Being Thankful for Providence

Dear friends, consider in the goodness of God to us, how we ought to be thankful! God has promised that every single thing in our lives will ultimately work for our good. Consider that if God would not spare His own Son, but gave Him for us, won’t He then also give us everything we need?

Romans 8:31-32 - 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? NASB

If God will give His people a Kingdom when they die, will He not also give them daily bread while they live? If Jesus would suffer and die to bring me to Himself, will He not also hear my prayer when I cry to Him for help? Indeed He will, more than that, he will crown me with eternal life and grant me to see His glory forever more in His glorious Heaven, what more could I have from the good hand of Providence! Learn then, that it is fitting for the upright to praise God! Thanksgiving to God is pure praise! It is direct honor to God who gives us life and breathe!

Psalm 50:23 - He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God." NASB

For those who know the goodness of God, we have no other response but the high praises of our King! Thanksgiving is the blood that runs through the veins of a saint! Praise is the garment that fits handsomely on our backs!

Psalm 145:9-10 - 9 The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works. 10 All Thy works shall give thanks to Thee, O LORD, And Thy godly ones shall bless Thee. NASB

Consider that the mouth of the wicked is filled with grumblings and murmuring and complaining! But this is not fitting for a saint! The wicked cannot praise God, neither are they thankful. The poison of asps is on their lips, and with the tongue they profane the name of God!

Psalm 33:1-5 - Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; Praise is becoming to the upright. 2 Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings. 3 Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy. 4 For the word of the LORD is upright; And all His work is done in faithfulness. 5 He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD.

Let us therefore give God the thanksgiving and praise which is due to Him! That no matter what cup He gives us to drink, no matter what bitterness of soul should afflict us, no matter what great trial may befall us or try us, that we shall stand in the company of the saints, with the glorious praise of God in our mouth, knowing that He shall give us nothing but that which works for our good as a wise and loving Father! It is God’s will that we should give Him thanks in every circumstance!

1 Thessalonians 5:18 - 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. NASB

Ephesians 5:20 - 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; NASB

4. Exhort us to contentment through Philippians 4:11-13

In the book of Philippians the Apostle Paul is writing to thank them for their support and exhort and encourage the believers to remain steadfast in the faith. Paul is writing from jail, and even though in a bitter circumstance, he writes with much joy and thanksgiving exhorting them to live in this way also. That no matter what they face, whether difficulty, trial (2:17-18) or severe lack, or even persecution (1:27-30), they can rejoice in the goodness of God and learn to be content by faith and trust in Him. Chapter 4 culminates with several such exhortations to contentment and thanksgiving from the Apostle who is himself in midst of a bitter trial.
Philippians 4:5-7 - 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. NASB

Philippians 4:11 - 11 Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. NASB
A. 11 Not that I speak from want – Here Paul is simply commenting on verse 10 where he is commending the Philippians for providing for his welfare. Here he is saying that he is currently in a situation where he has no unmet needs, but rather that he is amply supplied.
B. for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am – Contentment is a lesson that we must learn. “I have learned to be content.” It does not come naturally or by easy means. It only comes after we have found ourselves in plenty and in need, in happiness and in sorrow, on the mountaintop and in the valley, and in all of these places have learned that God is our source, He is our shield, He is our comfort and our hope. Through these ups and downs we learn to be content that God is on the throne and in control, and ordering the events of our lives according to His wise Providence and for our highest good and His greatest glory!

Psalm 37:23-24 - 23 The steps of a man are established by the Lord; And He delights in his way. 24 When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong; Because the Lord is the One who holds his hand. NASB
Psalm 121:1-5 - 1 I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From whence shall my help come? 2 My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. 3 He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber. 4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade on your right hand. NASB

Philippians 4:12 - 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. NASB
A. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity: - Here Paul explains he knows how no to be distressed or anxious when he is in need, nor to complain against God when resources are meager but rather be content. Moreover, he knows how to “live in prosperity,” that is, to be content with what he has and not driven by a continual lust for more, but rather humble and thankful to God for the many blessings. Notice that there is temptation in either circumstance, whether having barely enough or plenty, we are tempted to either complain against Providence or take it for granted and be greedy for more.
B. in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need – Here see that his knowing how to get along deals with “any and every circumstance,” which means beyond just having food and shelter. See here that contentment is necessary in all the situations of life we find ourselves in. This means being content with our spouses, our careers, our children’s temperaments, our health or sickness, our homes, our in-laws, our neighbors and any other things in our lives. Learn here that Paul calls it “the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.” Consider, could one actually be content in “going hungry” or “suffering need”? Or what about “being filled” and “having abundance,” can we be content in that and not lusting for more, grateful for what we have? Surely we can, and Paul tells us “the secret” in the next verse.

Philippians 4:13 - 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. NASB
A. 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me – Now this grand statement of the apostle begs the question, “How many things is all things?” And, in this context of being