

How Holy Spirit Can Empower You to Give Thanks Despite Your Trials

Last Tuesday at my house, the family is already preparing for Thanksgiving dinner. All year long, I look forward to spending time with my family around the table, eating my wife's cooking, taking a step back from work and spending a little extra time with God expressing thanksgiving to Him.

This spirit of thanksgiving is our love expressed to God as a response to His grace toward us. It is more than just feelings of gratitude; it is the desire to take action and express that gratitude. When thanksgiving pours out of our hearts, it takes the form of worship.

I want to give you a thought to consider today. In this week of Thanksgiving, do you have the courage to give God thanksgiving through worshipping with anticipation? Do you have the boldness to stare down the circumstances and situations in your life, family, and church that aren't going well and still offer thanksgiving to God for how He is working "for good" in the midst of them (Romans 8:28)?

When the leper came to Jesus in Matthew 8:2, the vital factor that unlocked his miracle was the courage to give worship with anticipation. The Scriptures tell us he knelt in front of Jesus and proclaimed, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." The leper likely believed for some time that Jesus was capable of healing him; that's why he sought Him out. But He chose to pursue the Savior and make a declaration of his faith in what Christ would do instead of wallowing in self-pity or becoming mired in his circumstances. As a result, he received his miracle. Jesus' response to that leper is the same as His response to us: "I will; be clean" (v. 3b,

emphasis added).

The pilgrims who left England in pursuit of religious freedom possessed a similar courage. Like the leper seeking Jesus out in the crowd, they got up and took a literal step of faith to seek Him out. They boarded the Mayflower believing that God would lead them to a new land and build them a new life. I'm sure they had plenty of opportunities to doubt their decision, but they chose instead to keep their eyes on Christ and His call. Because of their faith in action, we here in the United States will freely celebrate God's provision in our country's history and individual stories. What a testimony to the power of God when we step out in faith and approach Him with anticipation.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: "Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them."

What victories are you waiting for as we enter this holiday season? As you sit down at the Thanksgiving table this week, I encourage you to muster up the courage to leave your requests and concerns at the door and instead pick up the mantle of praise and worship to God, who always "causes us to triumph in Christ and through us reveals the fragrance of His knowledge in every place" (2 Cor. 2:14b).

I pray that as Thanksgiving comes upon us, you remain safe if you are traveling. I pray that your family is able to gather and celebrate the love of God together, and I pray that you will have a miraculous and intimate encounter with God in your own life.

Have an awesome Thanksgiving! You are beautiful. I see Jesus

in you! {eoa}

Mikel French has challenged spiritual awakening all across America, where many celebrations extended into multiple weeks, and has conducted celebrations in France, Sweden, Russia, Romania, Poland, Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia, Germany, South Africa, Malawi, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Haiti, Japan, Singapore, India and Thailand. He conducted an outreach celebration in Manila, Philippines, reaching 200,000 teenagers with the Book of Hope. Through the generous support of partners, he has presented the message of Jesus Christ to millions of people in the nation of Russia through televised citywide soul-winning celebrations. Mikel considers it an honor to assist in conducting the annual pastor's conference, where thousands of pastors from Russia's 11 time zones come for training, teaching and equipping. Mikel and his wife, Marsha, reside in Tulsa, Oklahoma.