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**BOX 9
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**THANKSGIVING: A
VIEW FROM THE TOP
NOVEMBER 17, 1974**

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Sun. Nov. 17, 1974

NEXT THURSDAY IS THANKSGIVING DAY. WE MIGHT ASK...WHY? WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT. A DAY AWAY FROM WORK?...A TIME TO GET TOGETHER WITH RELATIVES AND TO EXPERIENCE WHAT IRWIN S. COBB USED TO CALL, "THE ROYAL GORGE?"

IN THE PLAY "TWIGS" THE FEMALE LEAD IS PREPARING A THANKSGIVING DINNER FOR A LOAD OF VISITING RELATIVES. SHE SIGHS, "THIS HOLIDAY IS AN AWFUL LOT OF WORK...NO WONDER NO OTHER COUNTRY CELEBRATES IT!"

THE LINE GETS A HEARTY LAUGH, BECAUSE THE DAY IS A LOT OF WORK FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

ONE THING IS SURE: THURSDAY IS NOT GOING TO BRING ANYTHING DIFFERENT TO US. THERE IS NO SPECIAL LEGACY THAT ACCRUES TO US BY REASON OF OUR BEING ALIVE ON NOVEMBER 28TH. IT WILL BE A DAY LIKE ALL OTHER DAYS...AND LIKE ALL DAYS IT WILL BECOME WHAT WE MAKE IT.

CARLYLE: "EVERY DAY THAT IS BORN INTO THE WORLD COMES LIKE A BURST OF MUSIC AND RINGS ITSELF ALL THE DAY THROUGH; AND THOU SHALT MAKE OF IT A DANCE, A DIRGE, OR A LIFE-MARCH, AS THOU WILT."

THANKSGIVING IS SET ASIDE BY PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION AS A DAY TO REMEMBER IN DEEP GRATITUDE ALL THE RICH BLESSINGS THAT ARE OURS. BUT THERE IS NO LEGAL MACHINERY SET UP BY WHICH IT CAN BE ENFORCED..

SO...IT IS A LEGAL HOLIDAY....AND YOU WILL PROBABLY HAVE TIME OFF FROM WORK. BUT THE REST IS UP TO YOU...WHAT WILL YOU MAKE OF IT?

WHEN WE GET BEYOND THE HOLIDAY AND THINK OF THE HOLY DAY, THERE ARE THOSE WHO MIGHT CYNICALLY SAY: "WHAT IS THERE TO GIVE THANKS FOR - WITH ALL THE WORLD CONFLICTS, WITH INFLATION ERODING OUR WORTH, WITH A ~~CRISIS~~ OF LIVING GOING UP AND UP, ~~WITH~~ WITH ALL THE PERSONAL PROBLEMS."

WE ARE USUALLY REFERRED TO THAT FIRST THANKSGIVING OF 353 YEARS AGO, AND WE SEE THE PILGRIMS SEATED AROUND THE TABLE WITH THE INDIANS...THIS IS PROBABLY GLAMORIZED AND UNREAL. *EXAGGERATED*

ACTUALLY THEY HAD LITTLE ON THEIR TABLE, AND PRECIOUS LITTLE IN THEIR BARNS - WITH THE PROSPECTS OF A VERY DIFFICULT WINTER AHEAD... AND TRUE HARDSHIP AND SUFFERING BEHIND THEM AND EVEN WITH THEM.

WHEN WE ASK, "WHAT DO WE HAVE TO GIVE THANKS FOR?" WE CAN SEE THAT THE PILGRIMS HAD LITTLE TO GIVE THANKS FOR. THE QUESTION NEEDS TO BE TURNED AROUND: "WHAT DO WE HAVE TO GIVE THANKS FROM?" THE PILGRIMS WERE GIVING THANKS OUT OF A CONVICTION IN THE GOODNESS AND ALL SUFFICIENCY OF GOD. IT WAS THAT CONVICTION THAT BROUGHT THEM TO AMERICA...AND WHICH WOULD SUSTAIN THEM IN THE YEARS TO COME.

