

Being Grateful When In Want

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction: New Sunday evening Series: Mixed Blessings

1. Being Grateful when in Want
 2. Being Joyful when in Sorrow
 3. Being Gentle in the Face of Cruelty
 4. Being Compassionate when in Pain
 5. Being Humble among Fools
- A. Grateful, thankful people are a joy to others
1. We all appreciate people who express gratitude for help given them
 2. It is difficult to like those who are selfish, thoughtless, and ungrateful, who act as if they are entitled to the blessings given them
 3. "Next time we prefer chicken."
- B. In spiritual matters, there is an expectation on God's part that His people will show gratitude for what He has done for them
1. Hard to be grateful when we receive only a part of the help we believe we need.
 2. A sick woman asks to be restored to health is only given a partial recovery
 3. A poor man who asked to be relieved from his poverty is only given enough to get him through the day.
 4. A devout congregation prays fervently for a beloved member to live through a terminal illness only to be given an extra few weeks with her.
 5. Author Stephen Donaldson in his series of stories about a leper named Thomas Covenant asked: "How do you hurt a man who has lost everything? Give him back something broken."
 6. Speaks to the temptation we all face when our prayers are not answered in full. "Why did you only give us this, Lord?"
 7. Projects in Warren, OH - "Thank you for the space, Lord!"
- C. Luke 7:36-50 - Jesus taught that one who is forgiven more is the more grateful. Why is that true?
1. Too easy to get caught up in quantity of forgiveness, which was not His point, rather He wanted them to understand gratitude for whatever we are given
 2. Gratitude is not in proportion to the amount of blessings received, but is in proportion to how deeply we desire the blessing and how fully we recognize our own inability to supply it to ourselves

I. CONTRAST

- A. Consider Simon the Pharisee: A religious man, devoted the traditions of the Jews and to ritual purity
1. As with many Pharisees, however, he did not understand mercy or compassion - Matt. 9:13, 23:23
 2. Simon thought quite highly of himself, especially when measured against the sinner woman, and even against Jesus - Luke 18:10-11

3. He did not believe himself to be in need of forgiveness; he did not desire it strongly, and perhaps even believed that he could supply his own righteousness
 4. Jesus could and would do little for persons with that mindset.
- B. The Sinner Woman
1. No one doubts that she has sinned; she is keenly aware of her sin
 - a. She came to Jesus. If we want forgiveness, we must come to God, not the other way around - James 4:8
 - b. She was penitent. Humility is essential for those who want forgiveness - Matt. 18:3-4; James 4:10
 2. The two elements of true gratitude were met by the sinner woman and were not met by Simon the Pharisee:
 3. The two elements of true gratitude are being aware of our need and understanding that we cannot fill it.

II. ARE WE GRATEFUL WHEN IN WANT?

- A. We have been delivered from our sins. We are grateful, recovering sinners who have been made saints.
1. This does not mean that we are wonderful or better than unbelievers.
 2. We just fully recognized our spiritual poverty and our inability to supply our spiritual needs, and humbly appealed God for forgiveness of sins
 3. Now that we have been saved, delivered in ways in which we could never deliver ourselves, should lead us to act with fervent zeal and desire for the Lord... to be grateful!
- B. God expects that, on the basis of our salvation, we should gratefully show our appreciation for salvation by acting to preserve it - Heb. 2:1-3
1. God gave us His best, and He expects us to give our best back to Him
 - a. Gal. 2:20
- C. We will never be able to repay the debt, but that is not what God expects of us
1. Instead, we are to live as a people who remember we have been released from debt and who act accordingly with honor.
 - a. Since we have been forgiven, we forgive others - Matt. 18:21-35
 - b. As we have been loved, so we love others - 1John 4:9-11
 - c. As we have received mercy, we show mercy - Luke 6:36
 - d. As Christ humbled Himself to be exalted by God, so we must humble ourselves before God - Phil. 2:5-11

III. LESSONS

- A. Ungrateful people do not know how good they have it, and therefore do not appreciate what has been done for them
1. We live in the land of entitlement where very few ever starve to death and most believe that the government owes them a living
 2. Has that spirit spilled over into our relationship with God?
- B. Where is our focus: on what we have been given that we needed or on what we have not been given that we wanted?

1. We have not been given perfect health of body; but did we appreciate it when we had it?
 - a. But we have been given spiritual health in Jesus. Is it enough to say, "Thank you for the health, Lord," when we are sick in body and well in spirit?
 - b. It was for Paul - 2Cor. 4:16-18
2. We have not been given an easy abundant financial life; but did we appreciate abundance on the few occasions when we had it?
 - a. But we have been given riches in Christ and treasures in heaven. Is it enough to make us say, "Thank you for the gifts, Lord," when we are rich in blessings but poor in pocket?
 - b. It was for Paul - Phil. 4:10-13
3. We have not been given a guarantee of extended life for ourselves and loved ones in this world.
 - a. But we have been given eternal life when this life has ended for ourselves and our families and friends who come to the Lord.
 - b. Is that enough to help us gratefully say, "Thank you for the life, Lord," when we are aging on the outside but alive in Christ in the inward man?
 - c. It was for Paul - 2Tim. 4:6-8