

A Blessed



# Thanksgiving

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***"Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus."  
( 1 Thessalonians 5:18)***

Beloved Partners, Friends, Family,

It is with joy and gratitude that I write to you in this season of Thanksgiving when we offer thanks to the Lord for all the good things in our lives; for friends, family, our homes, for the beauty of the earth and the wonder and miracles of nature we see around us each day. It is also a time when we should remember those who have needs and are bereaved, lonely or sick and need a loving hand and heart to reach out to them and show them kindness.

The scriptures say ***"I will Magnify God with Thanksgiving!"*** (Psalm 69:30-32)

It can be simple to thank God when we see miracles and answered prayer in our lives. It is also easy to thank Him when we can look around and see many blessings and good things however, when our situation seems bleak and difficult, when prayers are seemingly unanswered, we are struggling through tragedy or trials and our life seems out of control, we may find ourselves asking *"God, do you really care, are you really seeing what is happening to me?"* Thanking God in all circumstances does not come naturally to most of us. We should note that it does not say we should give thanks **for** the circumstances but **in** them.

Last month, I wrote about my missionary friend who spent a considerable time in a difficult Asian country with overwhelming poverty, conflict, suffering and huge needs all around her. She told me how she was frequently asked the same question by people, "How do you think that you can make a difference in that place? The problem is so vast, so big, so overwhelming...what's the point?" She often answered that question by telling the story of the **Starfish**.

Now I'd like to follow up with Corrie Ten Boom as I reflected on her life and my father's interview with her and her now **"Timeless Testimony"**. Corrie saw the Lord's goodness and love in the provision of a handkerchief she had prayed for. A minor miracle that taught her a most precious lesson of how God cares about the smallest details of our lives.

Many of you may have read or heard more of Corrie's incredible story, [The Hiding Place](#), in the concentration camp in Ravensbruck and how God sustained her throughout. I am reminded how she learned the precious lesson of "Giving thanks in all circumstances" and I feel led briefly to share more about this wonderful woman at Thanksgiving time.

Corrie and her sister Betsie were living in the most inhumane of conditions in the concentration camp. A space created for 400 people held 1400 women. They endured lack of food and sanitary conditions and the basic necessities to maintain life were absent. The place was infested with fleas and lice and made life even more unbearable. The most precious thing to Corrie and Betsie was their little Bible that they had smuggled in with them. If they were found with it this "crime" would be punishable by death. Despite this Corrie writes that they all gathered around the Bible "like waifs clustered around a blazing fire..." to hear words of life, light and hope in the darkest times.

Betsie read the scriptures "Rejoice always, pray constantly, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus."

Excitedly she exclaimed "Give thanks in all circumstances!" *That's what we can do. We can start right now to thank God for every single thing about this new barracks!*

They thanked God for the fact they were together. They thanked God they had a Bible. They even thanked God for the brutal guards and then, Betsie thanked God for the fleas.

"The fleas!" This was too much. "Betsie, there's no way even God can make me grateful for a flea."

"Give thanks in all circumstances," she quoted. "It doesn't say, in pleasant circumstances."

" Fleas are part of this place where God has put us."

Corrie was convinced her sister was wrong but she obediently gave thanks for the fleas and lice.

It turned out that Betsie was not wrong; the fleas **were** a nuisance, but they later discovered it was the very reason that the guards rarely came into the barracks. The fleas turned out to be a disguised blessing and many were able to hear the gospel because of them!

Beloved friends do you have a "**flea story**" in your life? Is there a situation that you felt was so impossible but now as you reflect back you can see how God turned it around for good?

Let each of us seek to give thanks in **all** circumstances that our thanks and praise will be the enemy of discontent and dissatisfaction that can so easily creep upon us.

May our hearts abound with inner joy as we express hearts of gratitude by thanks and sacrificial giving. THANK YOU for helping us to reach multitudes with God's love over these 65 years of service.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving!

Together in the Master's Harvest,



Rev. Dr. Gordon S. Anderson, Jr.

GSA/cma

