

"WHADDAYA SAY?"

November 18, 2018

I remember growing up and being taught by my parents a very important lesson. And that lesson was to say thank you when someone did something for me or gave me something. They would say to me if I forget, or If I was slow in saying thank you, "whaddaya say?", to which I would quickly reply thank you.

Today I am a grandparent and we are trying to teach my grandchildren this same valuable lesson. I want my grandchildren to grow up showing appreciation for what people do for them rather than just expecting people to do things for them or expecting people to give them things. So, I make it a point whenever they don't remember to say thank you, to say those now famous words of reminder, "WHADDAYA SAY". To which they reply "thank you".

I see a tragic trend running through our culture where people don't say the words thank you very often. People do things for people, sacrifice for people, and yet, many fail to at least say thank you. It is as if people feel they have a right to expect others to take care of and do things for them.

Ingratitude is a serious problem that needs to be dealt with.

Many years ago, a boat was wrecked in a storm on Lake Michigan at Evanston, Illinois. Students from Northwestern University formed themselves into rescue teams. One student, Edward Spencer, saved 17 people from the sinking ship. When he was carried exhausted to his room, he asked, "Did I do my best? Do you think I did my best?"

Tears later, R.A. Torrey a well know evangelist was talking about the incident at a meeting in Los Angeles, and a man in the audience called out that Edward Spencer was present. Dr. Torrey invited Spencer to the platform. An old man with white hair slowly climbed the steps as the applause rang. Dr. Torrey asked him if anything in particular stood out in his memory. "Only this, sir, he replied, "of the 17 people I saved, not one of them thanked me" Not only do we have difficulty in saying thank you to each other, but we have difficulty in saying thank you to God.

This coming Thursday is Thanksgiving Day, and to prepare our hearts and our minds for this traditional day of thanks we are going to discuss several incidents in the book of Numbers and through our study we will learn, how we can really show God that we are indeed thankful for all He has done.

We once again will take seriously Paul's admonition in I Corinthians chapter 10 to learn from those of the O.T. so that we will not make the same mistakes ourselves. Remember he who fails to learn from history is doomed to repeat it.

A. THE ISRAELITES HAD REASON TO BE THANKFUL.

1. For over 400 hundred years the Israelite people were slaves of the Egyptian empire. They were treated harshly by the Egyptians and were forced at the end of a slavemaster's whip to build great cities for the mighty Pharaoh. Towards the end of their captivity they were forced to helplessly stand by as they watched their young baby boys were being thrown into the Nile river and drowned.

These years in bondage were without doubt a time of despair, a time of discouragement and a time of fear and hopelessness.

But God did not forget them and God did not forget His promise, And God demonstrated his Almighty power through great signs and miracles that brought the proud and mighty Egyptian empire to her knees. And God guided his people to freedom as he removed the chains and shackles of slavery from around their hands and feet.

2. The Israelites had great reason to be thankful to God. God had done something for them that they were powerless to do for themselves, to win their own freedom. God delivered them from slavery and gave them their freedom. In Egypt they were slaves without hope and now by the power of God they were free, and their hope was overflowing.

3. Not only did God deliver His people, but God also provided for His people. God's care and concern for his people did not end as they passed by the walls of the crippled Egyptian city. No, God's concern for them continued as they journeyed through the desert sands.

God provided food and water for the people. Every day God would send down manna from heaven and all the people had to do was just pick it up. God provided water for them and He provided quail for them to eat. God also provided clothing for His people as he caused their clothing and shoes to not wear out for 40 years.

4. God not only took care of their physical needs but God also provided for their spiritual needs as well. He made a covenant with them and gave them the law, on stones he engraved with his own hand, as he settled in fire and smoke upon the top of thundering Mt. Sinai.

God gave them a Tabernacle as a place of worship where prayers could be offered to him and where atonement could be made for their sins. He gave them spiritual leaders to meet their needs.

And God wanted His people to know that they were not alone so He showed the people that he was present with them as he guided them in the desert with the cloud and as his glory would rest upon the tabernacle.

The Israelites had many great reasons to be thankful to God, God had delivered them and had provided for their physical and spiritual needs.