RESPONSE vs. CAUSE

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO GIVE THANKS FROM? IF YOU HAVE NO BASIC FAITH FROM WHICH TO GIVE THANKS, THEN YOUR LIFE IS EMPTIER THAN YOU KNOW...AND ALL THE AFFLUENCE OF HEAVEN AND EARTH COULD NOT GIVE YOU FULFILLMENT.

AND IF YOU HAVE A BASIC FAITH THEN THANKSGIVING COMES EASY...BUT IT IS NOT JUST A RESPONSE TO THE THINGS OF YOUR LIFE. IT IS A CELEBRATION OF THE TRUTH WHICH BECOMES A CAUSE OF GOOD.

PLATO: "HE ENJOYS MUCH WHO IS THANKFUL. A GRATEFUL MIND IS A GREAT MIND WHICH EVENTUALLY ATTRACTS TO ITSELF GREAT THINGS."

NOT JUST ON AND FOR THANKSGIVING DAY, BUT AS A WAY OF LIFE, WE NEED TO CULTIVATE AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE...FOR IT IS A LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND A PERSPECTIVE BY WHICH TO VIEW LIFE.

A GREAT LESSON IN LIVING IS THIS: IF YOU CAN GET A VIEW FROM HIGH ENOUGH UP, AND SEE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF WHOLENESS...YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DEAL EASILY AND EFFICIENTLY WITH LIFE.

WE HAD SOME GUESTS FROM ENGLAND A FEW WEEKS AGO. THEY WERE VISITING OUR CITY FOR THE FIRST TIME. THEY HAD BEEN PREPARED WITH ALL THE LURID TALES OF THIS TERRIBLE PLACE.

I TOOK THEM FIRST UP ON THE RMA BUILDING...IT WAS ONE OF THOSE BEAUTIFULLY CLEAR DAYS ~~WHICH ARE SO RARE~~. THE WOMAN REMARKED: "WELL IT CERTAINLY IS A BEAUTIFUL AND AW-INSPIRING SIGHT FROM UP HERE. WE TOURED AROUND A LITTLE, BUT THEY SAID, 'WE JUST CANT FORGET THAT SIGHT FROM ON HIGH - THAT VIEW FROM THE TOP OF THE BLDG.'" THEY WENT AWAY SINGING PRAISES OF NEW YORK.

THIS IS WHAT THANKSGIVING IS: A VIEW FROM THE TOP...CONTEMPLATION OF ALL THE CHANGING CHALLENGING THINGS, EXPERIENCES, AND PERSONS OF LIFE FROM THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE POINT OF VIEW.

WHENEVER THERE IS CONFLICT OR CHAOS, THE NEED IS TO GET THE VIEW FROM THE TOP...TO SEE THE INHERENT GOOD, TO SEE THE ACTIVITY OF GOD...TO GET OUR CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE FLOW.

THIS RECALLS THOSE LINES OF O'NEIL'S PLAY,
"LAZARUS LAUGHED" THAT HAVE SUCH MEANING TO ME.
STORY OF LAZARUS AFTER JESUS BROUGHT HIM
BACK FROM DEAD -- HE HAD SEEN THE OTHER SIDE
OF LIFE, NOTHING DISTURBED HIM, HE WAS ALWAYS
LAUGHING AND WAS CHEERFUL.

HE SAID: "WHY ARE YOUR EYES ALWAYS FIXED ON THE
GROUND IN WEARINESS OF THOUGHT, OR WATCHING ONE
ANOTHER WITH SUSPICION. THROW YOUR GAZE UPWARD.
TO ETERNAL LIFE....O BROTHERS IN GOD, WEAVING
DANCE RHYTHMS OF ETERNAL PEACE TO THE LONGLY DRUM
OF TIME, LAUGH THINE EVERLASTING LAUGHTER, LET
IT DESCEND ON MAN'S SEARED LIPS...O BROTHERS,
SONS OF ETERNAL LIFE, CELEBRANTS OF ITS FLAMING
REVEL ALONG THE MOUNTAIN RIDGES OF INFINITY, LET
MAN FEEL THY ECSTASY THAT HE MAY EVOKE HIS OWN
HIGH FREEDOM."

