

# Milk & Honey

Vol. XXX November 2016 No. 11

*Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ*

## Thanksgiving

Steve Hulshizer

With the Thanksgiving season comes the reminder to be thankful. While this is good, it is sad that we need to be reminded. This is particularly true with Christians who are blessed “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

Unthankfulness characterizes the unbelieving world around us. How often do you see people in the McDonald’s or Wendy’s give thanks for their food? In Romans chapter one the apostle Paul describes the five step decline of the heathen. First there is *irreverence*, with man failing to give God the glory due Him as Creator. This was followed by *ingratitude* (vs. 21), which in turn was followed by *intellectual pride*, *idolatry*, and *immorality*.

Scripture clearly states that unthankfulness will characterize the last days. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, *unthankful*, unholy, . . .” (2 Tim. 3:1-2)

In contrast to the unbelieving world, thanksgiving should characterize believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Eph. 5:20) “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (1 Thess. 5:18) It is sad, however, that too often saints are unthankful. Barnhouse said, “How strange that the Lord must plead with those whom He has saved from the pit to show gratitude to Him.” Spurgeon noted, “It ought to be as habitual to us to thank as to ask.”

The thankful person is characterized by several things. First there is *awareness*. It has been wisely said, “Thinking precedes thanking.” Another stated in similar fashion, “Why then are we not more thankful? The truth probably is that we don’t stop to think.” We need to increase our awareness of our blessings!

The thankful person is aware of the *existence* of his blessings. He is able to enumerate them. Whether it be possessions, health, family, or spiritual blessings, he knows how well off he is. The thankful person is also aware of the *extent* of his blessings. He is aware, not only that he is blessed, but that he is “abundantly blessed.” (Isa. 55:7; 1 Pet. 1:3)

Lastly, he will be aware of the *source* of his blessings. An old Chinese proverb says, “When you drink from the stream remember the spring.” David stated it well when he said, “Both riches and honour *come of thee*, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, *we thank thee*, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for *all things come of thee*, and of thine own have we given thee.” (1 Chr. 29: 12–14)

The danger is that when we get comfortable we forget and are no longer aware of our blessings. The Lord repeatedly warned Israel that when they were “full” they would forget Him. (Deut. 6:6–12; 8:1–11) The psalmist stated it well, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and *forget not* all his benefits.” (Psa. 103:2)

The second characteristic of the thankful person is *appreciation*. First we must be aware, but this should be followed with appreciation. This too takes thought. We often gain appreciation by comparison. In past years I had surgery on my shoulders three times and spent a good deal of time in physical therapy. While the pain was often great, I only needed to compare myself with those around me. Some had one or both legs removed and were learning to walk with artificial limbs. Others had knee and hip replacements, while others were in far greater pain than I was. Such comparisons help us appreciate how well off we really are.

How much do we appreciate our sight until we think of those who can not see? This is especially true spiritually! How much do we appreciate the ability to walk until we see those who cannot. How much do we appreciate our food until we see those who have little or none. How much do we appreciate our salvation until we realize how lost we were? Paul was very aware of this when he said, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ

**Continued on Page 3**

## We Have Moved

Our new address is

**3237 Faire Wynd Pl  
Dover, PA 17315**

# The Clouds of Life

William MacDonald -

...they feared as they entered into the cloud. (Lk. 9:34)

Peter, James and John were on the mount with Jesus. Sensing that this was a significant moment in history and desiring to somehow preserve its glory, Peter proposed erecting three booths—one each for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. This, of course, would have put the Lord on the same level as the two Old Testament saints. God thwarted the project by enveloping them in a cloud. Luke tells us that “they feared as they entered into the cloud.”

They shouldn't have feared. It was a cloud of glory, not of judgment. It was a temporary phenomenon, not a permanent fact of life. God was in the cloud, even though He was not visible.

Oftentimes clouds come into our lives and, like the apostles, we fear as we enter into one of these clouds. When God calls us to a new sphere of service, for instance, there is often the fear of the unknown. We imagine the worst in the way of dangers, discomforts and disagreeable situations. Actually we are just being afraid of a blessing. When the cloud lifts, we find that God's will is good and acceptable and perfect.

