

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Giving Our Good God Thanks

(Jerry Fite)

Paul exhorts us, “*in everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward*” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). In everything? Surely no one expects us to be thankful in being surrounded by a deadly virus inhabiting some with no apparent symptoms. In everything? Surely no one expects us to be thankful in losing my job because the precautions to fight the invisible virus has shut down my work. Who would expect us to be thankful in the harmful and confining circumstances that the Corona virus pandemic has thrust upon us? The answer is, “God!”

Why does Paul appeal to the highest authority in the universe and specifically applies the Divine demand to our personal relationship in Christ? It may be that it might be very difficult for Christians, suffering persecution for living the honorable life, to “give thanks in everything.” Distress, resentment, and fear may be filling the heart, leaving little or no room for being thankful. God’s appointed servant brought the authority of heaven down to ground the Thessalonians and us today with God’s will in Christ Jesus that we give thanks... give thanks in everything.

Psalm 118 offers us some help in thanking God in everything. The first verse and the last verse of the Psalm exhorts us with, “*Oh give*

*thanks unto Jehovah; for He is good; for His lovingkindness endureth forever* (Psalm 118:1, 29). Some authorities think David is the author of this Psalm which was in the hearts of the priests and Levites when the foundation of the temple was laid in the days of Ezra. There were shouts of joy for God’s providence in allowing God’s people to rebuild the temple. They were “*giving thanks*” for *He is good, for His lovingkindness endureth for ever toward Israel*” (Ezra 3:11).

But there was crying among the older priests and Levites who were old enough to remember the glorious temple established on its foundation in Solomon’s day. They were weeping loudly amidst loud joy (Ezra 3:12). If you were nearby that day you would not have been able to discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people (Ezra 3:13).

When thinking of the past brings tears to the eyes and audible weeping to the tongue, when experiencing the present, we can give God thanks, He has brought us this far through His providential care and we can continue on to face the future in confidence.

What is the basis for this confidence? God is, Who is

always faithful to His promises. David says “*Jehovah is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? Jehovah is on my side among them that help me...*” (Psalm 118:6-7). This passage is coupled with God’s promise to not forsake His people or their leaders (Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 1:5) in strengthening the heart of the Christian to put confidence in God. Fear should be replaced with a good God who endures with us providing lovingkindness forever.

David could always be thankful in the present because of what God did for him in the past. David recalls, “*Out of my distress I called upon Jehovah: Jehovah answered me and set me in a large place*” (Psalm 118:5). Distress happens when we feel confined and feel the weight of being in tight restrictive places. David spent time in restrictive caves to avoid enemies in life. In such times he prayed to God. God answered his prayer with setting him in a “large place.” In your time of distress, because you are confined to home, pray to God who can and will set you in open spaces again. In such time of distress, dear Christian, you can be thankful to our God who is so good! His lovingkindness endures after the virus circumstances ends!