IN ALL THINGS...GET THE VIEW FROM THE TOP, LOOK
UP AND SEE THE WIDER SPHERE, SEE THE DIVINE
CREATIVE PROCESS AT WORK, SEE THE ACTIVITY OF
GOD IN PERSONS AND SITUATIONS. AND WHEN YOU
DO...YOU WILL EASILY AND SINCERELY GIVE THANKS.

WHEN JESUS WAS CALLED TO BETHANY TO MEET WITH
THE SORROWING FAMILY OF LAZARUS THE SISTERS
SAID, WITH A HINT OF REPROACH, "IF YOU HAD BEEN
HERE OUR BROTHER WOULD NOT HAVE DIED."

JESUS WENT TO THE TOMB WHERE LAZARUS HAD BEEN
INTERRED FOR FOUR DAYS. HE HAD THEM ROLL AWAY
THE STONE. THEN...HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES --
GOT THE VIEW FROM THE TOP -- AND SAID, "FATHER,
I THANK YOU THAT YOU HEAR ME."

CAN'T YOU IMAGINE PEOPLE THINKING, "THANKSGIVING! WHAT IS THERE TO BE THANKFUL FOR? LAZARUS IS ~~DEAD~~ DEAD! THE MAN HAD BETTER WAIT AND SEE IF HE CAN REALLY DO ANYTHING HERE BEFORE HE GIVES THANKS!"

BUT JESUS KNEW THAT THE KEY TO POWER WAS ACKNOWLEDGING THE AVAILABILITY OF THE POWER. HE WAS NOT GIVING THANKS FOR ANYTHING...BUT HE WAS GIVING THANKS FROM A HIGH PERSPECTIVE THAT SAW LIFE AS TRANSCENDENT TO DEATH.

IN THIS CONSCIOUSNESS HE AFFIRMED, "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE"...NOT TO MAKE IT TRUE BUT THAT WHICH WAS TRUE FROM HIS VIEW FROM THE TOP. THEN..."LAZARUS COME FORTH." AND THE MAN WALKED OUT FREE AND WHOLE.

WE MAY NOT UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS EVENT...THE ACTUAL RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD. BUT WE SHOULD NOT GET SO INVOLVED IN ANALYSIS THAT WE LOSE SIGHT OF A SIMPLE FUNDAMENTAL!

IF JESUS WOULD LIFT UP HIS EYES TO GET A VIEW FROM THE TOP IN THIS ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH THE FINAL ENEMY OF DEATH -- HOW MUCH MORE IMPORTANT IT IS THAT WE LOOK UP AND GIVE THANKS IN EVERY EXPERIENCE OF OUR LIVES. THANKSGIVING CAN BE A DYNAMIC GOLDEN KEY TO RESURRECT WANING POSSIBILITIES IN ANY EXPERIENCE.

THE BEAUTIFUL THING IS -- IF YOU ALWAYS SEEK FIRST TO GET A VIEW FROM THE TOP...AND GIVE THANKS IN ALL THINGS FOR THE ACTIVITY OF GOD THAT NEITHER SLUMBERS NOR SLEEPS...YOU ACTUALLY SET OFF A CHAIN REACTION OF POSITIVE POWER.

WE CAN SEE OR SENSE THE CHAIN REACTIONS OF LIFE WORKING IN A NEGATIVE SENSE IN SO MANY WAYS ~~1~~~~2~~ ALMOST TRAGIC WAYS.

JOHN JONES IS AWAKENED EARLY BY THE RINGING OF THE TELEPHONE. ONE OF THE FOREMEN TELLS HIM THAT A CERTAIN MACHINE IS OUT OF ORDER AT THE PLANT. JOHN SNARLS SOMETHING UNPLEASANT BACK OVER THE PHONE, SOMETHING CRITICAL OF THE FOREMAN'S CARE OF THE MACHINE. JOHN IS NOW IN A VILE HUMOR. SO IS THE FOREMAN.

AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE JOHN SNARLS AT HIS WIFE. AND AT THE PLANT THE FOREMAN SNARLS AT HIS MEN. MRS. JONES SNARLS AT HER SON BEFORE HE GOES TO SCHOOL. LITTLE JOHNNY SNARLS AT HIS TEACHER. THE TEACHER SNARLS AT THE WHOLE CLASS. THE WORKERS AT THE PLANT GO HOME AND SNARL AT THEIR FAMILIES, THE CHILDREN GO HOME AND SNARL AT THEIR PARENTS. IT IS A THOROUGHLY BAD DAY AT SCHOOL, AT THE SHOP, AND IN AN UNBELIEVABLY LARGE NUMBER OF HOMES. A BEAUTIFUL DAY HAS BECOME A DAY OF SNARLS.

WHY? WE COULD BLAME IT ON THE TELEPHONE - FOR IT WAS THE TELEPHONE THAT SET OFF THE IRRITATION CYCLE. BUT WHAT SHOULD WE DO...REMOVE ALL THE PHONES? OF COURSE NOT...THE PHONE IS HERE TO STAY.

FROM - CAUSAL

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF A NEGATIVE CHAIN REACTION. NOW NOTE WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF THE CALL WAS MET WITH A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO VIEW THE EXPERIENCE FROM THE HIGHEST POINT OF VIEW...WITH THE VIEW FROM THE TOP, THE BOSS WOULD ACTUALLY START AN INSPIRATION CYCLE INSTEAD OF AN IRRITATION CYCLE. NOTE THE DIFFERENCE IN SO MANY LIVES...AND IN THE WORLD AS A WHOLE.

IN ANY CHALLENGING SITUATION -- IT IS GOOD TO TAKE A MOMENT TO GET SOME ALTITUDE IN YOUR THINKING....TAKE A TIME OF QUIET MEDITATION TO SEE IT FROM THE HIGHEST POINT OF VIEW. EMERSON SAYS THIS IS WHAT PRAYER IS.

IF WE CAN LIFT UP OUR EYES HIGH ENOUGH, AND GIVE THANKS DEEPLY ENOUGH, AND OPEN THE GREATNESS OF OUR GODSELF COMPLETELY ENOUGH, WE CAN ALWAYS SET OFF A CHAIN REACTION FOR GOOD. THIS IS THE STUFF OF WHICH PEACE IS MADE.

AND...THIS ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE...THIS VIEW FROM THE TOP ENABLES US TO SEE THINGS AND PEOPLE AND EXPERIENCES IN A COMPLETELY NEW WAY. WE HAVE A NEW SENSE OF APPRECIATION. WE APPRECIATE PEOPLE MORE, FOR WE SEE BEYOND THE APPEARANCES...WE SEE THE DIVINITY IN THEM... WE SEE AND SENSE THE WHOLE PERSON...AND BY SEEING IT AND RESPONDING TO IT, WE TEND TO CALL IT FORTH.

WE DEAL WITH LIFE WITH A VIEW THAT IS OPTIMISTIC AND POSITIVE. ~~NS~~

THERE IS AN OLD SAYING THAT A DONKEY MAY CARRY A HEAVY LOAD OF PRECIOUS SANDALWOOD ON ITS BACK AND NEVER KNOW ITS PRECIOUSNESS...ONLY ITS WEIGHT

MANY OF US GO THROUGH LIFE FEELING ONLY THE WEIGHT OF CIRCUMSTANCES, NEVER ABLE TO KNOW THE PRECIOUS NATURE OF LIFE - BECAUSE OF A CHRONIC NEGATIVE ATTITUDE...A HEAD BOWED DOWN...EYES FIXED ON THE GROUND. WE NEED TO LOOK UP...TO GET THE VIEW FROM THE TOP...TO CULTIVATE THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE.

STORY OF WOMAN WHO WAS FACING A PHYSICAL CHALLENGE THAT THREATENED HER BUSINESS CAREER...AND AT THE SAME TIME WAS FACING SOME FINANCIAL OBSTACLES THAT SEEMED INSURMOUNTABLE...AND THUS SHE WAS TERRIBLY DEPRESSED. IT ALL SEEMED HOPELESS.