We fear as we enter the cloud of sickness. Our minds run wild with alarm. We interpret every word and facial movement of the doctor as an omen of doom. We diagnose every symptom as pointing to a terminal disease. But when the illness passes, we find ourselves saying with the psalmist, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted” (Psa. 119:71). God was in the cloud and we did not know it.

We fear when we enter the cloud of sorrow. What good, we ask, could ever come out of such tears, anguish and bereavement. Our whole world seems to collapse in ruins around us. But there is instruction in the cloud. We learn how to comfort others with the comfort with which the Lord comforts us. We come to understand the tears of the Son of God in a way we could never have known otherwise.

We needn't fear as we enter the clouds of life. They are educative. They are temporary. They are not destructive. They may hide the Lord's face but not His love and power. So we should take to heart the words of William Cowper:

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head. \*

Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:3-4

# “Written For Our Learning”

Israel's Idolatry  
C.H. Machintosh

“But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.” Deut. 4:20.

Can anything be more affecting than this? Jehovah, in His rich and sovereign grace and by His mighty hand, brought them forth from the land of death and darkness, a redeemed and delivered people. He had brought them to Himself that they might be to Him a peculiar treasure above all the people upon the earth. How then could they turn away from Him, from His holy covenant, and from His precious commandments? “Sadly, they could and did. “They made a calf “(Acts 7:41) “and . . . said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Ex. 32:4). Think of this! A calf made by their own hands, an image graven by art and man's device had brought them up out of Egypt! A thing made out of the women's earrings had redeemed and delivered them! And this has been written for our admonition. But why should it be written for us if we are not capable of and liable to the very same sin? We must either claim that God the Holy Spirit has penned an unnecessary sentence, or admit our need of an admonition against the sin of idolatry; and assuredly our needing the admonition proves our tendency to the sin.

Are we better than Israel? In no wise. We have brighter light and higher privileges; but, so far as we are concerned, we are made of the same material, and have the same capabilities and the same tendencies as they. Our idolatry may take a different shape from theirs; but idolatry is “idolatry, whatever the shape may be; and the higher our privileges, the greater our sin. We may, perhaps, be disposed to wonder how a rational people could be guilty of such overwhelming folly as to make a calf and bow down to it, and this too after having had such a display of the majesty, power, and glory of God. Let us remember that their folly is recorded for our admonition, and that we, with all our light, all our knowledge, all our privileges, are warned to “flee from idolatry.”

Let us deeply ponder all this, and seek to profit by it. May every chamber of our hearts be filled with Christ, and then we shall have no room for idols. This is our only safeguard. If we slip away the breadth of a hair from our precious Saviour and Shepherd, we are capable of plunging into the darkest forms of error and moral evil. Light, knowledge, spiritual privileges, church position are no security for the soul. They are very good in their right places, and if rightly used; but in themselves, they only increase our moral danger.

Nothing can keep us safe, right, and happy, but having Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. Abiding in Him,

He in us, that wicked one touches us not. But if personal communion be not diligently maintained, the higher our position, the greater our danger, and the more disastrous our fall. There was not a nation beneath the canopy of heaven more favored and exalted than Israel when they gathered round Mount Horeb to hear the word of God. There was not a nation on the face of the earth more degraded or more guilty than they when they bowed before the golden calf, an image of their own formation. \*

### Continued from Page 1 - *Thanksgiving*

into the world to save sinners; *of whom I am chief.*"

A third characteristic is that of *action*. The thankful person's awareness of the existence and extent of his blessings leads him not only to appreciation, but also to action. This is clearly seen in the lame man who was healed. "He leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God." (Acts 3:8) Matthew Henry said, "Thanksgiving is good but thanks-living is better." Our thankfulness should be translated into praise and to a life which manifests it. It should also be evident in our prayer life. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving* let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. 4:6)

The awareness and appreciation of our blessings should lead to action. They should also develop within us an *attitude* of thanksgiving. One has said, "As the Lord loves a cheerful giver, so likewise a cheerful thanksgiver." Job had such an attitude. In the midst of a crisis he could say, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21) David likewise had this attitude of thanksgiving. "I will bless the LORD *at all times*: his praise shall *continually* be in my mouth" (Psa. 34:1) Saints are exhorted to be of the same mind. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God *continually*, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." (Heb. 13:15)

Being thankful produces desired results. It brings glory to God. As stated earlier the unbelieving world around us fails to acknowledge the source of its blessings. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." (Rom. 1:21)

Being thankful also brings peace. After exhorting the saints to pray with thanksgiving, Paul adds, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:7) John Blanchard said, "I give it as my testimony that there is marvellous therapy in thanksgiving." Solomon wrote, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." May we not forget to be a thankful people! \*

## Rich Toward God

F. B. Meyer

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Luk 12:15.

