

The Gift of Giving Thanks

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“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s Will for you in Christ Jesus.”

- 1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIV

Good morning! In November, In America, we have a holiday called Thanksgiving. On Thanksgiving, we celebrate with our families by having a big feast and giving thanks for all the good things in our lives. It is a very fun time, and it is a reminder to be thankful. But how often do we give thanks?

Of course, we may give thanks when things are going well. Thank you God, that I did well on that test. Thank you that I got to eat apple pie for lunch. Thank you for the great, sunny weather. But how about when things aren’t going well? Do we thank God for the rain, too? Paul, the follower of Jesus who wrote this verse, did. Listen to what happened to him.

“After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.”

- Acts 15:23-25

Wow! Can you imagine that?! Paul did nothing wrong. But they beat him, they treated him like a criminal, and locked him up. And what did Paul do? He did not get angry. He did not get depressed. He didn’t even complain. He sang to God! “Jesus loves me this I know!” Maybe you’re thinking, “Really?! Paul, you’re in prison!” But Paul knew, God is good. Paul knew that there is always something to give thanks for. Paul was thankful that he was alive, that he had his friend Silas with him. Paul was thankful that God’s love is bigger than people’s hate.

When we have hard times, or when things don’t go our way, we have a choice to make. We can get angry. We can get sad. We can complain. Or, we can give thanks. We can thank God for the rain. We can thank God that we have food to eat. We can thank God that we have a nice school building that keeps us dry. There is always something to give thanks for. And giving thanks leads to joy and hope, and it gives us the strength to overcome the challenges of life. So, next time you are in a hard place, find something to give thanks for. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Papa God, thank you so much for all the good things you give us. Thank you for life, thank you for our parents, our teachers, our students, our school building. Thank you for Aomori apples, for sunshine, and for rain. Thank you for club activities and homework. Thank you for friends. Thank you for You, God. Give us hearts that always give thanks. In Jesus’ name, amen.