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BOX 26

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THE PROSPERING

POWER OF

THANKSGIVING

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THE PROSPERING POWER OF THANKSGIVING

Psalm 100: Make a joyful noise unto the Lord; serve the Lord with gladness; come into His presence with singing. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the Lord is good, His steadfastness endureth forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."

Psalm 100 will be read and preached about and sung in churches across this great land all this week and on Thanksgiving Day. But I wonder how often the individual participating in the Thanksgiving service will reflect the attitude of gratitude, or if the congregant may be engaging in what Gilbert and Sullivan call..."Platitudes in stained-glass attitudes."

Many persons think of Thanksgiving as a season to count our many blessings, count them over and over." And there will sometimes be a time when things are at a low ebb, and you can't in all honesty find much to give thanks for. Thanksgiving is a matter of attitudes, not platitudes. And if we do not have an attitude of gratitude, you will be searching out there for blessings to give thanks for...but they may mistakenly start with the perspective of inadequacy and insufficiency...thus they simply become more conscious of limitations. The end effect is...instead of counting their blessings, they count their envy: "He is so talented" "She has so many lovely things" or, "I wish we had a nice home like they have." As a result of this process, they develop, paradoxically, "an ungrateful heart."

To pray for prosperity out of a sense of complaint or discouragement is to effectively compound the problem. You may be praying for improved financial conditions, but if you are feeling poor, your feeling is the consciousness you will be projecting. As Jesus once said to His disciples, "Ye pray but ye pray amiss."

We want to consider some thoughts this morning on the prospering power of Thanksgiving." You may have to unlearn some things (which I involved in all learning...) The preacher may roll out all the theological chestnuts, in preaching on Thanksgiving Day, and we turn to the computer of our subconscious mind, and roll out the memory of special prayers and liturgies.

I often recall the story of the little girl who was "staying over" at her Auntie's house. Her auntie listened while the little girl said her prayers. Quite impressed with the little one's maturity...and she commented on how nicely she prayed. The little girl said, "But Auntie, you should hear me gargle." Her prayer was merely an accomplishment of memory and imitation.

Thanksgiving is not a day on which you do certain things, like counting your blessings". It is a certain way you deal with all things every day. And as it is with everything we deal with in Truth, it boils down to attitudes.

But Thanksgiving is not playing games. It is much more than a day of piously singing our praise God, Oh how I love God! etc. God isn't one bit moved by your flattery. I say (to the shock of some persons) that it makes no difference to God whether you thank him or not. But it makes a lot of difference to you. Certainly we need to make a grateful heart a perpetual consciousness, but we need to get the vision of God as a ceaseless flow of substance and creativity, calling only for us to "give way", which is what Thanksgiving is about.

The despondent persons cry out, "But what do I have to give thanks for?" This is to miss the whole idea of Thanksgiving. You don't need to have something to give thanks for. Thanksgiving is not just a reactionary emotion. It simply flows forth from within and becomes a causative energy.

We tend to view thanksgiving in terms of obligation, and we are obligated to show some kind of appreciation. Traditional religionists tell us that we owe it to God to give him thanks for all our blessings. But how do you thank God? Often without thinking, we are subtly drawn into a dualism with Mighty God up there. Truly God is the Universal source that is present in every point in all its fullness. But God is too Almighty and too omnipresent to be upset if you do not express gratitude. We know how a person reacts if you are not grateful for what he may have done for you. He may say "Such an ingrate?" But will God call you an ingrate if you do not give thanks?

I like the wit and wisdom of Meister Eckhart who says, "I never give thanks to God for loving me...He can't help himself." You see gratitude is not for God. You are not obligated to thank God for your life, for your job, for your prosperity. But giving thanks is an important state of your awareness which tends to keep you centered in the divine flow within. So you thank God by thinking good, by "Letting God be God in you, by letting the divine idea which you are in God mind, "Be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

It may be an undeniable fact that you have employment and financial problems. And it may seem hard to whip up much enthusiasm for the holiday. Perhaps you cannot honestly give thanks for your experiences. But the metaphysical thought is to give thanks from the reality of your eternal relationship with the prodigal Universe.

It is a cosmic insight taught by the mystical teachers of all time. Plato (2500 years ago) taught: A grateful mind is a great mind which eventually attracts to itself great things."

