

Isaiah 12 & Colossians 1:1-14

A CHRISTIAN CLIPPINGS BOOKLET CONTAINED AN ARTICLE ON THE ORIGINS OF SOME OF OUR EXPRESSIONS, SAYING:

IN THE LATE 1700'S MANY HOUSES HAD ONE LARGE ROOM WITH A LONG BOARD TABLE AND BENCHES, THAT WAS SET UP FOR MEALS, AND USUALLY HAD ONLY ONE CHAIR.

NATURALLY THE OLDEST MAN OF THE HOUSE USUALLY SAT IN THE CHAIR, AND THIS CAME TO MEAN THE ONE WHO WAS IN CHARGE-HENCE THE WORD CHAIRMAN.

ALSO PERSONAL HYGIENE AND MEDICAL CARE BACK THEN FELL FAR SHORT OF WHAT IT IS TODAY, CONSEQUENTLY IT WAS COMMON FOR PEOPLE TO HAVE SCARS ON THEIR FACES.

THIS CAUSED WOMEN WHO HAD THE MEANS TO DO SO TO COVER THEIR FACES WITH BEESWAX, WHICH MELTED IN HOT WEATHER. THIS LED TO THE EXPRESSION "LOOSING FACE."

WOMEN ALSO WORE LACED-UP CORSETS FOR POSTURE, WHICH GAVE US THE DESCRIPTION OF A PROPER AND DIGNIFIED LADY AS BEING- "STRAIGHT-LACED."

CARD PLAYING WAS A POPULAR FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT, SO MUCH SO-- ENGLAND PLACED TAX ON THE "ACE OF SPADES."

HOWEVER, PEOPLE COULD AVOID THE TAX BY PURCHASING DECKS WITHOUT THAT CARD- HENCE THE SAYING- "NOT PLAYING WITH A FULL DECK."

THE WORD GOSSIP FOUND ITS ORIGINS IN THE PRACTICE OF POLITICIANS TRYING TO ASSESS PUBLIC OPINION BY GOING, OR SENDING OTHERS, TO VISIT TAVERNS TO LISTEN TO CONVERSATIONS.

THESE MEN WOULD GO AND SIP IN ONE PLACE AND THEN ANOTHER. EVENTUALLY THE WORDS GO AND SIP WERE MERGED TO FORM "GOSSIP"

AND THE WORD THANKSGIVING- IS OF COURSE A MERGER OF THE ENGLISH WORDS THANKS WITH GIVING.

THE HOLIDAY WITH THAT NAME IS INTENDED TO BE A DAY TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR HIS PROVISION TO OUR COUNTRY. OF COURSE THE CALL FOR PEOPLE TO GATHER TOGETHER TO OFFICIALLY AND COMMUNALLY GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD THEIR GOD- IS NOTHING NEW.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS CONTAIN EXPRESSIONS OF THANKSGIVING TO GOD.

GIVING THANKS TO THE LORD IS IMPORTANT FOR US BECAUSE IT NOT ONLY EXPRESSES GRATITUDE BUT HELPS US TO GROW IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

AND THANKSGIVING FOR WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR OTHERS MOVES US OUTSIDE OF OURSELVES INTO COMMUNITY WITH OTHERS.

WHAT WE HEARD TODAY FROM ISAIAH IS A HYMN OF PRAISE AND THANKS TO GOD FOR A SALVATION WHICH WAS YET TO BE EXPERIENCED.

HERE, THE PROPHET FOLLOWS TEN CHAPTERS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON HIS SINFUL PEOPLE WITH A WORD OF HOPE.

ISAIAH 11 SPEAKS OF THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM TO COME AND THE FUTURE RETURN OF EXILES.

TODAY'S READING IS A SONG OF THANKS TO GOD FOR THE DELIVERANCE HE WILL SOMEDAY PROVIDE.

AND, THE HEBREW WORD FOR "THANKS" IS AN EXPRESSION OF MORE THAN SIMPLE GRATITUDE.

