

Blessings from God

Thanksgiving is one of my favorite seasons of the year! Thanksgiving is a great season of the year for you & I to take a good look at the extent of our personal gratitude!

It is easy to thank God when you move into a new home. It is easy to thank God when you purchase that new automobile. It is easy to thank God when you get a raise in salary. It is easy to thank God when you are in the best of health. **But**, what about when your health breaks? What about when you are placed into the ambulance & carried to the hospital, & the doctor says: "I have bad news for you." What about when your finances go south? What about these critical times of economic downturn & loss of savings. **Are you still able to thank God even in the bad times!**

That Old Testament character **Job** speaks to us along this line! The man Job was in the cloudiest day of his life. To all appearances there was neither sun nor moon nor stars in the whole horizon of Job's life! Job had lost his property, his children & his friends; his friends, who, it turned out were only fair-weather friends. Finally, when terrible physical distress came upon him, even his own wife became bitter & said to Job: "**Why don't you just curse God, & die!**" Yet, through it all, Job was able to say: "The Lord gives & the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

I want to direct your attention this morning to one of Job's remarks found in **Job 10:12**. "**Thou hast granted me life & favor, & thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.**" Notice three words in that statement: -- **life, favor, & visitation**.

It is easy to give God praise in the good times, but it is of extreme importance for us to give God praise even when life is in reverse, when the dark clouds stand overhead! One of the ways to help drive those clouds away is **to recall** the days of sunshine & mercy & blessing with a thankful heart. That is what Job teaches us today, for right out of the depths of that sea of trouble, into which Job had been plunged, he cried: "Lord, You have granted me life, & You have shown me Your unfailing love & favor. My life has been preserved by Your tender care." **What a wonderful recognition this is of God's mercies!**

Job mentions three things for which **profound gratitude** should be expressed by each one of us who are here today. He singles out three truths, & these three truths are so commanding, so wonderful, that they should make every one of us, **even out of the deepest sea of trouble**, look to God & bless His holy name!

1. God Has granted Us Life!

First of all Job recognizes the **gift of life!** He said: "**Thou has granted me life.**" Job is saying: "I am still alive! All has been taken from me, it would appear, except for life itself. But as long as I have life I will worship God, the giver of life; I will honor God, the Author of life; & I will bless God, the Sustainer of life."

"**Lord, You have granted me life!**" Does not your heart light up & stir within you at the very thought that **you are alive!** You are a living human being; you are alive! **Oh, the abnormality of the man who wishes to get away from life! -- for life is such a wonderful gift!** It is Great to be alive! It is Great to be a living human being!

Stop & think about that for a moment! **You should be forever grateful that God made you to be a living human being!** What if -- what if God had made you to be a tree? What if He had made you to be a rock! What if

He had made you a bird, or some beast of the field, or the dog that sits on your porch, or the snake that makes its way, crawling over the dusty ground! Oh, what reverence, what humility, what thankfulness, should be in our hearts because **God** has made us living human beings, & clothed us with **potential dominion** over all the world about us!

Read the 8th Psalm which says: "When I look at the night sky & see the work of your fingers, the moon & the stars you have set in place; what are mortals that you should think of us, mere humans that you should care for us? For you made us only a little lower than the angels, & you crowned us with glory & honor. You put us in charge of everything you made, giving us authority over all things!" (8:3-6 NLT).

When I read that passage, I think of the words of the song: --
O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder Consider all the words Thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy pow'r thro'-out the universe displayed.
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee. How great Thou art! How great Thou art!

What a wonderful thing it is to be a living human being! **What a great thing is life! It is great to be alive!**
How our hearts ought to be lifted in adoring wonderful & grateful praise to such a God as is our God! He spared us despite the fact that we were so undeserving! You & I have been spared again & again, & with all that, we have often forgotten our Maker, & have played the part of the ungrateful person! **O, the wonder of it all!**

God **not only** gives us this life, this bodily life, but to those who have believed on His Son, Jesus, **He also offers us life eternal!** Jesus said: "He that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, & he that lives & believes in me shall never die." **O the wonder of the life that never dies!** How wonderful it is that God gives eternal life to those who put their faith & trust in His Son, Jesus Christ! Eternal life! Not life just for today; not life for a doubtful length of time; but **eternal** life, everlasting life!

My dear friends, **trust God!** Believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, & you shall never perish! You will be given life everlasting! D. L. Moody once said, "Some day you will read in the paper that Dwight L. Moody has died. Don't believe a word of it! It may be true that this tongue of mine will be quiet; my pulse will be still; my heart will have ceased its beating; **but I will be alive!** -- more alive than I am right now; more alive than I have ever been! I will have gone from this life, but I will be where the conditions of life are perfect, because God gives those who trust in Him eternal life!" Thank God! He has given us life in the here & now, & He has given us everlasting life for all eternity!

2. God Has Shown us His Unfailing Love & Favor!

Job said, "Thou hast granted me favor." God's favor is expressed in so many, many wonderful ways! We could talk for hours about the mercies of God! Let's consider just a few of God's favors & mercies: --

God has given you a good, sound body! Is not that reason enough to be devoutly thankful? Sound bodies; well bodies. There are some people who are blind. If you have sight today, that is a deep cause for you to give praise to God, & to be thankful to Him that your sight has not been taken away! How thankful you & I should be that we can **talk**, that we can **hear**, that we are **not crippled or maimed**. **Have we turned into ill-bred beasts that we cannot thank God for our health & strength of body?**

And then, you have a sound mind! How grateful we should be that our minds are unclouded! By & by perhaps, our minds will whirl, & our sense of reasoning will stagger, & one whose mind was once joyful & bright

will become clouded, because reason has fled & the mind becomes blank! But as for now, you have your mind; you have your intellect; you can think & reason; you can put this & that together logically, & go your way. O, what wonderful cause you have for thankfulness to God!