You may enviously say of a more fortunate person, "She has good reason for gratitude for she has so much." But the grateful person is great because she has turned on all the lights within her. By Plato's law it might be that she has so much because she is so grateful. The grateful heart actually opens the way to the flow and becomes an attractive force to draw to itself great things.

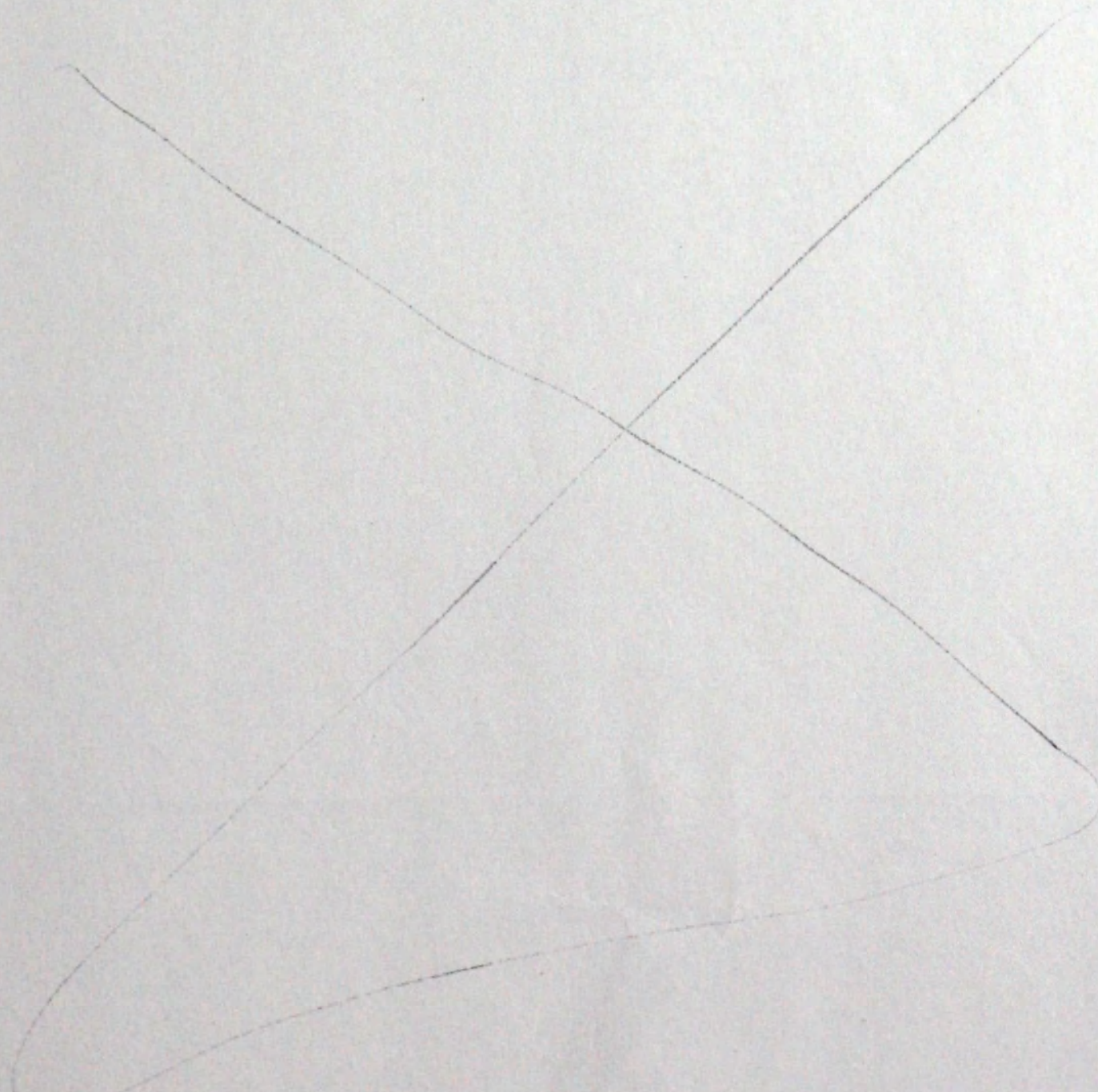
A missionary to Africa spent a life-time working with a particular tribe that was mysteriously poverty-stricken, even though other tribes in the region were relatively prosperous. He spent years researching this phenomenon. He studies all aspects of their culture. And he came up with one possible answer to the dilemma. In their tribal language, there was no word to express gratitude. By some quirk of evolution, they had forgotten how to say "thank you." Could it be that our own financial problems be the result of the loss, even temporarily, of a grateful heart. This missionary all but concludes that we grow rich by Thanksgiving, and we grow impoverished when we lose the spirit of gratitude.