IT ALSO IMPLIES CONFESSION OF FAITH, REVERENCE, AND WORSHIP.

HERE IS AN EXPLANATION OF THANKS, I CAME ACROSS, WHICH DRAWS ITS DIRECTION FROM THIS HEBREW WORD:

"TO OFFER THANKS IS TO CONFESS DEPENDENCE, TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT OTHERS HAVE THE POWER TO BENEFIT YOU, TO ADMIT YOUR LIFE IS BETTER BECAUSE OF THEIR EFFORTS."

ISAIAH, IT COULD BE SAID- IS CALLING ON THOSE WHO KNOW AND LOVE THE LORD TO CONFESS THEIR DEPENDENCE UPON HIM BY CASTING THEIR THANKS IN GOD'S DIRECTION.

AND DIRECTING OUR THANKS TOWARDS GOD ALSO IMPLIES MAKING THE LORD OF OBJECT OF OUR GRATITUDE.

TRULY, CHRISTIANS NEED TO BE MORE DELIBERATE IN REVERENTLY DIRECTING OUR GRATITUDE TOWARDS GOD.

THE REASON WE MAY NEED TO BE REMINDED ABOUT THIS IN OUR NATION TODAY IS ILLUSTRATED IN A STORY TOLD BY A MAN NAMED JOEL GREGORY, WHICH SAYS:

ONE THANKSGIVING A FAMILY WAS SEATED AROUND THE TABLE BEFORE THE MEAL, AND PAUSED FOR THE BLESSING.

THEIR FAMILY TRADITION ASKED EACH ONE PRESENT, WHO WAS ABLE, FROM OLDEST TO THE YOUNGEST, TO OFFER THANKS.

WHEN THE FIVE YEAR OLD BOY HAD HIS TURN, HE BEGAN BY OFFERING THANKS FOR THE TURKEY, WHICH HE SAID HE KNEW WOULD BE GOOD.

HE THANKED HIS MOTHER FOR COOKING IT AND HIS FATHER FOR BUYING IT, THE PERSON IN THE STORE WHO CHECKED IT OUT, AND THOSE WHO PLACED IT ON THE STORE SHELF.

THE BOY THANKED THE TRUCKER WHO DELIVERED THE TURKEY AND THE FARMER WHO RAISED IT. FINALLY THE BOY PAUSED AND ASKED IF HE HAD FORGOTTEN ANYONE.

HIS YOUNGER BROTHER CALLED OUT-"GOD", AND THE FIVE YEAR OLD RESPONDED- "I WAS GOING TO GET TO HIM."

THIS IS OFTEN THE CASE, EVEN AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE TODAY, IS IT NOT?

SOMETIMES RATHER THAN THANKING GOD DIRECTLY WE GET SIDE TRACKED.

INDEED, IT SEEMS FAR TOO OFTEN WE MAY PLACE GOD AT THE END OF OUR LIST OF THOSE TO THANK, RATHER THAN AT THE BEGINNING.

BUT, THE APOSTLE PAUL, AS WE HEARD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT READING, WAS VERY GOOD AT PLACING GOD FIRST.

THEREFORE, HIS CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO EXPRESS THANKS TO GOD IS YET ANOTHER WAY PAUL MODELS FOR US HOW TO LIVE OUT OUR FAITH IN, AND LOVE FOR, THE LORD.

IN FACT, FOLLOWING THE GREETINGS, THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN COLOSSAE OPENS WITH A PRAYER OF THANKS DIRECTED TOWARDS GOD.

THE PRAYER CELEBRATES AND GIVES THANKS FOR THE FAITH IN CHRIST, EXHIBITED IN THE LIVES OF THE CHRISTIANS THERE.

FURTHERMORE THE APOSTLE WRITES THAT HE AND HIS FELLOW SERVANTS IN CHRIST, ALSO THANK GOD FOR THE LOVE THEY ARE SHOWING, AND THE HOPE THAT THEIR FAITH AND LOVE IS GROUNDED IN.

