A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical and Southern Studies

Pastor Ron Rumburg

SBSS

546

1 Whate'er my God ordains is right:
his holy will abideth;
I will be still, whate'er he doth,
and follow where he guideth.
He is my God; though dark my road,
he holds me that I shall not fall:
wherefore to him I leave it all.
2 Whate'er my God ordains is right:
he never will deceive me;
he leads me by the proper path;
I know he will not leave me.
I take, content, what he hath sent;
his hand can turn my griefs away,
and patiently I wait his day.
3 Whate'er my God ordains is right:
though now this cup, in drinking,
may bitter seem to my faint heart,
I take it, all unshrinking.
My God is true; each morn anew
sweet comfort yet shall fill my heart,
and pain and sorrow shall depart.
4 Whate'er my God ordains is right:
here shall my stand be taken;
though sorrow, need, or death be mine,
yet am I not forsaken.
My Father's care is round me there;
he holds me that I shall not fall:
and so to him I leave it all.

Samuel Rodigast (1649-1708)

Thanksgiving unto God

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."
1 Thessalonians 5:18

The giving of thanks to God is not optional for an obedient Christian, but it is an attribute of his new nature in Christ. Thankfulness is an attitude of a grateful heart to a gracious God. The New Testament words used: "thank" (*eucharisteo*), "thankful" (*eucharistos*), and "thanksgiving" (*eucharistia*) all convey a thankful attitude and a demonstration of

gratitude. This is an element that must never be absent from any of our devotions to God for past mercies as distinguished from seeking future benefits. Yes, in glory they say, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Then there is the giving of "glory and honour and *thanks* to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne" (Rev. 4:8-10). Thanksgiving is a part of the atmosphere of heaven, "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God," this tells us what they were doing in heaven; they were worshipping! But how were they worshipping besides falling on their faces before Him, they were "Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and *thanksgiving*, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 7:11, 12).

As we consider the words of our text there are three considerations: the obedience of thanks according to "the will of God," the opportunity of thanks "in everything give thanks," and the object of thanks to "God in Christ Jesus."

First, consider the obedience of thanks according to "the will of God." This is what the holy omniscient God purposes or commands. Thanksgiving is the revealed and declarative will of God. God's will matches His nature or the attributes of His nature. Ultimately everything that occurs is indicative of God's will for He works everything after the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11). "Now, if it be the will of God that we should give thanks in everything, then it must be against His will that we should complain in anything. *Complaining is contrary to thanksgiving*. A godly man may see two things in the heaviest strokes of his affliction, which may provoke him to thanksgiving, at least, which may stop him from all immoderate complaining. First, that God has a respect to his good in his heaviest afflictions, and that the issue shall certainly be good to him. Secondly, that how heavy soever His stroke is, his sin has deserved a heavier, and that God could have made it heavier, even his little finger heavier upon him.... That our stroke might have been heavier may stop our complaining, but our heaviest stroke shall turn to our benefit, should stir us up to thanksgiving. In heaven there will not be the least shadow of a cause to complain. Thanksgiving will be all our work, and the work of all in heaven. And by how much we are the more in thanksgiving and the less in complaining on earth (unless it be of and against our selves for sin) the more heavenly we are" [Joseph Caryl].

Second, consider the opportunity of thanks "in everything give thanks." The phrase "in everything give thanks" is imperative and means that under all circumstances, even persecution, bereavement, sickness, joy, happiness, etc. thanks are to be willingly given. Augustine told of early saints who when they met each other would never separate without

saying, “Deo gratias!” that is “thanks be to God.” When they discussed persecution and their fellow believers being fed to beasts they would say, “Deo gratias!” Yes, in everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Third, consider the object of thanks is “God in Christ Jesus.” He whose will it is that we give thanks is to receive that thanks through His eternal Son Christ Jesus. The Christ within us should be the stimulating cause of thanks to God the Father. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17). Yes, our giving of thanks to God the Father is through the Lord Jesus who has reconciled us to God through His sacrificial atonement which removed the condemnation of sin.

The motto of the great preacher Chrysostom (c. 347-407) was, “Glory to God for all things.” He would utter these words at whatever circumstance good or bad. When the wicked Empress banished him again and again he would declare, “Glory to God for all things.” When the soldiers were dragging him through snows, and he was utterly worn out, he begged to be taken into a little way-side church building that he might die, and his last words, as he lay on the cold stone floor were, “Glory to God for all things.” He believed thankfulness was the best sacrifice we could offer God.

Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680) explained, “We generally say, that thanksgiving is a nobler and more divinely generous duty than prayer, for self-love puts us upon that, praying for benefits; but thanks is a more free, (free from impurity or corruption), and pure act, and yet is out of a sense of God’s goodness unto one’s self; ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all’ (that is, not any) ‘of His benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and health all thy diseases, Ps 103:2, 3. And Ps. 86:12, 13, ‘I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify Thy name for evermore. For great is Thy mercy towards me; and Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.’ Yet we see there is a deep touch of self-love in this both praise and glorifying of God; ‘for great is Thy mercy to me.’ Well, but this way of glorifying God is yet more high and generous, being for what is abstractly considered from all benefits; that is, simply considering what glory and excellencies are in God Himself, or in His glory unto others of His creatures.”