

The Spirit of Thanksgiving

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

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Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

What do we have that we have not been given? All things come from the hand of the Lord. We cannot claim any of His marvelous creation as our own. Even our position as His children was purchased with His Blood. Our eternal life is revealed in the power of His resurrection.

Still, it is so easy for us to slip into disappointment. We tend to complain when things don't turn out the way we had planned. We worry over money, over relationships, over health. An entire industry is devoted to mental and emotional counseling and treatment because of anxiety, which is rooted in the flesh.

God offers a simple solution for these problems: the spirit of thanksgiving. In this booklet, we aim to reveal the true potential that is within all of us: a potential to be a fountain of life, expressing praise and giving thanks to the God of all grace.

Chapter One

GOD KEEPS HIS VINEYARD

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee” (Proverbs 23:7).

In Proverbs 23:7, the Hebrew word for “thinketh”—*shaar*—means to hear something that has substance and then to reflect upon it, allowing it to dwell in our hearts richly. After hearing something from the Word of God, we can think upon the topic with the substance of faith through grace. Then, we estimate its value, evaluate its meaning, have a mental attitude of praise for it, and guard the content of the message. This is how we develop an attitude of thanksgiving.

Kept Every Moment

“In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine.

“I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every

moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day” (Isaiah 27:2-3).

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

The vineyard of red wine speaks of the filling of the Holy Spirit whereby God’s people sing praises to Him. The “vineyard,” speaking of His people, is kept by God. He waters it, not just every day but every moment, so that none may be wounded or hurt.

Next, we see that God keeps the vineyard through the night as well as the day. Why does He keep us through the nighttime? God allows the conscious mind to sleep while the unconscious and subconscious are awake. He keeps us so that whatever we have been through during the day is not lying in wait to trouble us during our sleep. That way, the Holy Spirit can minister and deal with certain issues while we rest, and then give us inspiration for circumstances when we awaken (Job 33:15-17; Song of Solomon 5:2a; Isaiah 50:4).

Doesn’t that make sense? Thank God for the way He keeps us.

A Thankful Generation

“I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:

“That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works” (Psalm 26:6-7).

“Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High” (Psalm 50:14).

“I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving” (Psalm 69:30).

“Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God” (Psalm 147:7).

This is where our orchestras, choirs, and singers come in, always singing and playing songs unto God’s name with thanksgiving. The listeners hear with thanksgiving because they practice *shaar*.

Often in Scripture, the word “fountain” relates to praising God (Psalm 36:9; Proverbs 14:27; Song of Solomon 4:15). Psalm 102:18 speaks of a generation to come that shall be created to praise God. Praises shall come from these people like water from a fountain as the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ in this generation.

We are of this generation, and the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth. He never speaks of Himself, but always glorifies Christ (see John 16:13-14). Wherever the fountain of life is, the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ inside our hearts, our minds, and our souls, and we have a consistent attitude of praise.

Chapter Two

OUR SPRINGS OF JOY
ARE IN HIM

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name” (Psalm 100:4).

This verse shows what it means to have a mental attitude that is kept by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit always glorifies Christ. Therefore, we come through the church doors with thanksgiving. We enter His courts—His church—with praise. We don’t go in and just sit down like someone who is spiritually malfunctioning. We thank Him and bless Him for who He is.

Church should be the place we go to enjoy the Body of Christ. Psalm 116:14 says that we pay our vows and bless God in the midst of the congregation. Praise God by being happy! Do not dwell on the details of life; do not be preoccupied with negativity and natural viewpoint.

Being thankful is one of the greatest things that happens when we come to the Father through Jesus Christ. I cannot think of anything greater than to be genuinely happy and to be able to express it with the spirit of thanksgiving.

The Springs of True Praise

Before everything that is, God was already there. Before there were fountains or depths or mountains or springs of water, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were already there. God's character did not evolve. Proverbs chapter 8 beautifully describes this as wisdom personified. According to Proverbs 8:28, God strengthens the fountains of the deep.

Isaiah 51:3 illustrates what happens in the Christian community: "For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."

Jesus Christ comforts the waste places. Her wildernesses He shall make as Eden. Her deserts shall be made into gardens of the Lord. Then, joy and gladness, thanksgiving and melody, shall be found therein.

Unseen Gardens of Potential

“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Romans 1:20-21).

Every person has the potential to be comforted by the Spirit, to have his waste places comforted, to have his wildernesses made like Eden. Desert places can be made into gardens of the Lord, having God’s gladness and joy flowing through them.

The heathen (those who do not acknowledge the God of the Bible) are without excuse, because each one has God-consciousness through creation. In certain times and places, it may seem that the Holy Spirit has no conventional means to witness, concerning the Savior—no way to get the Gospel in there. Still, the Holy Spirit witnesses of Someone who made all of this magnificent creation.

People may not know the God of redemp-

tion, but they can know His character (which is the manifestation of His name, Exodus 34:5-7) through the creation. But, having revealed Himself, if they do not treat Him as the God of Creation, then their imaginations become vain, and their foolish hearts are darkened (Romans 1:21).

When we let the Lord comfort us, we find something we may have never known: true godly joy and gladness with thanksgiving. Something special can be found in everyone who responds to God: an attitude of thankfulness and praise to the Lord.

Tapping the Fountain Within

Let me tell you about a man named Eddie.