George Bernard Shaw says, "God has given us a world that nothing but our own folly keeps from being a paradise." In other words we live in a world where there is always a potential for affluence. All the substance of the Universe, and all the wealth that has ever manifested itself or ever will manifest itself in this world, is present right now, and right where you are. Only our lack of perception, lack of a grateful heart, keeps us from experiencing it.

The old religion sang, "Count your many blessings..." But what if the "blessings are completely inadequate? If you have pants with patches on them, the old concept would be to thank God for the pants, patches and all. This was the teaching of the theology of the "grade of poverty." It was explained, "I am grateful for my little now, for I will have abundance by and by." But realistically this may well be centering the attention on limitation as being your lot in life.

When Jesus was faced with a throng of 5,000 hungry people, the disciples reported that they "only" had one boy's lunch of five loaves and two fish, which of course was inadequate. You may think that he thanked God for this meager supply. Actually the account says, "He lifted up his eyes and gave thanks..." In other words he looked away from the evidence of lack to the realization of the Allness of God. He gave thanks not for the boy's lunch, but from the realization of the limitless supply in God. He centered himself in the limitless creative flow.

You know the rest. The disciples were told to distribute the good, and there was plenty and to spare. It is not a matter of rejecting the present supply, but it is seeing the supply as a symbol of abundance rather than an evidence of lack. For instance, if you need money, perhaps you have a dollar bill - even if it is your last one - turn your thought away from the "only a dollar" consciousness, to the realization that the dollar is substance in currency. Center your thoughts in that currency. Give thanks for the flow.



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There is an important clue to prosperity through Thanksgiving found in the Gospels of Jesus, where on many instances it says, "He lifted up his eyes and gave thanks." It is recorded that he did this when faced with 5,000 hungry people in the wilderness. He looked beyond the appearances, and with Thanksgiving he centered himself in the limitless creative flow. And you know the rest. There was abundance and to spare.

A few years ago on a return flight from Europe about Thanksgiving time, I was looking out of the window of the modern jet plane, looking down on the Ocean some 30,000 feet beneath, And I imagine I saw the Pilgrim's little caravel plying its way in the New World. Propelled by wind and the set of the sails it took about 1580 hours for them to travel the same distance that was taking me about six hours, And I visualized the pilgrim down, being tossed about by the pitch of the ship, the dashed waves flooding over the deck, nights and days filled with anxiety. And I thought how incredible these folks would have been if they had been told that in 370 years so many people would cross the Atlantic in this way.

And I recalled the story of a caterpillar looking up and watching with awe a large butterfly flitting around, and saying, "They'll never get me up in one of those contraptions."

So the Pilgrims were looking up...and setting into operation a vital energy through Thanksgiving. It was a conscious choice to turn from darkness to light, to look beyond appearances. And it was this looking up that opened the way for the rich blessings of our modern world more than they knew or that we may acknowledge.

In Psalm 100 there is a phrase that is normally dismissed as theological gingerbread..... It is "Bless his name." Actually this is a vital link in the Psalm of Thanksgiving. "Give thanks to him, and bless his name." This means to "bless his nature." Focus your attention on the divinity in every person, and the divine energy flow manifesting in every object.

"Blessing" is the action part of Thanksgiving. You give thanks to God precisely by extending your hands in blessing. In Hebrew the word for Thanksgiving is "YAW-DAW" which literally means "extending the hands." The word "bless" means "to confer prosperity upon." (look it up) So the call is to confer prosperity on all the aspects of your life that are affected in any way by the economy. Extend your hands in blessing to all the many things, experiences, and persons whose performances have such a profound influence on your life. Bless the car you drive (or the subway, bus or train you ride) Bless the weather and the traffic, bless your place of business or employment, Bless your employer and your co-workers.

Remember the power of blessing is not reserved for holy places or for specially ordained persons. You are always projecting some kind of thought toward everything you have or hold. Sometimes it is restrictive, negative, limiting. But you can bless all things, confer prosperity upon them, thus confer a consciousness of abundance upon them. And the metaphysical law is - things become to you what you see them as being.