

## "In Every Thing Give Thanks...."

The Bible says, *"In every thing give thanks...."* (I Thessalonians 5:18). In this thanksgiving season, it is especially important to carry out this clear Bible command! I would like to make a simple list of four things in life I am thankful for and a brief statement as to why....

### 1. I am thankful for the loving gift of relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ!

*"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift"* (II Corinthians 9:15). Without Christ we all would be doomed and damned forever! Without Christ, sins would not be forgivable, that is a weight in itself that is unbearable. One of the main reasons people escape with substance abuse is to try to salve the torments of guilt that escalates miserably without the knowledge that one's sins are forgiven, which alone comes through relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Without personal relationship with our Lord, direction, guidance and His will for our lives would be null and void, actually non-existent. *"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD...."* (Hosea 6:3).

### 2. I am thankful for marriage to my wife.

Sometime ago a survey was taken with the following question. Could you have been happy with any number of chosen spouses or do you believe you were meant for a "one and only"? The summation was almost to say, is marriage the result of making the most out of the choice you made or was your marriage a rendezvous of destiny. For those of you that know me, you know what I believe. For those of you that do not know me, allow me to clarify. I am married to Barbara, my assignment from God to (joyfully) marry! It is amazing that life's greatest decisions must be made before we are old enough and wise enough to make them. When we leave this decision in His hands, He will providentially lead us in the right direction (Psalm 37:4,5). How very thankful to God that as my love has grown for Barbara, that it is not a mere "I've grown accustomed to your face, ways, and style" kind of thing. Over these almost thirty years I am more than ever aware that I am operating in predestinated purpose and my every day experience of loving her, caring for her, and her for me is obedience to Divine will. What a joy and blessing to know that being her husband can be so much fun and so in accordance with His will! *"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD"* (Proverbs 18:22).

### 3. I am thankful for our progeny!

*"As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate"* (Psalm 127:3-5). The definition of progeny is: *children, descendants, or offspring collectively*. I needed a word that encompasses descendents because we are now grandparents! I suppose I could have made that a point all by itself, but time would not permit, I'm not sure your patience would permit it as well. How lonely life would be without family! It has rightly been said, that every time a baby is born it is God's way of saying "I want life to go on"!

The benefit children bring is the promise of friendships that last beyond our lifetime. Another benefit is that it is God's ideal plan of discipleship! Each child brings the potential of not only seeing them believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but disciplined in the ways of God. We may not reach as many people as we would anticipate, but if we can bring our families along that chosen pathway, how great a thing we will have accomplished! *"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him"* (Genesis 18:19).

### 4. I am thankful for Christchurch Baptist Fellowship.

If you notice on our sign and stationary, the "Baptist Fellowship" part of our name is smaller than Christchurch. This was not done without premeditation. It is our goal to always announce first and

foremost that it is "Christ's Church". The "c" in church is in smaller case to emphasize our oneness and subservience to Christ. There is not a more appropriate name for His church! To borrow the comment of the old Zulu, South African Pastor who saw our name and with a tender smile reminded me, "It is His church, you know!"

How true, it is indeed Christ's church! The gates of Hell have stormed us, but we prevail by His grace. Storms have assailed, but we prevail by His grace. The future of this church is quite literally as bright as the promises of God.

It is a place where Christ is, in accordance with our mission statement known and loved. It is a place where marriages are reinforced and it is a place where families are taught to not only love our Lord, but to love one another. It is a place where everyone is able to feel at home. I am thankful for Christchurch! *"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"* (Ephesians 3:21).

- Pastor Pope -

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