



The Christian's duty of praise and thanksgiving

Whoso Offereth praise glorifieth me.

Psalm 50:23

One of the grossest manifestations of human pride is the steadfast refusal to glorify God in thanksgiving for all the unmerited mercies received. Paul shows us that this is the very thing that marks the unregenerate heart: *"Because ... when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful."* But does ingratitude belong to the unregenerate alone? Sadly, this sin at times characterizes the believer, too. Henry Scudder wrote, *"Holy Job and good David were in some particulars overtaken with this fault."* Job reckoned that he should die in comfort and multiply his days as the sand (Job 29:18). David, in his prosperity, said, *"I shall never be moved"* (Ps. 30:6). It was through afflictions that they, by experience, came to recognize the vanity of trusting in earthly things and to sincerely confess this grievous sin against the Lord.

God alone is worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing (Rev. 5:12). It is for this very reason that man has received a mind to understand and a tongue to speak, so as to employ these in the worship of his Creator. *"Awake my glory,"* says David, referring here to his whole being, *"and I will praise thee among the people"* (Ps. 57:8-9). Thankfulness on our behalf expresses further requests for blessing and confers on us the best security we could hope to enjoy (Phil. 4:6, 7). Praise and thanksgiving often go together and only differ to some degree. Scudder offers this practical differentiation: *"The superabundant excellency of God showed by his titles and works is the object of praise"* (1 Chron. 29:11-13; Ps. 8:1-9). The abundant goodness of God showed in his titles and works to his church, to you or to anyone or anything else to which you have reference, is the object and matter of your thanks (1 Chron. 29:14). We praise Him for all His glorious works in creation and for His life-giving Word (Ps. 19). We thank Him for all things, spiritual and temporal, in which He is good to us. We praise Him with the inward and the outward man (Ps. 35:28); we praise Him at all times, as long as we have life and breath; we praise and thank Him for His most precious gift given to mankind – the gift of His Son – our only Great and Heavenly High Priest out of whose censer our prayers and praises ascend as a sweet smelling aroma in the nostrils of the Father (Rev. 8:3, 4).

There is no sin more common than base ingratitude. Simply look around in a restaurant and note how many people give thanks for what is before them. If man cannot take the time to give thanks to God for the basic necessities of life, such as bread and drink, why would he care to bless and praise Him for all of His benefits received (Ps. 103:2)? One leper out of ten returned with thanksgiving to the Lord Jesus; and those who do give thanks do not thank God for one mercy in twenty. In our afflictions and trials we cry, even howl to God, but who returns with proportionate praise and heartfelt gratitude (Hos. 7:14)? The Christian should more often be in thanks than in supplication because God goes ahead of our prayers with His good gifts in a thousand ways (Isa. 65:24; Matt. 6:8).

Christian, take heed that you are not unthankful. It is a most hateful and condemnable sin. He who is unthankful is blind to the immeasurable provision of God in everything and is turned in upon himself, thinking he deserves all that he gets. Some points, then, to consider in this regard:

1. When your heart is cold towards the Lord and words of thanksgiving feel strangled in your mouth, stir up holy emotions through the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit. Is the sin of pride in self-sufficiency not surreptitiously creeping in? Remember that praise and gratitude is

but a small beginning of heaven on earth and it will be our constant employment when we get to heaven. We dare not anticipate the marvellous activities of heaven with cold hearts and mute lips.

2. What proportion of your prayers comprises heartfelt praise and thanks? Wherein do your prayers consist? Endless, vain repetition? Anxious supplication and complaint? Instead, do what the Word of God requires and give thanks *“always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Eph. 5:20). Ask with David, *“What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?”* (Ps. 116:12).
3. And you, unconverted friend, do you see the offensiveness of base ingratitude in the eyes of a superabundantly generous God – the One who causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends His rain on the just and the unjust? Is it any wonder that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against this very thing (Rom. 1:18, 21)? Yet He continues in His longsuffering toward you in the hope that you will recognize His bounteous goodness, for He is *“not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance”* (2 Pet. 3:9). But he who knows and loves the Lord Jesus will, like Asaph, own that whosoever glorifies God in Christ gives Him praise as His just due.

Arthur Miskin

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