THE APOSTLE ALSO REJOICES BECAUSE GOD'S SPIRIT IS FOUND TO BE PRESENT WITHIN THAT CHURCH.

PAUL WRITES-THE SPIRIT IS REVEALED IN THE FRUIT THE COLOSSIAN BELIEVERS ARE BEARING.

HE DOES SO EVEN THOUGH HE KNOWS THERE ARE MANY AREAS OF GROWTH SPIRITUALLY, AND OTHERWISE NEEDED WITHIN THESE BELIEVERS.

THEREFORE, THEY ARE ASSURED THAT HE AND OTHERS ARE PRAYING FOR THIS CHURCH TO CONTINUE TO GROW IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, SO THE LIVES OF COLOSSIAN BELIEVERS MAY BE PLEASING TO GOD.

AND NOTICE- WHILE PAUL REJOICES IN THESE GOOD THINGS HE HAS HEARD ABOUT THE COLOSSIAN CHURCH, HIS JOY AND THANKSGIVING ARE DIRECTED TOWARDS GOD.

THUS, WE OBSERVE, THE LETTER IS NOT SO MUCH PRAISING THESE BELIEVERS, AS IT IS PRAISING GOD FOR HIS WORK AMONG AND WITHIN THEM.

WE TOO SHOULD THANKS AND PRAISE GOD FOR HIS WORK AMONG THE COLOSSIANS AND THE OTHER CHURCHES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

WE SHOULD ALSO GIVE THANKS FOR ALL THE COUNTLESS INDIVIDUALS AND CONGREGATIONS FOUND THROUGHOUT THE AGES ALL OVER THE WORLD--INCLUDING THOSE WHOSE EXISTENCE IS KNOWN OR REMEMBERED ONLY BY GOD.

AND-WE WOULD ALSO DO WELL TO BE MORE CONSCIOUS ABOUT THANKING GOD FOR OUR OWN EXISTENCE AND FRUIT AS BELIEVERS AND A COMMUNITY OF FAITH.

THIS DELIBERATE GRATITUDE CAN BE EXPRESSED IN VARIOUS WAYS, INCLUDING COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS, AND THEN THANKING GOD FOR THEM BY SHARING THEM WITH OTHERS.

THE LATE MR. ROGERS, WAS A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER WHO HOSTED ALONG RUNNING CHILDREN'S TV PROGRAM. HE SAID THIS ABOUT BLESSINGS:

“THE REAL ISSUE IN LIFE IS NOT HOW MANY BLESSINGS WE HAVE, BUT WHAT WE DO WITH OUR BLESSINGS.

SOME PEOPLE HAVE MANY BLESSINGS AND HOARD THEM, SOME HAVE FEW AND GIVE EVERYTHING AWAY.”

THERE IS A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IOWA THAT BEGAN A DELIBERATE PRACTICE OF ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR BLESSINGS DURING WORSHIP.

ONCE A MONTH A LARGE PICKLE JAR IS PLACED ON THE COMMUNION TABLE, WITH THE WORDS OF MR. ROGERS TAPED ON THE FRONT.

DURING THE MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS PEOPLE SHARE THEIR JOYS-THEIR BLESSINGS, AND THEN PLACE A DOLLAR IN THE JAR.

EACH MONTH, THE MONEY COLLECTED IS SENT TO PERSONS WITHIN OR OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY IN NEED OF A BLESSING.

THE MONEY IS ACCOMPANIED BY A NOTE EXPLAINING IT CAME FROM PEOPLE IN THIS CHURCH WHO ARE THANKFUL FOR A BLESSING GOD HAS GIVEN THEM.

WHAT A WONDERFUL WAY TO SHOW GOD OUR THANKS FOR THE BLESSINGS WE HAVE RECEIVED!

