

Seventeenth Church of Christ, Scientist – Chicago

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

Subject: ***The Gift and the Commands of Gratitude***

We all receive many blessings in our lives. It's good to acknowledge the source of these blessings to be our Father-Mother God. But gratitude is more than a counting of blessings and a rejoicing over them. Gratitude is also a call to action. To pray and to love our fellow man. To heal! What could be more needed in the world today? The readings explore *The Gift and the Commands of Gratitude*.

Hymns: 3, 249, 146

HOLY BIBLE

Eph. 5:1, 2, 20

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Luke 17:11-19

And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

Ps. 66:1, 2, 8, 9

Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:

Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.

O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:

Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

I Chron. 16:8-12, 14, 15

Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.

Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.

Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.

Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually.

Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations;

John 14:15-21

If ye love me, keep my commandments.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

John 15:1, 2, 8-12

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Matt. 10:8

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, By Mary Baker Eddy

33:18-27

When the human element in him struggled with the divine, our great Teacher said: "Not my will, but Thine, be done!" — that is, Let not the flesh, but the Spirit, be represented in me. This is the new understanding of spiritual Love. It gives all for Christ, or Truth. It blesses its enemies, heals the sick, casts out error, raises the dead from trespasses and sins, and preaches the gospel to the poor, the meek in heart.

Christians, are you drinking his cup?

190:21-31

The Hebrew bard, swayed by mortal thoughts, thus swept his lyre with saddening strains on human existence: As for man, his days are as grass:

As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone;

And the place thereof shall know it no more. When hope rose higher in the human heart, he sang: As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness:

I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.

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For with Thee is the fountain of life;

In Thy light shall we see light.

2:23-3

God is Love. Can we ask Him to be more? God is intelligence. Can we inform the infinite Mind of anything He does not already comprehend? Do we expect to change perfection? Shall we plead for more at the open fount, which is pouring forth more than we accept? The unspoken desire does bring us nearer the source of all existence and blessedness.

Asking God to be God is a vain repetition. God is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever;" and He who is immutably right will do right without being reminded of His province. The wisdom of man is not sufficient to warrant him in advising God.

3:17-11

How empty are our conceptions of Deity! We admit theoretically that God is good, omnipotent, omnipresent, infinite, and then we try to give information to this infinite Mind. We plead for unmerited pardon and for a liberal outpouring of benefactions. Are we really grateful for the good already received? Then we shall avail ourselves of the blessings we have, and thus be fitted to receive more. Gratitude is much more than a verbal expression of thanks. Action expresses more gratitude than speech.

If we are ungrateful for Life, Truth, and Love, and yet return thanks to God for all blessings, we are insincere and incur the sharp censure our Master pronounces on hypocrites. In such a case, the only acceptable prayer is to put the finger on the lips and remember our blessings. While the heart is far from divine Truth and Love, we cannot conceal the ingratitude of barren lives.

What we most need is the prayer of fervent desire for growth in grace, expressed in patience, meekness, love, and good deeds. To keep the commandments of our Master and follow his example, is our proper debt to him and the only worthy evidence of our gratitude for all that he has done. Outward worship is not of itself sufficient to express loyal and heartfelt gratitude, since he has said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

26:1

While we adore Jesus, and the heart overflows with gratitude for what he did for mortals, — treading alone his loving pathway up to the throne of glory, in speechless agony exploring the way for us, — yet Jesus spares us not one individual experience, if we follow his commands faithfully; and all have the cup of sorrowful effort to drink in proportion to their demonstration of his love, till all are redeemed through divine Love.

8:10-30

If a man, though apparently fervent and prayerful, is impure and therefore insincere, what must be the comment upon him? If he reached the loftiness of his prayer, there would be no occasion for comment. If we feel the aspiration, humility, gratitude, and love which our words express, — this God accepts; and it is wise not to try to deceive ourselves or others, for "there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed." Professions and audible prayers are like charity in one respect, — they "cover the multitude of sins." Praying for humility with whatever fervency of expression does not always mean a desire for it. If we turn away from the poor, we are not ready to receive the reward of Him who blesses the poor. We confess to having a very wicked heart and ask that it may be laid bare before us, but do we not already know more of this heart than we are willing to have our neighbor see?

We should examine ourselves and learn what is the affection and purpose of the heart, for in this way only can we learn what we honestly are.

9:5-24

The test of all prayer lies in the answer to these questions: Do we love our neighbor better because of this asking? Do we pursue the old selfishness, satisfied with having prayed for something better, though we give no evidence of the sincerity of our requests by living consistently with our prayer? If selfishness has given place to kindness, we shall regard our neighbor unselfishly, and bless them that curse us; but we shall never meet this great duty simply by asking that it may be done. There is a cross to be taken up before we can enjoy the fruition of our hope and faith.

Dost thou “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind”? This command includes much, even the surrender of all merely material sensation, affection, and worship. This is the El Dorado of Christianity. It involves the Science of Life, and recognizes only the divine control of Spirit, in which Soul is our master, and material sense and human will have no place.

94:17

The progress of truth confirms its claims, and our Master confirmed his words by his works. His healing-power evoked denial, ingratitude, and betrayal, arising from sensuality. Of the ten lepers whom Jesus healed, but one returned to give God thanks, — that is, to acknowledge the divine Principle which had healed him.

5:29-32

An apostle says that the Son of God [Christ] came to “destroy the works of the devil.” We should follow our divine Exemplar, and seek the destruction of all evil works, error and disease included.

4:12-22

The habitual struggle to be always good is unceasing prayer. Its motives are made manifest in the blessings they bring, — blessings which, even if not acknowledged in audible words, attest our worthiness to be partakers of Love.

Simply asking that we may love God will never make us love Him; but the longing to be better and holier, expressed in daily watchfulness and in striving to assimilate more of the divine character, will mould and fashion us anew, until we awake in His likeness.

191:4

As mortals give up the delusion that there is more than one Mind, more than one God, man in God's likeness will appear, and this eternal man will include in that likeness no material element.

From Concord Express - A Christian Science Study Resource: The King James Version of the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's published writings