

11242024. **Thanksgiving is a matter of perspective** which enables us to count our blessings even when life gives us negatives. Giving thanks is an investment in one's attitude... To say we feel grateful is not to say that everything in our lives is necessarily great. giving thanks is an investment in moving forward in lifeHow? By thanking God in advance ...before we even experience any change ...Thanking God in advance of seeing any change in circumstance or situation is to acknowledge that God has a plan and it will bless you....

NIV Proverbs 21:30 ³⁰ There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord.

Therefore we can thank the Lord in advance for what he is going to do, no matter what we are going through right now, where we are at and what we are dealing with....we know there is a plan in action...and it will bring good...therefore we can thank God in advance

"Real life isn't always going to be perfect or go our way, but the attitude of gratefulness for what is working in our lives helps us not only to survive but overcome our difficulties."

Listen When Moses led the people out of slavery toward the promised land, he did not lead them the quickest way to the promised land...but took them through the Sinai desert...twenty miles south of where they thought they were going...he took them toward toward Elim...

NLT Exodus 13: 17 When Pharaoh finally let the people go, God did not lead them along the main road that runs through Philistine territory, even though that was the shortest route to the Promised Land. God said, "If the people are faced with a battle, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." ¹⁸ So God led them in a roundabout way through the wilderness toward the Red Sea.^[c] Thus the Israelites left Egypt like an army ready for battle.

- He did not lead them by the coast for the Phillistines lived their ...they were free but knew nothing of fighting for their freedom....they would have simply been conquered by the Philistines and made slaves to a new group of oppressors...
- How many of us are familiar with that scenario...’but God lead them twenty miles south into the wilderness...toward Elim
- On the way he parts the Red sea killing their Egyptian oppressors...he fought for them

NLT Ex 15:27 After leaving Marah, the Israelites traveled on to the oasis of Elim, where they found twelve springs and seventy palm trees. They camped there beside the water.

And that in a nutshell is the story of our journey... regularly finding our selves twenty miles south of where we thought we would be... often out of resources...except for God

- **Thanking God in advance of any advancement...is good Theology...**
- **When we are out of resources or plans, ideas, ...knowing we have God and thanking him for that in advance of any change...that is good Theology!**

You know ...I think I will start doing Marriage counseling for couples a year after their wedding ...after they thought they reached the promised land at their wedding...but find themselves now twenty south of where they thought they would be ...they might even begin to miss Egypt!

Because Now they begin to understand the true cost of having a marriage they truly want... the laying down of your life becomes a reality!

*****When you abandon how you think it ought to be and you embrace what actually is...and doing that you realize your resources are scant...But you have God!...That is something to be thankful for!!**

The central challenge for us followers of Jesus is giving up the expectation of Knowing what God is doing, but living confidently in that he knows what he is doing!!...

- And the only way trust is built is when you find yourself twenty miles south of where you thought you would be....
- They needed to learn to trust him...obey him and that usually takes place twenty miles south of where we think we should be, twenty miles south of how we think it should be, twenty miles south of how we want it to be...\
- that is where we learn to live on the manna the resources God provides.. one day at a time.... And learning to be grateful in it...not just when were out of it...

*****So God after 45 or so days at Elim has the Israelites on the move... as soon as they leave Elim...they find themselves hungry...and God provides manna...their first lesson 20 miles south ...**

- **They were Twenty miles off of what God was doing...**

NLT Ex 16:4 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Look, I’m going to rain down food from heaven for you. Each day the people can go out and pick up as much food as they need for that day. I will test them in this to see whether or not they will follow my instructions.

- The test I will give them their daily bread...the test is actually simple... trust me daily...and thank me daily...for the resources you need I provide daily

It’s the same test you and I have....

Jesus put it this way: *NIV Matt 6:9 “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven 11 Give us today our daily bread.*

- When you find yourself twenty miles south of wherever you think you should be....trust God and rely on the manna he provides while you are there!
- Thanking him for today and everyday in your future....As He keeps leading us toward a promise we cannot not yet see...or understand....

God keeps pushing us toward a promise we cannot not yet see...or understand

***NLT PHP 1: 6 *And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.*

- You know what this does... it doesn't let us stay feeling sorry for ourselves, because we will find ourselves twenty miles south of where we thought we were going....

Why does God allow trials That seem like deserts...?

Because to take us out of trials and sorrows...he would have had to take us out of this world a long time ago.....

