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“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

I get a video of some kind in my inbox each day from Mel’s Video of the Day. One day recently there was entitled “Best New Puppy Surprise for Kids Compilation Video” which lasted 12 minutes and 44 seconds. Actually, I only watched almost eight minutes as I can only spend so much time relaxing with this much excitement. What I did notice though was that at least half and probably more than half of the recipients were so very excited and they started to cry. Why tears? Aren’t tears usually a sign of hurt or sorrow or anger? Or maybe frustration, or even or a tender heart when we watch those mushy commercials on TV? (I had someone tell me that it was my tender heart showing when I became emotional and teared up—and the older I get, the more tender my heart is becoming.) But these children were crying for joy. It was like they just couldn’t believe that this gift was real and then when they realized it was, the emotion just broke out of them. Most ran to a parent or other adult to offer thanksgiving.

I began to wonder if there has been a time recently that I have been so thankful for something that it brought me to tears, and the only thing I could think of was not even that recent. I cried as I watched my daughter give birth to both of her children, and that was 7 years and 12 years ago.

November is the month we traditionally focus on giving thanks. We even have a special holiday to celebrate not just the first thanksgiving the pilgrims recorded, but for all the blessings that we have—our physical blessings and for Christians, our Spiritual blessings as well. But I can’t remember a time when I was so full of thanks for these Spiritual blessings that I burst into tears of joy. So maybe I am taking these blessings for granted.

The fact that God sent His only Son to pay the penalty for our sin and to be our Redeemer and our Savior is truly worth being so thankful for that we can hardly keep the good news to ourselves. We should be walking around with a smile on our face and with a spring in our step and make people wonder what it is we have to be so happy about.

You may be asking how this can happen while we are dealing with a mask-wearing, social distancing, fear-inducing pandemic going on.

A challenge came to me the other day to consider the things I have to be thankful for even in the midst of the Covid-19 restrictions. Not only to list the things but to think of how something good had come out of the circumstances even though we had to go through something very hard to get there.

When we spend time thinking of and thanking God for how He holds us in the palm of His hand, we are refreshed, hopeful, and able to find the joy that can only come through our trust that God is in control of all of our circumstances. He is never surprised at what is going on with us, or with our church, our community, our nation or our world. For this we do give thanks.

The above passage from 1st Thessalonians continues in verses 23-24 with these comforting words:

“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you in faithful; he will surely do it.”

These words surely give us reason to offer thanksgiving for all that God allows into our lives, and as we reflect on the many things for which we can be thankful, perhaps we will burst into tears of joy.



The Christian Life Committee