

WHAT TO REMEMBER IN THANKLESS TIMES

Job 1:1-22

There are countless times all through life, when things appear less than “thankful”. You are doing the best you can in life, and all of a sudden something happens...sickness, loss of job, finances crumble, friends turn against you for one reason or the other.

There are a thousand things that happen through the course of our lives, for which we struggle giving thanks. No one knew that any better than two people in Scripture, Job and Paul. Job faced the loss of family, possessions, and faced a wife that turned against him along with three friends that were “sorry comforters” and Paul faced the reality of opposition throughout his life, he faced the loss of friends, when he became a Christian.

1. IN THANKLESS TIMES REMEMBER...GOD REMAINS LOVING.

1 John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. It is the very nature and being of the God that created us to love, meaning that all that God does in and to our lives, and all that He permits in our lives is out of an overflow of “pure, complete, absolute, unwavering, eternal and perfect love”. For God to allow one single thing into our lives that is outside of His love violates His holy nature and His way. Job learned a lesson from God’s divine nature of love...and it was this...nothing was happening to him or with him apart from the “loving throttle” of a completely loving God.

If you are walking through a thankless situation and have not settled the fact that God always responds to us “in love”, it will be totally possible to completely misunderstand what you are walking through! Yet, Job realized and knew that God loved him, and Job through the process of time realized what God was up to. Job learned that God’s hand was on the throttle of all that was happening to his life. The Father knows what we can weather and what we cannot.

The truth is, Satan could not do to Job anything that he wanted. Everything was carefully monitored and carefully gauged, and the same holds true in our lives as well. Job realized that God was overshadowing his life when he was least conscious of it. While Job couldn’t understand all that was happening, he knew that there was a Loving God that had blessed him, and been faithful to him, and that He was not going to leave Job in the middle of his crisis. And the same God that created Job, also created us.

Often times we talk of Job’s affliction, but before the affliction, God revealed to Job that He was a God of abundance and blessing.

It was God that loved Job, and blessed Job. God was the one that allowed the blessings into his life, and showered his life with blessings. Job knew God to be a God of love, because he would not turn away from him in the “heat” of his circumstances. Job made the connection between reverencing God, worshipping God, obeying God and receiving the wonderful blessings from God.

Job’s abundance is found in 1:3. He had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys. Job was the greatest man in all the east. But greater than all of Job’s blessings was the love of God that he realized for the Lord God that created him. Job didn’t love God because he had possessions. Job loved God and the Lord God added to his life possessions.

When you understand that the God of Scripture can never relate to you in any other way other than perfect love, it will cause you to think differently in the “thankless times”. You may be going through a thankless time, but keep in mind, you are not being picked on by God. God can never express or do anything to you’re your life but what it is out of His overflowing pure love. If you have lost a job...could it be God in love knew that it was leading you away from Him, and He has something better in store and is calling you to a “waiting time”. If you are struggling in your finances, could it be that the Father in heaven is aware that your focus on money is completely unhealthy from an eternal perspective. If you are struggling with your health, could it be that you have disregarded what God says about our bodies being the “temple of the Holy Spirit”? Could it also be that God is reminding you that your life is short no matter how long you live...and to invest in eternal treasures rather than this one earthly life.

If you are experiencing God’s discipline...God is reorienting your life to what matters for all eternity, namely a life of obedience and surrender to Him and His will.

2. IN THANKLESS TIMES REMEMBER...GOD HAS THE COMPLETE PICTURE OF YOUR SITUATION.

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. "Why doesn't God get me out of this situation?" What is God up to?" "Doesn't God care what is happening to me and my life?" These questions and millions more like them are questions that people throughout time have raised when in thankless situations. One of the struggles that we face as human beings is the fact that at best we have "fragmented vision". Paul made it clear about life this sobering reality, *1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

It is an eternal fact that our vision and understanding of our situations are completely different from that of the Fathers. That was the way in the life of Job. Though Job was a man of maturity, nonetheless he remained human. He couldn't see the big picture of His situation. Job's humanity kept him from understanding all that was going on.

