

Bad Times



By
Willie Martin

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Come Thanksgiving Day and millions of people will sit down to a table filled with turkey, ham or fried chicken and all the trimmings, surrounded by family and friends. Thinks will be give for the abundant feast, for freedom, and many other blessings. But the truth of the matter is that we are not free. You say no, and that I don't know what I am talking about. Ok think that just fifty years ago, one could

- (1) carry a gun anywhere in the United States,
- (2) one did not have to have the multitude of licenses that we do today,
- (3) we are forced to buy insurance on our cars, boats and etc.,
- (4) the government was as open with their assassinations of people as they are today,
- (5) we did not have congress passing the patriot act which is the most traitorous legislation that has ever come down the pike.

I am sure that with this reminder that you can thank of many others that I don't have listed her. It is natural to be thankful when all is going well or seems to be going well. But how can we give thanks in the bad times, times when everything seems to be going against us. What about it when you have had traffic accident and the patrol cars fill the street while the cops close in to fix the blame? There you sit with a patrolman writing out a ticket while you wonder if your insurance will pay for damages. How are you gong to obey the injunction of Paul; "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ toward you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18) You just received notice that you have been terminated from your job. The income stops but the bills will keep coming in. Can you give thanks? Or take the time when Your spouse has just been diagnosed with

cancer. Giving thanks may be the last thing on your mind at a time like that. Christians are not exempt from having to go through bad time. But there are blessings and advantages that Christians have that enable to give thanks even in the midst of such bad times. I will mention in a few.

1). The Forgiveness of Sin: In the stress of the traffic accident while the cop writes out the ticket, I remember that even if I am guilty of a traffic violation, and must pay dearly, I am one for whom Christ died, and therefore have been forgiven of all my grievous sins. I may have to pay a steep fine, but I will never have to pay the penalty for my sins, because Jesus did that when bore my sins in his body on the tree. Here is freedom that cannot be taken away by any accident or any authority. Thanks be to Yahweh. So I have lost my job, I have not lost my salvation. God's mercy did not protect my job, but is has protect me for eternity. As I seek employment, Thank God that I'm carrying a burden of guilt for my are forgiven. Paul didn't say "give thanks for everything" but "in everything" We are not thankful for cancer. But the cancer of sin is more deadly than any cancer of the body, and while we fight the physical disease, we rejoice that Jesus has already won the fight against the devil, and we do no have worry about failure and sins. They are all forgiven. Thank God.

2). The Abiding Presence of God: God is famous for being present in bad situations. He was with Moses, Gideon, David, Daniel, and yes He was with Jeremiah while he was in the pit of dung, right in their worst times. He made this promise: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6-8; Hebrews 13:5) Then Jesus, with his parting words, said:

"Lo I am with you always." (Matthew 28:20) Sometimes you may feel isolated when surrounded by the world of unbelief and hostility to your faith, even from your own family. You may feel out of place, a minority of one, and terribly alone. But by faith you know that Yahweh is there, even in your darkest hours, and what is needed is the faith to trust His presence. The times of trial and testing are beneficial, as they teach us our weaknesses and focus on our faith. David wrote, "It is good that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy ways." (Paraphrase) James wrote, "Count it all joy," for such hardships develop faith and patience that work

toward our perfection In the midst of trial and affliction we give thanks that Yahweh is present, not only to give strength to endure the affliction, but also to use it for our spiritual growth and to bind us closer to Him. 3). Assurance of Resurrection Victory: Abraham, Job, David in the midst of bad times all found comfort that he would raise them up in the last day.

“For the hour is coming in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.” (John 5:28-29) Yahweh’s purpose for your life will not be fulfilled until you have been transformed from mortal to immortal, with a body that is incorruptible, glorious, powerful and spiritual.

(1Corinthians 5:42-44) John wrote:

“Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. And everyone that has this hope set on him purifies himself as he is pure.” This will be the final victory, and whatever hard times we must go through, they are only bringing us closer to that day of Resurrection Victory. “Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:57)

Throughout the Bible are stories of how God used severe trials to develop character and faith in His people. Peter explained it: “In this you greatly rejoice through now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold trials, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold that perishes, through it be tried with fire might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appear of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:6-7) We go through these trials, Peter says, that we may receive praise, honour and glory when we see Him. “O give thanks unto the God of heaven; for his loving-kindness endures for ever” in good time and bad.



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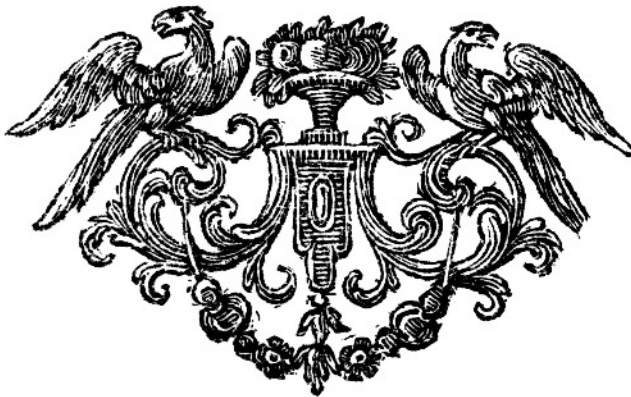
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