BUT THERE ARE MANY MORE WAYS WE CAN DO SO- THROUGH PRAYERS, OUR TIME, OUR GIFTS, OR ASSISTANCE TO OTHERS IN CHRIST'S NAME.

FOR EXAMPLE: WE SHARE THROUGH THE OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD BOXES; OUR DONATIONS OF THE HATS, GLOVES, SCARFS AND OF COURSE FOOD AT THANKSGIVING.

IN THE RECENT PAST WE HAVE GIVEN MONEY, TIME, OR ITEMS TO OTHER CAUSES.

FOR EXAMPLE- TO THE VETERAN'S HOSPITAL, THE ANGEL FUND DINNER, COLLECTIONS OF FLANNEL FOR THE MALAWI MISSIONS, AND BRAS FOR OTHER PLACES IN AFRICA.

THERE IS ALSO THE GIVING WE DO AS INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES THAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT.

THE IMPORTANT THING TO US TO BE CONSCIOUS OF GIVING WHAT WE ARE ABLE OUT OF GRATITUDE TO GOD.

AND REMEMBER, SCRIPTURE CALLS US TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE GIVE FROM WHAT WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE LORD.

SOMETIMES, EVEN CHRISTIANS FORGET THIS, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ARE GIVING FROM RESOURCES WE HAVE EARNED.

YET EVEN OUR SKILLS AND ABILITY TO WORK OR WHAT WE HAVE INHERITED - IS FROM THE LORD.

AS THE LETTER OF JAMES PROCLAIMS: “EVERY GENEROUS ACT OF GIVING, WITH EVERY PERFECT GIFT, IS FROM ABOVE....”

HERE WE ARE REMINDED EVEN OUR WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO SHARE IS SOMETHING TO THANK GOD FOR, SINCE IT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO INSPIRES US TO BE GRATEFUL AND GIVING.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE ARE CALLED TO THANK THE LORD FOR THE SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST THAT WE AND OTHERS HAVE RECEIVED.

LET US PRAY: DEAR LORD, TODAY WE GIVE THANKS FOR OUR MANY BLESSINGS, AS WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED.

WE PRAISE YOU AND THANK YOU FOR OUR SALVATION MADE POSSIBLE BY JESUS, AND FOR THE FAITH WE HAVE RECEIVED IN HIM WITH THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT YET BELIEVE, AND FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLE TO HOLD ON TO FAITH.

WE GIVE THANKS FOR OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS, AS WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE LONELY OR ARE STRUGGLING IN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS.

WE GIVE THANKS FOR OUR FREEDOMS, AS WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED.

THOSE WHO ARE WELL, GIVE THANKS FOR GOOD HEALTH, AS WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL.

WE GIVE THANKS FOR THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL AND THE CHURCH WE ARE A PART OF, AND FOR THE GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES WHO HAVE COME BEFORE US.

WE GIVE THANKS FOR OUR COMFORT AND PROSPERITY, AS WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS.

DURING THIS TIME OF THANKSGIVING, MAY THE LOVE OF GOD ENFOLD US, THE PEACE OF GOD DWELL WITHIN US AND THE JOY OF GOD UPLIFT US.

AND MAY WE FIND WAYS TO BLESS OTHERS WITH THE BLESSINGS WE HAVE RECEIVED.

THROUGH CHRIST, OUR LORD WE PRAY. AMEN.

SERMON SUMMARY: ISAIAH 12 & COLOSSIANS 1:1-14

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FINALLY, LET US REMEMBER THE GIFT OF SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST IS THE GREATEST BLESSING OF ALL GOD GIVES TO US AND OTHERS.

MAY THE LORD CONTINUE TO BLESS US, AND GOD'S SPIRIT INSPIRE US, TO BE MORE INTENTIONAL IN OUR THANKSGIVING TO GOD-NOT ONLY THROUGH OUR WORDS, BUT ALSO IN OUR ACTIONS-SO THAT OUR LIVES MAY BE A WITNESS FOR JESUS. AMEN