Now, Eddie didn't smoke and didn't drink. He seemed like a nice man. But his wife came to me and said, "My husband is suicidal, could you come over to our house and talk to him?"

After meeting Eddie, I knew that God-consciousness was working in Him. I knew that he had a potential within him and that we could find a fountain of gladness and joy and thanksgiving.

After several visits, Eddie grew to like me. I took him out for coffee and showed him the love of God. As he grew to trust me, he told me that

twice he had come within an inch of taking his own life. The Holy Spirit began to minister to the deep places of his heart and the Treasure was released. Eddie became gloriously saved.

I still can see Eddie and his wife worshipping God, hands raised, clapping with the music. What happened to Eddie? His life was transformed by the Holy Spirit glorifying Christ through the fountain of life within him. Out of that fountain came the spirit of praise and thanksgiving.

Chapter Three

LET THE LIVING WATERS FLOW

“For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills” (Deuteronomy 8:7).

“And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur” (Genesis 16:7).

The fountains for Hagar and Ishmael were in the wilderness. According to Zechariah 13:1, the fountains of God flow even to someone who is sinning, because the Lord wants to get that person’s attention. God waits to be gracious so that His mercy will be exalted (Isaiah 30:18).

In my first church, I kept visiting one particular house for three years. A seven-year-old girl who lived there came to our Sunday school, but her parents had yet to come to church. The church was growing so fast during those years; at that time, attendance had grown from six to

six hundred. Well, that little girl was such a sweetheart. After service every Sunday, she would pass me a note asking me to pray for her parents.

One day I stopped by and the mother motioned for me to come in. That had never happened before. "Don't say anything," the woman said to me as she got her husband.

They took me to the door of their daughter's room. The girl was on her knees, and her mother said to me in tears, "My daughter is praying for her pastor."

That couple got saved right then and there. Later, we baptized the whole family, and they became one of our very faithful families.

The little girl did not know I was coming at that moment. She was just seven, but she was praising God Almighty for her salvation and praying for her pastor. When the mother saw her on her knees, that little girl was a fountain of life for her parents.

Everlasting Springs

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water

that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13-14).

When we come to Jesus and drink from His well, rivers of living water flow from our emotions. We become like fountains with our attitude of praise.

In Noah's day, when the rains came down in the beginning of the Flood, Genesis 7:11 says, "the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up." The Hebrew word translated as "broken up" also means to tear into, to rip apart, to dig up. There are times when the Word of God and the Holy Spirit must dig inside to find the fountain of our potential.

Each of us has God-consciousness. When we are born again, we have the Holy Spirit. We have eternal life. We have the grace of God and the love of God. Now our only need is to recognize, realize, estimate, evaluate, praise, and guard all we have been given through Christ's life in us.

In Everything Give Thanks

"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

“Rejoice evermore.

“Pray without ceasing.

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:15-18).

I take these verses seriously, and I pray that the Holy Spirit will continually impart the truth of this passage to my heart.

The Spirit glorifies Christ within you, and that is a fountain of thanksgiving. A fountain is made for its waters to be dispersed everywhere. The waters that come from within you can flow into the streets where you live and bring people to Christ. This is a wonderful picture.

In *everything*, give thanks, for this is the will of God concerning you. You may not be able to do a lot of things for God, but surely you can be a thankful person, and that is the will of God.

Defeating the Doubts

“But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

“The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not

believe.

“And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you” (John 20:24-26).

Thomas doubted that Christ had risen from the dead. When Jesus came into the room again, He went directly to Thomas. “Reach your hand into my side,” Jesus said. Thomas never did that. He saw Jesus and that was enough for him.

This doubter went on to become a great missionary to India. According to Church history, he won hundreds of souls to Christ because he was so grateful for God’s forgiveness. Eventually, Thomas died as a martyr. Those who were around him during his persecution said he was always such a joy to be around. Even in the midst of trials, he always acted as if there were no persecution going on. It was written of Thomas that he had such a beautiful countenance, and that he was continually giving thanks.

When Peter was being nailed to his cross, he asked the Roman guards to place him upside down. “Put my head down and my feet up—I am not worthy to die as My Lord died,” he said.

He was weeping as he died, weeping that God would count him worthy to give up his life for the Lord after all the things that he had done. He shouted out thanksgiving and praise to God as he was on his way to receive the crown of life (see Revelation 2:10; James 1:12).

CONCLUSION

“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:20).

If I have a fountain flowing inside of me, if its source is the Word of God that I have guarded in my heart, if the Holy Spirit is glorifying Christ in me and through me, and if His life is flowing out of my emotions with praise and thankfulness, then that should take care of any problems I have. This is the best preventive medicine for sin. What is more, it becomes a tremendous ministry toward the people around me—though I may not say a thing.

When I give thanks in everything, then I am not living in my self. The Holy Spirit is being allowed to glorify Christ in me as I grow into a Christian who will reign for all eternity. All I have to do is accept God’s provision.

In Revelation 7:17, the Lamb of God is in the midst of the throne to feed those who were

saved during the Great Tribulation. Then, He leads them to the “living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

“It is done. The work is finished!” Jesus Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, calls out. “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (see Revelation 21:6).

If you are thirsty, just come and let the Holy Spirit comfort your waste places. God will make your wilderness like Eden, the deserts in your soul will become gardens of the Lord. You will have gladness and joy and melody with thanksgiving springing up within you—a fountain you never knew you had. It will spring up to glorify God, and a river will flow from you that will bless everyone you see.