



Berean Christian Fellowship

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Are You Thankful?

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18 ESV).

Many Believers struggle with being thankful. Why? Well, thankfulness denotes gratitude for things you don't deserve. It is difficult to be thankful for what you have when you feel you deserve it: “I've worked hard all my life, and I deserve what I have.” It is equally difficult to be thankful when you feel you deserve something different or better: “I've had a tough life, I deserve to be treated well!” Maybe you are thankful to God for what you have, but what if you lost it? It isn't easy to have a thankful heart when things you rely on, love, or cherish are taken from you.

Ultimately, it's people's sense of self-worth, self-esteem, and pride that causes them to think they deserve something. In America, we are raised to believe we are entitled to basic things like “unalienable rights...among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (The Declaration of Independence). We feel entitled to our dignity in the very least and **EXPECT** to inherit an ordinary or good life, with the opportunity to achieve an extraordinary or great one. But the truth is that before God, we don't deserve any of it. As a sinful and rebellious race, God has said we only deserve His wrath, to be cut off from life and separated from Him, “*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23).

Jesus, alone, DID deserve better. He was entitled to the best things, for He was God's sinless Son, yet in this life “*He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities...He poured out his soul to death and was*

numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:3a, 5a, 12b). This is what you and I DO deserve! This is what we are entitled to! Yet in God's mercy, Jesus stood in our place, taking God's wrath on Himself—separated from His Father because of us. He bore “*the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors*” (Isaiah 53:12b) in order that we might be saved from what we truly deserve!

If at this moment, you were to stand in the presence of Jesus Christ, you would know that you deserve only punishment. All our self-esteem and self-worth would fall away in the reality of Who He is and what He has done in contrast to who we are and what we deserve. We often aren't “seeing” Jesus when we go about our business. Our eyes so easily drift from Him, and we spend a great deal of time defending or pursuing what we “deserve” to have in life, so easily forgetting God, “*Who richly provides us with everything to enjoy*” (1 Timothy 6:17b). “*Mark this, then, you who forget God, lest I tear you apart, and there be none to deliver! The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies Me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!*” (Psalm 50:22-23) “*Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*” (2 Cor. 9:15) for He HAS shown us His salvation and inheritance in His love, grace, and mercy through Jesus Christ! We don't deserve our lives, much less good things, much less Jesus!

Do you feel you deserve or are entitled to anything? Health? A good job? A normal life? I pray we examine ourselves for ungrateful thoughts, that we would instead be found always “*looking to Jesus,*” (Hebrews 12:2a), “*Who rescues us from the wrath to come*” (1 Thess. 1:10b). May we continually offer sacrifices of thanksgiving in all circumstances for His love, mercy, and grace in adopting us into the family of God. Praise His name! Amen!

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