Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

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Being Thankful...Always

(Jerry Fite)

Paul says Christians should be *"...giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father (Ephesians5:20).* On the surface, God's demand seems unreasonable, considering all the bad things in life we are forced to encounter. What about theft, disease, and death? Give thanks *"always..."* give thanks for *"all things..."* really?

Paul's statement connects singing with making *melody* in our heart, or *striking our heart strings* with feelings of grace unto God *(Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16).* We are with one another on such occasions because we are "...speaking one to another" with these words of grace unto God.

With all the possible evil things that can occur daily to any one person, a plurality is gathered, uniting numerous hearts in praise. Surely someone is worshipping with a sick loved one demanding their daily attention. Is it because death has not hit home among friends and loved ones this week enabling them to sing with grace? Surely someone is worshipping with pain in their life but still singing with a thankful heart unto God.

One key to help us see how we can be thankful always for all things is to connect our thanksgiving with the name or authority of Christ. We can give thanks for all things knowing that all things are under Christ's authority.

As Christians, death has no fearful hold on us because Jesus hath been raised, and through death, He has defeated death, taking death's sting away *(I Corinthians 15:20-23, 55-57; Hebrews 2:14-15).* As Christians, we can experience theft or the confiscation of our possessions and still hold on to joy. Our treasure is in heaven, and regardless of the evils of this earth, our true and abiding treasure remains untouched *(Matthew 6:20, Hebrews 10:34).*

Yes, we sorrow in death, but not without hope. Yes, we can lose our possessions, but not our joy. This is why we can be giving thanks while worshipping our Lord and our God at "all times..." – even on those difficult, hurting occasions.

A second key is to focus on God's sovereignty. God can turn man's evil plans into the working of good. Evil can hit us hard, opening the way through God's sovereignty unto blessings for ourselves and others. Joseph looking back at the evil done to him by his brothers says, *"And as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much alive" (Genesis 50:20).*

God's sovereignty was overshadowing the evil done to Joseph, including the hurt Joseph was feeling. God meant "it" includes Joseph feeling the rejection of his brothers, being sold into slavery, false imprisonment, and being forgotten by a freed fellow prisoner. God meant "it," with all of evil's consequential pains, for good – saving God's people from starvation.

In the end, all paths of men lead to confessing the authority of the Lord unto the Father's glory *(Philippians 2:11, Romans 14:11-12).* If working out God's glory means we experience evil along the way, so be it. Promoting God's glory is what the Christian's life is all about. In tune with God's sovereignty, we can honestly give thanks for "all things."

Give thanks always for all things. is this really possible? Yes, really! The transformed mind gives such thanks.