NLT John 16:³³ I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

- And some day he will...but until then...have peace and take heart and keep on keeping on...
- But it takes heart...Heart ...means be strong in your mind and emotions...in other words expect this...so be emotionally prepared...
- You know what Psycholigists have called this? *Emotional regulation*"

- In fact...Studies have shown that people who can regulate their emotions ...are the most stable people and the most resilient people...
- “Emotional regulation refers to the process by which individuals influence which emotions they allow to control them, and how they experience and express their feelings.
- Emotional regulation or heart is the practiced ability to master our feelings thereby maintaining control of our selves...
- And you know what feeling overwhelms us when we find ourselves twenty miles south of where we thought we would be??? FEAR And FEAR cause us to lose HEART or EMOTIONSL REGULATION
- FEAR IS THE OPPOSITE OF PEACE YOU MASTER FEAR BY FAITH!
- When you exercise Faith you develop HEART and Heart brings Peace...
- And the key to peace is Thankfulness...it broadens our perspective...
- Faith is knowing Knowing Jesus has overcome the world... HE is greater than the world....
- He is more powerful, because he has infinite resources at his disposal..... trials and sorrow never have the last word! Jesus does !!
- Therefore I can Thank him in Advance of seeing any change in my circumstances...why? Because he loves me, I am his child!! A family member!! And an Heir!!

NLT Rom 8:15 So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father."¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. ¹⁷ And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. ¹⁸ Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.

- **Human spirit Receives God's Spirit...The seal of his adopting us as His children literally making us Children of God.. therefore heirs or those who will inherit His possessions...His Kingdom ...yet while here on the earthly realm we will have suffering like he did here...but later we enter the glory of His Kingdom...**
- **And when we do suffer in trials and sorrow here... He will make it work out for Good...because he is able too and cannot be overcome...**

**Esv Isaiah 46: ⁹ for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me,
¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
and I will accomplish all my purpose,'**

- **He does this because of the love relationship we have with our Father...we are his family.....**

NLT Rom 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. ³¹ What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?

38 *And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. ³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

• **And because of that...I can be thankful...in advance**

So with that knowledge we can do.. James says in our trials

James 1:2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. ⁵ If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. ⁶ But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

- ***They are loyal to God...but more loyal to their circumstances ...in other words their circumstances govern their lives..making them unstable in their faith...***

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11052023 Thankful in the Desert..... You know the problem with being in a desert environment? is you are hungry thirsty and tired...and the desert looks endless...and our eyes and mind plays tricks on us.... Now most of us have not been in that situation ...but we have all been in the desert of trials...trials that don't seem to have an end, or sometimes we see what appears to be an Oasis that turn out to be a mirage... sometimes our minds play trick with us ...and we cant believe were another trial, because we think we should only have them once in a great while....and when we do they should be over fairly quickly...That thinking is what creates much of our emotional problems in our trials....How? because we think we should be exempt somehow! As if We can determine how many trials we should have and not have...we fantasize that we have the ability somehow to control everything that comes into our lives...it is a losing mind game we play on our selves....

Here are two truths to digest: one I have quite a bit of control what trials I choose to bring into my life by my actions and choices... I have far less control of the trials that come into my life

through the actions of others, evil, nature, my genetics, circumstances, what God allows... the enemy attacks...

Bottom line...as long as I live their will be trouble!!

I have a saying...we are either in a trial, leaving a trial or getting ready to enter a trial....

Why does God allow trials That seem like deserts...?

Because to take us out of trials and sorrows...he would have to take us out of this world... One reason

*NLT John 16:³³ I have told you all this so that you may **have peace in me. Here on earth** you will have many trials and sorrows. But take **heart**, because I have overcome **the world.**"*

- *And some day he will...but until then...have peace and take heart*
- **Heart ...means be strong in your mind and emotions...in other words expect this...**
- **Studies have shown this to be true....a person who can regulate their emotions ...are the most stable people**
"Emotional regulation refers to the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express their feelings. Emotional regulation can be automatic or controlled, conscious or unconscious, and may have effects at one or more points in the emotion producing process."
- **You can know peace ...and the key to peace is Thankfulness...it broadens our perspective...not the spiritual realm....**
- **Knowing Jesus has overcome the world...the natural...he has a power greater than the world....in a realm we know little of**

- He is more powerful, because he has infinite resources at his disposal..... **trials and sorrow never have the last word! Jesus does !!**
- **The opposite of fear is peace...how? Fear is a flesh thing an emotion attached to this world... based on our circumstances...and expectations**
- **God's peace is based on truth...when I know God is in absolute control and has absolute power to achieve what he desires...I can have a peace that passes my understanding of the situation and circumstance...because it is based on his word!**

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- **Thankfulness is a faith issue...faith in Jesus and the word of God...though I see it not in the natural ...I am fully confident ...his plans will be achieved...**

- **And because of that...I can be thankful...in advance**

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perfect and complete, needing nothing. ⁵ If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. ⁶ But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

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