Here is one man that lost everything. He lost possessions, family, but in all he lost, he didn't lose his integrity. He worshipped God irregardless of his possessions. In the life of Job, God allowed Job to lose everything that he had, but that was not the "complete story".

Sadly, when we are in the middle of a "thankless situation" we desire to draw conclusions about God, about our lives, and much more.

Never allow yourself to draw conclusions from the "middle of your circumstances". If you choose to draw conclusions in the middle of a crisis or a thankless situation, we will: 1) Wrongly evaluate our situation, 2) Completely misunderstand God's plan, 3) Misinterpret the events of our lives, 4) Draw completely inconsistent conclusions of God.

God was not allowing Job to go through what he was going through by accident, and God is not allowing you to go through what you are going through by accident. The truth is, you are as significant to God as Job is. You are a vital to the work of God and this one precious life that God has given you is designed with eternity in mind. Job lost possessions...but not without God's knowledge. Job faced temptations from friends...but not without God's knowledge. Job lost seemingly his health...but not without the God who created the human body being completely aware.

If you are in the middle of a "thankless situation" remember that God has not put you there by accident or by chance. But the wisest thing to do in your situation is ask, "Father, what are you teaching me and what do you desire me to learn right now while I am here?" God may desire you...to watch and see how you are affecting others in a most difficult situation. God may desire you...to pray and watch Him come to your rescue in your personal situation. God may desire you...to learn patience, allowing Him to grow your integrity. God may desire you...to see how "self focused" your life is. God may desire you...to learn the wonderful truth of "Christ's sufficiency".

3. IN THANKLESS TIMES REMEMBER...GOD IS REFINING OUR LIVES.

Malachi 3:2, "But who can endure the day of his coming? And who will stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like a launderer's soap."

God yearns to make all who are saved by His grace into individuals that reveal His grace, mercy, kindness, peace. It is the will of the Father in heaven, that people see our lives, and glorify the Father in heaven. When God allows us to go through thankless times, and we allow Him to make us into what He purposes and desires, then and then alone is there a "true miniature replica of Christ". God didn't put Job through the trials by accident, neither did he put Paul through the "seemingly thankless times" by accident. God does all that He does preparing our lives for eternity. The truth is, the thankless times are purposed by God to reveal: 1) our self, 2) our character, 3) our treasure and its location, 4) a reminder that the judgment of God will evaluate our total lives. What does it really matter how much a person has had on this side of eternity, if they are not rich toward God.

Sadly however, so many lives live oriented toward this one life to forget the reality that there is an eternity to come. Had Job been oriented toward things, his life would have made no lasting eternal impact. If your life is oriented toward things, you will find it to be a saddening day when you stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, and see Him evaluate your "one" earthly life with His holy and pure judgment. If God is allowing you a "time of loss" it is a wise person that asks this question, "How would I enjoy losing for all eternity?" "How would I enjoy the thought of losing eternal treasures by living a life of disobedience to the Father?"

Scripture makes it clear that is totally possible to be saved and "suffer loss" and that loss be eternal. *1 Corinthians 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

There is one reality that God yearns every believer to be oriented to, and that is eternity. Someday you will lay aside all possessions, and things and walk into eternity. At that point, the only thing that will matter is what had been done for the glory of God. All that is done for self will evaporate before the presence of Christ.

4. IN THANKLESS TIMES REMEMBER...GOD'S BEST IS JUST BEYOND THE THANKLESS TIMES.

Job learned a sobering lesson in the midst of his “thankless situation” and that lesson was this...God had a “best” for Job and that best was just beyond “the thankless situation”. Scripture reveals that “the best from God” for Job on earth was just beyond the difficulties he was facing. That is not by chance. That is an eternal law of God. Scripture reveals in Job 42:12 *So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand female donkeys.*

Though there were thousands of circumstances for which Job could not understand the mind of God...God revealed to Job: 1) He is always up to something beyond our human reasoning in the thankless times. 2) Thankless times will come to pass for the obedient child of God. 3) God uses the thankless times for maturity and development of spiritual character. 4) God will make it His business to come to the rescue of all who chose to retain their focus, integrity before holy God and He will bring about His abundant blessings. For the Lord God never changes.