

So That ... Thanksgiving

Safe shelter. Plenty to eat.

A choice of clothes. Shoes on my feet.

A loving family. A comfortable bed.

Friends to laugh with. Pillows for my head.

They are simple things that I'm thankful for

And each year I appreciate them more

Eyesight to see. Books I can read.

Doctors close by to help when in need.

The ability to smile, the freedom to choose...

Who to vote for... win or lose

Strength for any task, Money to give

A Savior who died so that I can live.

The blessings go on, too numerous to mention

God is so good, He deserves my attention

When I think of all He's done, and how He first loved me

I want to bless Him back with a life lived generously!

Our forefathers wisely set aside a day, every year, for our nation to recount the goodness of the Lord to us. Just think of the opportunities, homes (with flush toilets and electricity!), and choices we have in every area of our lives. Even in our trying times, people in many other places dare not dream of a life like ours. God has truly made us rich in every way.

Why of all people are we so richly blessed?

We are not greater, wiser, lovelier, and more deserving. It is God's amazing grace – our God; whose ways are higher than ours and whose thoughts are higher than ours. In pouring His grace on us He has several reasons.

- First, God loves us; but He loves the whole world so that doesn't fully explain our blessing.
- Second, this nation was founded on Biblical principles, dedicated to Him, bathed in prayer that continues still. We benefit from His promise to bless the children of those who fear Him and obey His commands. I'm so thankful we had godly forefathers!
- Third, we have been "made rich in every way so that we can be generous on every occasion, and <that our> generosity will result in thanksgiving to God!" (2 Cor. 9:11)

The apostle Paul explains that God gives us everything we need so that we can abound in good works. Now works do not save us, but good works flow out of our love for and gratitude to God. The service God has in mind for us will provide for the needs of others who are not now as amply supplied; so that they can have a heart full of thanksgiving too!

I've witnessed this truth many times. While in Romania years ago, a mayor shared with me that her village had no running water. Even in the dead of winter they used outside pumps. She explained with desperation the hardship this caused, especially for the very young and old. I was able to tell her that because of the generosity of caring Christians, her village would have a municipal well providing plenty of fresh water for their homes before year's end. She cried tears of joy! When she was finally able to speak, she couldn't stop thanking God and His people!

Recently, I was in Florida responding to Hurricane Ian. Daily

our partners had been faithfully serving thousands of hot meals to people still without power in their homes because of flood damage. Those meals along with truckloads of cleaning supplies, groceries, and other needed items were assisting families whose homes were damaged, possessions lost and who experienced trauma. The generosity of so many, allows us to continue meeting changing needs like mucking out houses, repairing damage, praying with the grieving, and offering hope. Many cannot express thanks enough for the help God sends through people just like you.

Thanksgiving is a time to recount the many blessings of God to us, our families, and our nation. It is a time to celebrate the goodness and greatness of God. It is also a time to ask God how the blessings He has bestowed on you can overflow into the lives of others. Take time to jot down some simple action steps you and your family can take. God has gifted you to bless others, around the corner or around the world. As you give others something to be thankful for, God will pour out more blessing on you as well! He says so.

Here are a few of His promises:

- God will “make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Cor 9: 8)
- God will “increase your store of seed” (that’s material provision) (2 Cor 9: 10)
- God will “enlarge your harvest of righteousness” (that’s spiritual blessing) (2 Cor 9:10)

Isn’t it amazing! God blesses us, so we can bless others, so He can bless us more! That is worth celebrating! Happy Thanksgiving!

Dr.

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