IS MAGNIFIED AS THE WEALTHY SOURCE OF OUR BLESSING. HE IS ACKNOWLEDGED AS GIVER AND BENEFACTOR AND THEREFORE AS GLORIOUS. BUT WHEN GRATITUDE DOES NOT SPRING UP IN OUR HEARTS AT GOD'S GREAT GOODNESS TO US, IT PROBABLY MEANS THAT WE DON'T WANT TO PAY HIM A COMPLIMENT; WE DON'T WANT TO MAGNIFY HIM AS OUR BENEFACTOR.

AND THERE IS A VERY GOOD REASON THAT HUMAN BEINGS BY NATURE DO NOT WANT TO MAGNIFY GOD WITH THANKSGIVING OR GLORIFY HIM AS THEIR BENEFACTOR. THE REASON IS THAT IT DETRACTS FROM THEIR OWN GLORY, AND ALL PEOPLE BY NATURE LOVE THEIR OWN GLORY MORE THAN THE GLORY OF GOD.

THERE ARE ONLY TWO GROUPS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHOSE DIFFERENCES FROM EACH OTHER ARE OF ANY ETERNAL

SIGNIFICANCE: THOSE WHO LOVE TO MAGNIFY GOD AND THOSE WHO LOVE TO MAGNIFY THEMSELVES.

AT THE ROOT OF ALL INGRATITUDE IS THE LOVE OF ONE'S OWN GREATNESS. FOR GENUINE GRATITUDE ADMITS THAT WE ARE BENEFICIARIES OF AN UNEARNED LIFESTYLE; WE ARE CRIPPLES LEANING ON THE CROSS SHAPED CRUTCH OF JESUS CHRIST; WE ARE PARALYTICS LIVING MINUTE BY MINUTE IN THE BOSOM OF GOD'S MERCY; WE ARE CHILDREN ASLEEP IN HEAVEN'S STROLLER. NATURAL MAN HATES TO THINK OF HIMSELF IN THESE IMAGES: UNWORTHY BENEFICIARY, CRIPPLE, PARALYTIC, CHILD. THEY ROB HIM OF ALL HIS GLORY BY GIVING IT ALL TO GOD. THEREFORE, WHILE A MAN LOVES HIS OWN GLORY, AND PRIZES HIS SELF-SUFFICIENCY, AND HATES TO THINK OF HIMSELF AS SIN-SICK AND HELPLESS, HE WILL NEVER FEEL ANY GENUINE GRATITUDE TO THE TRUE GOD AND SO WILL NEVER MAGNIFY GOD, BUT ONLY HIMSELF.

ONE OF THE REASONS GOD WAS NOT PLEASED WITH THE OFFERING OF AN OX OR BULL OR GOAT WAS THAT THE GIVER OFTEN THOUGHT THAT HIS GIFT WAS ENRICHING GOD, WAS SUPPLYING SOME DEFICIENCY IN GOD. BUT WHAT SEEMS LIKE AN ACT OF LOVE AMONG MEN—MEETING SOMEONE'S NEEDS—IS AN INSULT TO GOD. "EVERY BEAST OF THE FOREST IS MINE, THE CATTLE ON A THOUSAND HILLS." YOU CAN'T GIVE ME A BULL OR AN OX! THEY ARE ALREADY MINE.

HERE IS MAN'S SELF-EXALTATION AGAIN. EVEN IN THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION, HE FINDS A WAY TO PRESERVE HIS STATUS AS GIVER, AS SELF-SUFFICIENT BENEFACTOR. IN THE VERY ACT OF WORSHIP, HE BELITTLES GOD BY REFUSING TO ASSUME THE PART OF A RECEIVER, AN UNDESERVING AND HELPLESS BENEFICIARY OF MERCY.

AS AN ANTIDOTE TO THIS ARROGANCE IN WORSHIP, GOD PRESCRIBES THE OPPOSITE: "OFFER TO GOD A SACRIFICE OF THANKS!" ACKNOWLEDGE GOD AS THE GIVER AND ACCEPT THE LOWLY STATUS OF RECEIVER. THIS IS WHAT MAGNIFIES GOD. THAT'S WHY THE LAST VERSE OF PSALM 50 (23) SAYS, "HE WHO

BRINGS THANKSGIVING AS HIS SACRIFICE HONORS ME." SO WHEN DAVID SAYS IN PSALM 51:17, "THE SACRIFICE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD IS A BROKEN SPIRIT; A BROKEN AND CONTRITE HEART, O GOD, THOU WILT NOT DESPISE," HE IS SIMPLY DESCRIBING THE ONLY SORT OF HEART FROM WHICH THE SACRIFICE OF GENUINE THANKSGIVING CAN FLOW. UNTIL THE STIFFNESS OF MAN'S ARROGANT NECK IS BROKEN AND THE HARDNESS OF HIS SELF-SUFFICIENT HEART IS SOFTENED, HE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO OFFER GENUINE THANKS TO THE TRUE GOD, AND THEREFORE WILL NOT MAGNIFY GOD BUT ONLY HIMSELF.

I BESEECH YOU ALL BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, "CLOTHE YOURSELVES, ALL OF YOU, WITH HUMILITY . . . FOR GOD OPPOSES THE PROUD BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. HUMBLE YOURSELVES THEREFORE UNDER THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD, THAT IN DUE TIME HE MAY EXALT YOU" (1 PETER 5:5-6)

O MAGNIFY THE LORD WITH ME AND LET US EXALT HIS NAME TOGETHER. (PSALM 34:3)

I WILL PRAISE THE NAME OF GOD WITH A SONG. I WILL MAGNIFY HIM WITH THANKSGIVING. (PSALM 69:30)

BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL AND ALL THAT IS IN ME, BLESS HIS HOLY NAME!

BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL AND FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS. (PSALM 103:1)