



## Thank You, Lord

What would you identify as the most destructive sins of our culture? *Idolatry* would certainly rank at the top. The failure to exclusively worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ leads to destructive living. *Immorality* is pandemic and destructively epidemic. Adultery, fornication, and pornography of all kinds are surely destroying the family and killing our nation. *Insolence* and *Indolence* are tearing at the fabric of our society. That is, we are witnessing rebellion against legitimate authorities, at all levels, and on the other hand those in authority seem to not care that everyone is 'doing that which is right in their own eyes.'

Surely these are four serious social sins with serious social consequences. But at the root of such destructive worldviews and behaviours is the most destructive sin: *Ingratitude*. If you asked the apostle Paul for his list of the most destructive sins it would include these we have mentioned but at the top of the list would be *ingratitude*. He says so in Romans 1:18-32.

As he describes societal degradation, the beginning point (v.21) is the failure to '*glorify God as God.*' But immediately he adds, '*nor were they thankful*' The result is people become '*futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts are darkened.*' And everything falls apart from there. All of the ugliness that surrounds us is rooted in a failure to live with the worldview, 'Thank you, Lord.' May Jesus save us from this sin!

Ingratitude is a serious sin. And most of us know this intuitively. One of the early lessons that we teach our children is to say please and *thank you*. Or at least we should. When a child assumes that their only responsibility in life is to receive then we end up with, well, we end up with what we see all around us; irreverence, idolatry, immorality, insolence and indolence. We end up with a cultural mess. We end up with a society that reflects the downgrade described in Romans chapter one.

Ingratitude leads to the violation of the first commandment, to have no other gods. Ingratitude reveals an autonomously idolatrous heart. After all, if I am not grateful then this implies that I think that I owe no one, it implies that I exist by my own initiative and efforts. Ingratitude implies that I am only receiving what is my right to receive; it implies that life is all about me. Ingratitude makes me an idolater. I become a self-worshipper and I live as if I deserve any and all good things that come my way. When I am ungrateful I am guilty of refusing to acknowledge my dependence on others and upon *Another*. However, when I am grateful then I am acknowledging that I am a receiver. A 'gratitude attitude' reminds me that I am not autonomous; I am not self-existent; I cannot live an isolated existence. I am *dependant*, on the Lord.

It is thundering outside this evening and I am beginning to hear the drizzle of rain; rain for which Christians have been praying. Thank you, Lord!

David wrote in Psalm 103:1, '*bless the Lord, O my soul.*' This was the self-medication of self-exhortation; an exhortation to gratitude.

I don't know what he was going through. Perhaps he was in the midst of some serious affliction, tribulation or heartache. On the other hand, maybe he was just having one of those days; like I sometimes have. You know, those days when your spiritual battery is running low, when there is lethargy in your devotion; when you are self-focused and self-pitying. At such times we are tempted to curve in on ourselves. And when this happens we will struggle to be grateful. The self-focused are not self-forgetful; and self-forgetfulness is a necessary precursor to gratitude. It is precisely at such times that you and I need to do what David did: talk to ourselves, commanding

our souls to bless the Lord. Command your soul to *commend* God. Command yourself to give God thanks.

David reminded himself to '*Bless the Lord ... and forget not all His benefits*' (v.2). He then lists them. In the words of the old hymn he was doing what we should daily do, '*Count your many blessings name them one by one.*' And when you reckon them, be sure to give thanks to God for them.

The Lord is kind, always. He supplies our need and He graciously answers prayers. And for the past two days He has daily loaded us with rain. *Thank you, Lord.*

It is now morning and after a good night's sleep (Thank you Lord) I am finishing this article. I see the clouds building this morning. Will the Lord send more rain? Perhaps. And if He does then be sure to say, '*Thank you, Lord.*'

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