"I have all, and abound." Phi 4:18.

LET US never forget this wonderful assertion, that life consists not in what we possess, but in what we are; not in goods, but in goodness; not in things, but qualities. "How much was he worth?" we ask when a man dies, and we expect an answer in the amount that stood to his credit, and on which his estate must pay death duties. Yet surely a man is worth only the love, humility, generosity, and sweet reasonableness which characterize him. Take away some people's wealth, and, as in the case of the rich man of whom our Lord speaks in His parable, you have nothing left; but take away all things from John or Paul, from Francis or Augustine, or Wesley, and you have an abundance left which makes them the millionaires of all time! "Poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

The rich man in the parable made three foolish mistakes. First, he treated his wealth as though it were absolutely his own. There is no suggestion that he had made it wrongfully. His wealth had evidently accrued as the gift of prolific harvests, and was certainly due to the goodness of the Creator, on whose co-operation the results of husbandry evidently depend. But to lift up grateful eyes in thankful acknowledgment to God seems never to have occurred to him! Are we not all too prone to magnify our own shrewdness and aptitude, and to exclude God when we make up our accounts for the year.

Second, he thought that the best receptacle for his abundance was in barns, and forgot that there were multitudes of poor and needy souls around. When we begin to accumulate more than we need for our use, or the provision for our families, we should consider, not further investments, but the pressing need of others.

Third, he thought that goods could stay the hunger of the soul. How often has the heart of man or woman been abounding with goods and remained unsatisfied? Let us give, expecting nothing again, with full measure, pressed down, and running over; give, not only money, but love and tenderness and human sympathy; give as one who is always receiving from the boundless resources of God. \*

### Funds to Commended Workers

It would be appreciated if funds sent to STW for distribution to workers were *received* no later than 12/29/16.

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## Purpose of Heart

C.H. Macintosh

“And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart” (Deut. 6:6)-at the very source of all the issues of life. This is peculiarly precious. Whatever is in the heart comes out through the lips and in the life. How important then to have the heart full of the Word of God, so full that we shall have no room for the vanities and follies of this present evil world. Thus shall our conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Hence we can judge of what is in the heart by what comes out of the mouth. The tongue is the organ of the heart-the organ of the man. “A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.” When the heart is really governed by the Word of God, the whole character reveals the blessed result. It must be so, inasmuch as the heart is the mainspring of our entire moral condition; it lies at the center of all those moral influences which govern our personal history and shape our practical career.

In every part of the divine volume we see how much importance God attaches to the attitude and state of the heart with respect to Him or to His Word, which is one and the same thing. When the heart is true to Him, all is sure to come out right; but on the other hand, we shall find that where the heart grows cold and careless as to God and His truth, there will sooner or later be open departure from the path of truth and righteousness. There is, therefore, much force and value in the exhortation addressed by Barnabas to the converts at Antioch: “He exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.”

How needful then, now and always! This “purpose of heart” is most precious to God. It is what we may venture to call the grand moral regulator. It imparts a lovely earnestness to the Christian character which is greatly to be coveted by all of us. It is a divine antidote against coldness, deadness, and formality, all of which are so hateful to God. The outward life may be very correct, and the creed may be very orthodox; but if the earnest purpose of heart be lacking-the affectionate cleaving of the whole moral being to God and His Christ-all is utterly worthless.

It is through the heart that the Holy Spirit instructs us. Hence, the Apostle prayed for the saints at Ephesus that the eyes of their hearts might be enlightened (J.N.D.). And again, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” \*

## York Bible Study Program

November 12 Brian Gunning Headship  
December 10 Tom Irwin Genesis in the NT  
10 AM - 3PM Lunch served.

Let us know how many will be coming.  
You may contact us thru our web site  
[www.FoodForSaints.com](http://www.FoodForSaints.com)

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