You have your road in life, your daily tasks, your living; you have your income, your comfortable sense of competence. You are able to work, & you have work to do. You have a sufficient amount coming in, as the product of your labors, as the wages of your work, to keep the wolf from the door, & to make you & your family comfortable. **How wonderful is the kindness & mercy of God to you!**

My friends, if God were to withhold His mercies from you for even one moment, your health would be gone, your mind would falter, & your reason would fail you! Were it not for God's unfailing love, God's favor, everything would disappear like the mists of the morning! Oh, be thankful today for God's unfailing love & favor in your life!

3. God Has Visited Your Soul!

"Thy Visitation Hath Preserved My Spirit." My very soul! Did you know that God **visits** men & women, boys & girls? How? You may ask! Does He visit them as of old? Oh, how many, many time He has visited **you -- & you & you!** How many times God has paused at **your** door, even at the very door of **your** heart!

Jesus said: "Behold, I stand at the door & knock; if any man hear my voice & open the door, I will come in to him." **God visits you in many ways, but most often He visits you spiritually!** I was just a child when the sense of sin first gripped my heart, so strongly that I feared to fall asleep at night in that little country home where we lived. I had sinned & I knew it! My heart was not right with God & I knew it! Some of you have felt the conviction of sin more than others. Some have had their hearts fairly torn to shreds, so terrible, so deep, was their conviction of wrong doing, of sinfulness!

We do not hear much preaching about the conviction of sin any more! We use to pray that God would bring old-fashion conviction of sin upon people, until they could not sleep or eat, until they turned from sin & surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ! To our shame, we have lost that conviction of sin!

Oh, the power of the conviction of sin; the tragedy of the heart that is exposed before God, & trembles out of its personal sense of shame & separation from God, & utter helplessness before the onslaughts of sin! My friends, **Jesus Christ still stands at our heart's door**, visiting our hearts, urging us to surrender our hearts & lives to Him, in order that He may forgive us of our sinful condition & that we might experience His mighty cleansing!

Has He visited your heart lately? Perhaps in the quietness of your room, it was there you settled it, & you said: "Christ is mine & I am His." Or maybe it was in the church, while the preacher preached & prayers were offered for you, the light came to you & you said: "I see it now! I see it! At last I see it! Never can I save myself, but Christ can save me! I surrender to Him now & confess Him as my Lord, here & now!" **Oh, how wonderful is that moment of conversion!**

Will you allow me the liberty of telling my own story, to recall that moment of my own conversion to Jesus Christ? Although I was brought up in a good Christian home, & was taught what it meant to be saved, it was not until I was 16 years of age, that one Sunday afternoon as a high school student in the hills of Eastern KY, I felt that old fashion conviction of sin. **God visited my heart that day; He knocked at my heart's door!** I made my way to an old fashion altar of prayer at the front of the chapel, & there I confessed my sins, & I asked God "for Christ sake" to forgive me! There I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord & Savior; I yielded my life to Him! As I made my way back to the boy's dorm that afternoon, it seemed to me that the very trees were clapping their hands, & the very heavens seemed to be putting on new expressions of joy!

What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought Since Jesus came into my heart!

I have light in my soul for which long I had sought, Since Jesus came into my heart.
I have ceased from my wand'ring & going astray, And my sins which were many are all washed away,
There's a light in the valley of death now for me, And the gates of the city beyond I can see,
I shall go there to dwell in that city I know, And I'm happy, so happy, as onward I go,
Since Jesus came into my heart, Since Jesus came into my heart,
Floods of joy o'er my soul like the sea billows roll, Since Jesus came into my heart.

Jesus Christ is the Savior of sinners! All through our earthly life, Christ **visits** us, & He gives His angels charge over us! He comes Himself! He never forgets us! He will never, never forsake us! He will be with us in the dark & cloudy days, just as He was with Job, & as He was with Paul, & as He has been with all the others who place their faith & trust in Him! He will be with us in all the upheavals & disappointments & losses, that come as we travel this road of life. At every step He will be with us, leading us on.

And He will be with us when the shadows come upon this earthly home of ours, & we can say with David: "Yea, though I walk ... through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod & thy staff they comfort me."

Conclusion: You & I have so much for which to be thankful during this thanksgiving season, & every day of our lives! **It is of extreme importance that every one of us should stop often & recount God's blessings & mercies!** Whether in good times or in bad times, we like Job can truthfully say: "**Lord, You have granted me life; & You have shown me Your unfailing favor. My soul has been preserved by Your visitation.**"

One of the most blessed of all exercises, to which we can give ourselves, is that exercise of calling to mind every day the kindness & mercy of God toward us! My friends, God has given you life! God has given you favor; favor in body; favor in mind; favor in soul. He has given you life, & showed you His kindness, & in His providence He has watched over your soul!

God is attempting to draw you to Himself! Your Savior offers not only to be with you here, not only to save you here, but He offers to be your Pilot when you leave this life behind & embark upon the boundless sea, so that you will be carried safely to your Eternal Home! Christ offers you Eternal Life, if you will trust in Him totally, & surrender yourself completely to Him!

Let me ask you this morning: **Have you made that wonderful discovery of knowing Jesus Christ in a real & personal way?** Can you truthfully say today, "I have surrendered my life to Jesus Christ? I have joined that great company of believers! I can truthfully say, 'I am at peace with God.' I know my sins are forgiven, & that I have the gift of Eternal Life"?

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Sunday Morning -- November 23, 2014