B. HOWEVER, (despite all of their obvious reasons for thankfulness) THE ISRAELITES FAILED TO DEMONSTRATE TRUE THANKFULNESS.

1. Sure they danced and sang to God a song of praise and thanks after they had crossed the Red Sea on dry ground and as they watched their enemy Egypt being swept away by its mighty waters.

But you see there is more to saying thanks to God than simply saying or singing the words. Though their lips may have said "thank you", the activities of their daily lives demonstrated serious ingratitude on the part of the Israelites.

2. Let's look at several incidents in the book of Numbers that were blatant signs of ingratitude on the part of the Israelites towards God:

a. First their COMPLAINING was a sign of ingratitude.

[11:1-3] "Now when the people complained, it displeased the Lord; for the Lord heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the Lord burned

among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the Lord, the fire was quenched. So he called the name of the place Taberah, because the fire of the Lord had burned among them."

It had been only three days since they had set out from the mountain of the Lord and already they are complaining about their hardships again. And God heard their complaining (as he always does) and he became very angry with them. Their complaining was not the way that they should have said thank you to God. If they were truly thankful, they would not have complained about the things they lacked but rather would have praised God for ALL they had.

b. We also find many of the Israelites showing ingratitude to God by being JEALOUS. We see one example of this in [16:1-3,8-11]. These men were not thankful for all that God had given them. Rather than appreciating and thanking God for what blessings God had given them, they were looking at others with envy and were jealous for the things that God had given them.

What God had done for them, what God had given them was not enough.

c. We see the Israelites also continuing to demonstrate their ingratitude as we see them LACKING THE FAITH AND COMMITMENT to do the work of God. One obvious example was in their failure to take the promise land, after the report of the ten spies.

We see another example of this in Numbers 32. As the Israelites neared the end of their journey and as they were about to cross over and take the promised land. Two tribes, Gad and Rueben, felt nice and comfortable right where they were and didn't want to make the effort to cross the river and fight.

Moses told them that it wasn't right for them to sit there while their brothers go off to war. He also told them that their refusal to do the work of the Lord would discourage their fellow Israelites, and later in the chapter Moses told them that they were a brood of sinners that were making the Lord angry at His people again. It is a serious sin to fail to do the work of the Lord.

d. The last example of Israel's ingratitude that I want to study today is found in the 11th chapter of Numbers.

[31-34]. "Now a wind went out from the Lord, and it brought quail from the sea and left them fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground. And the people stayed up all that day, all that night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was aroused against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very great plague. So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving."

Here we see the Israelites demonstrating unthankfulness by craving other food.

God had provided manna from heaven for them every day BUT they were not thankful and were craving other food than the food God had provided. And we see God's anger at this ingratitude as He causes the meat to rot between their teeth and as he strikes them with a plague.

Well that's the them part. The Israelites had reason to be thankful however they failed to demonstrate true thankfulness. Let's now talk about, the Us part.

II. US

A. We Also Have Reason To Be Thankful.

1. **Romans 3:23** states

"FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND HAVE FALLEN SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD".

John 8:34 reads,

"JESUS REPLIED `I TELL YOU THE TRUTH EVERYONE WHO SINS IS A SLAVE TO SIN".

In **Romans 6:23** we see that "the wages of sin is death" (separation from God).

Friends we had a problem. We were slaves every bit as much as the Israelites were and in reality even more. And there was nothing we could do about it either. We were slaves and we unable on our own power to break free from the shackles that bound us.

"For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:6-8

Friends we were condemned to die, we were on death row. Locked in a cold dark cell with chains on our hands and feet. And there was nothing that we could do but sit and wait to hear the sound of the executioners footsteps.

And just when all seemed lost, at just the right time Jesus Christ gave His life for all the world, and his precious blood, when applied to our lives, burst opened our prison door and shattered the chains that bound us.

If you are here and you are a Christian, you have reason, you have cause to fall on your knees and be thankful to God. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through are Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Yes, we have reason to be thankful, but the question we need to ask ourselves is, have we demonstrated true thankfulness to God?

Now it is true that everyone here has probably sang the Doxology:

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below, Praise Him above the heavenly host, Praise Father Son and Holy Ghost".