SHE WENT TO THE BEACH AND STRETCHED OUT ON THE SAND AND STARED UP INTO THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT SKY...REMAINING THERE ALL NIGHT LONG. BUT GRADUALLY SHE SEEMED TO GET AWAY FROM THE EARTH-BOUND THOUGHTS. SHE SEEMED TO GET A NEW UNIVERSAL PERSPECTIVE. FINALLY SHE DROPPED OFF TO SLEEP IN A PEACEFUL REALIZATION THAT SHE WAS ONE WITH LIMITLESSNESS.

SHE AWAKENED WITH NEW CONFIDENCE. THE PHYSICAL CHALLENGE DISAPPEARED. SHE WAS GUIDED TO MAKE CERTAIN CONTACTS. IN THE MATTER OF DAYS, THE WHOLE DIFFICULT EXPERIENCE WAS DISSOLVED. SHE HAD BEEN RESURRECTED FROM HER TOMB OF DESPAIR... BY GETTING A VIEW FROM THE TOP.

AND THE BEAUTIFUL PART OF THIS HIGH PERSPECTIVE IS THAT IT ENABLES YOU TO APPRECIATE YOUR ABILITY TO APPRECIATE SO MANY PERSONS...WHEN LOOKING FOR THINGS TO GIVE THANKS FOR...BECOME AWARE OF THEIR INADEQUACIES. THEY COUNT THEIR ENVIES ONE BY ONE.

"HE IS SO TALENTED"...SHE HAS SO MANY LOVELY THINGS?...I WISH I HAD A HAPPY HOME LIKE THEY DO"
"WOULDN'T IT BE WONDERFUL TO BE SO CREATIVE!"

DO YOU RECALL ROSTAND'S STORY, ^{ROOSTER} "THE CHANTICLEER". HE THOUGHT IT WAS BECAUSE OF HIS CROWING IN THE MORNING THAT THE SUN ROSE - FOR EVERY DAY HE WOULD AWAKEN IN THE DARK, AND THEN AFTER HIS CROWING,, THE SUN WOULD RISE.

ONE DAY HE OVERSLEPT...AND HE AROSE TO FIND THE SUN HAD ALREADY RISEN...HE HAD NOT CROWED. IT WAS A GREAT DISILLUSIONMENT...HOW INNEFFECTIVE HIS LIFE WAS!

THEN, IN A MOMENT OF INSPIRATION, HE THOUGHT, "IT MAY BE THAT IT IS NOT MY POOR VOICE THAT BRINGS ON THE DAY, BUT EVEN IF I MAY NOT CAUSE THE SUN TO RISE, I MAY LIFT UP MY VOICE AND CELEBRATE ITS RISING!"

THIS IS A MARVELOUS INSIGHT INTO THANKSGIVING AS A POSITIVE POWER. SOME PERSONS MAY DO GREAT THINGS, OTHERS MAY HAVE GOOD HEALTH OR RICH POSSESSIONS...THEY MAY SEEM TO HAVE GOOD REASON FOR THANKSGIVING.

BUT WHEN WE GET THE VIEW FROM THE TOP...WE REALIZE THAT WE CAN APPRECIATE GREAT THINGS, AND BE GRATEFUL THAT WE CAN. WE CAN CELEBRATE THE ABUNDANCE THAT IS EVERYWHERE, NO MATTER WHOSE LIFE IT MAY APPEAR IN.

WHAT WOULD ART MUSEUMS BE WITHOUT APPRECIATIVE ART ENTHUSIASTS...OR A SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA WITHOUT MUSIC LOVERS.

GREATFUL - GREAT - ATTRACT GREAT

WE CAN'T ALL PAINT OR SEW OR COMPOSE OR SING OR PLAY...AND PERHAPS WE MAY NOT ALL HAVE ~~THOUSANDS~~ MILLIONS OR EVEN THE KIND OF JOBS THAT SOME PERSONS HAVE. BUT WE CAN CELEBRATE THIS ORDER AND BEAUTY AND AFFLUENCE.. AND APPRECIATE AND BE GRATEFUL. MAYBE APPRECIATION IS THE GREATEST KIND OF CREATIVITY. AND MAYBE OUR VIEW FROM THE TOP, OUR ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE...IS THE KEY THAT WILL OPEN THE WAY TO THE FLOW OF OUR OWN AFFLUENCE.

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