But here again we need to remember that there is more to thanking God with our lips, WE MUST THANK GOD WITH OUR LIVES!!!!

And in this regard, I can confidently say that we at times and sometimes too often have demonstrated to our God and Savior blatant acts of ingratitude. We have failed to learn from the example of the Nation of Israel.

WE TOO:

COMPLAIN about our hardships. And fail to appreciate what God has done for us.

Let me tell you raising our children has many times taught valuable lessons about my relationship to God. I like most parents want to give nice things to my children, but for their own good and because of obvious financial limitations I can't give them everything. More than once when my kids don't get something they want and they complain I find myself getting angry and saying, "you guys don't appreciate all we do for you, all the things we buy you, we give you a home and food and clothes and the minute you don't get this one thing you pitch a fit and complain." And more than once God has reached down and slapped me in the face and said "Yeah I know how you feel".

God our Father has richly blessed us with many things. And yet we complain about what we don't have. It's like all that God has given us doesn't count.

2. We too like the Israelites suffer from JEALOUSY and petty fighting. WHEN WE WORRY ABOUT WHAT SOME ONE HAS THAT WE DON'T HAVE, WHEN WE ARE ENVIOUS OVER THE PRAISE SOMEONE GETS THAT WE WANT, When we let insignificant things and hurt feelings damage the church we are showing God that we are ungrateful for his blessings and that what he has giving us individually isn't enough.

3. Our LACK OF FAITH AND COMMITMENT to do the work of the Lord is a direct slap in the face of our Lord and Savior.

To tell Jesus Christ, who was arrested, beaten, tried, scourged, and forced to carry his cross. Then had spikes hammered into His wrists and feet. Who willingly bore our sin, who hang naked all alone on a cross while God the Father turned His back on Him. To tell Jesus who died for your sin, "You know Jesus, I don't want you to think that I don't care about what you did, BUT hey I don't have time for all that church stuff, I just don't want Christianity and the Lord's work to take up too much of my time". How dare we have such an attitude. He died for you and you need to live for Him.

4. The Israelites had a problem with CRAVING OTHER FOOD and so do we.

God has given us all we need, And rather than craving the bread of life which came down from heaven, which is Jesus Christ , We much too often crave the things of the world more than Christ.

I wouldn't be surprised if many here has at one time or another demonstrated ingratitude towards God.

What I want to do now is tell you how to REALLY say thank you to God.

1. Many people when asked how do you spell love, spell it:

T. I. M. E. Do you really want to say thank you to God? Then spend time with Him, crave his word each day.

2. We say thank you to God when we FORGIVE OTHERS. He forgave us all of our sins and he continues to do so. Yet we won't forgive each other a harsh word spoken 5 years ago. If you are holding bitterness and unforgiveness in your heart at this very moment, I IMPLORE YOU TO LET IT GO! GIVE THAT PERSON THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT (THAT'S WHAT GOD DID FOR US). FORGIVE THEM NOW AND SAY THANK YOU TO GOD. And if you need to talk with them do so.

3. We say thank you to God. When we SERVE IN HIS CHURCH.

4. We say thank you to God when we SHARE HIS GOSPEL.

5. We say thank you to God when we REACH OUT TO THE HURTING when we give a drink to the thirsty and food to the hungry. And an ear to the heart broken.

6. We say thank you to God when we GIVE GOD OUR BEST. If you are holding back on your time, talents or treasure give to God your best now and say thank you.

Psalm 68:19

Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, The God of our salvation.

Often in the bad times our eyesight gets foggy and we fail to recognize God's hand of blessing. We focus on the negatives and let them pull us down. At times we may not even see any positives in our situation, but my friends, God always gives blessings even though they may not be readily seen.

I encourage you to deliberately find things to be thankful for every day of the year. See God's hand at work in your life and praise Him. Remember that daily He gives multiple blessings. Matthew Henry the Bible commentator said, "So many, so weighty are the gifts of God's bounty, that He may be truly said to load us with them." Yes, face life's difficulties, but focus on the load of blessings that surround you and thank God for them. Remember, a thankful heart is a joyful heart!

Beloved Father, help us always to see You as the bountiful giver of blessings. Keep us from getting caught up in negative thinking and neglecting the wonderful benefits You provide for us each day.