

"The Epic Festival of THANKSGIVING!"

November 19, 2023

INTRO ...Jewish Festivals

...They were intended to be moments of "Impacting Pause" in the Routines of Life! ...**Moments of "Reflection & Raucous"— "Contemplation & Celebration" ...God Put These On Their Calendar—Because the Human Soul Needs Contemplation & Celebration!**

...Enter THANKSGIVING! ...**My Soul Needs Thanksgiving ("Giving Thanks") to Be a Skill/Practice that I'm VERY GOOD At!!!**

The Disorienting Impact of Ingratitude

...There is something intrinsically helpful and reorienting about "Giving Thanks"! ...It is an exercise that contains "Contemplation" (observation, awareness, reflection, intentionality, consideration, inventory, valuing) and "Celebration" (acknowledgment, appreciation, applause, affection, delight, expression).

- These Things Create an Orienting Effect! They help our lives to not become Confused, Disordered, and Disoriented. ...God even goes as far as associating a failure to give thanks with one of the most revealing passages about the human condition

Rom 1:18-23 *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*

...v. 18 ...**God is responding with Extreme Disfavor** (ie 'wrath') ...Man has rebelled & drifted his way into ungodliness & unrighteousness, such that God's Revealed Truth is SUPPRESSED!

...v. 19-20 ...**There are things that man can know about God that "touch" man's existence!**

...v. 21 ... "Although they knew God" = **These things of God that touched their lives produce some kind of awareness that COULD be appreciated or acknowledged!** —INSTEAD: "they did not HONOR him as God or GIVE THANKS to him" ...THEN... a Horrible Soulful Condition Ensued-- "futility of mind and darkness of heart"

...v. 21-23... "they became futile in their thinking..." "darkened in their hearts" (followed by the calamitous details of this condition!)

The word mátaios carries the senses of 'vain,' 'deceptive,' 'pointless,' 'futile.'
skótos denotes darkness experienced as an enveloping sphere that has significance for existence, e.g., by hampering movement or foresight, or causing anxiety or danger. If light means potentiality, going into the dark means death. The realm of the dead is a dark realm. (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Abridged - Little Kittel))

SIMPLE FORMULA ...When God's Activity and Provision and Self-Revelation TOUCHES Our Lives—Failing to HONOR and GIVE THANKS to God thrusts us into the Disorienting Condition of "Futility of Mind & Darkness of Soul"! ...All this creation and provision and intentional revealing of God to us is INTENDED to be Responded to!!

"Thankfulness is neither trivial nor inconsequential. On this one quality pivots the difference between maturity and immaturity.

What do I mean by pivot? A gate pivots on a hinge so that it swings one way to open the path and another way to shut you out. Wars can pivot on a single battle, so that one side decisively takes the upper hand when the outcome previously was in doubt. Ask Napoleon about Wellington at Waterloo, or Hitler about parachutes at Normandy. The war seemed to be going in one direction, then wham!—things took a sudden and decisive turn. Gratitude is pivotal in whether I'll be given over to folly. It is decisive.

...More than a mere word, gratitude reveals each person's core—his priorities, his presuppositions, his understanding of God and his ways. As Al Mohler puts it, how grateful we are is "the key to understanding what we really believe about God, what we really believe about ourselves, and what we really believe about the world we experience."¹ Accordingly, between gratefulness to God and indifference toward him lies the distinction between wisdom and folly. The pivot. Everyone's entire future swings like a hinge on whether thankfulness is lubricated to swing easily—or if it is ignored, becoming encrusted by the rust and corrosion of our heart's indifference, bitterness, or some self-inflated sense of entitlement.

Thankfulness is not just a religious duty, or a task on a list, or something nice people do, or a simple protocol of good manners to be taught to children. Rather, thankfulness is a powerful force. It wins or loses the war for your future. When practiced, it works toward beauty and produces fruit. When ignored, it works toward ugliness and chokes out life. At stake is the vitality of every human relationship, without exception." **Sam Crabtree**, *Practicing Thankfulness* (pp. 12-13). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

...In Rom 1 ..."Thanksgiving" sits as the hinge of the door of human depravity & disorientation!

ILLUST: Going to a Concert, Theater, or Sports Event

...Creation is a **CONCERT!** ...

...My Soul NEEDS to be Informed & Calibrated by the Honoring & Thanksgiving to God!

CONTEMPLATION ... "Intentional Inventory"

Our Friends in Hebrews have been Needing Recalibration!! ...Their Life-Discouragement and Hour of Difficulty is shifting them into this "futility of mind and darkness of soul!"

...What Was Their Prescribed Remedy? ... "**CONSIDER JESUS**"!! [The First Half of "THANKSGIVING"]

Heb 2:18 - 3:1 *For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.* ¹ *Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus...*

...Jeremiah's Lament over the "Dire-Straights-Moment in Jerusalem"... But Consider What He Does in That Dire Moment—He TAKES INVENTORY!

Lam 3:16-33 ¹⁶ *He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes;*

¹⁷ *my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is;*

¹⁸ *so I say, "My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the LORD."*

¹⁹ *Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall!*

²⁰ *My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me.*

²¹ *But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:*

²² *The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;*

²³ *they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

v. 20 ...**Be Aware: "The Soul is CONTINUOUSLY CONTEMPLATING!!"** ...

v. 21 ...**The Irreplaceable Practice of "Calling to Mind"**! ...There is something about the "Engaging of the Mind" that simply sits at the center of Our Life Experience and Our Walk with God!

Heb 6:18 "...we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. ¹⁹ We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul..."

...Our Friends in Hebrews (like Jeremiah and those in Jerusalem at the Hour of Siege!) are being Battered by Life's Waves!! ...**Those who follow God live in settings where STORMS Occur!**

-- You will Need the Soul Recalibrating Exercise of "CONTEMPLATION" ...You will need the Great Epic Festival of THANKSGIVING!

Doing a Thanksgiving Inventory (an exercise in cataloging the mercies of God and reestablishing our hope based in the steadfast love of the Lord and His faithfulness!)

"Not only our salvation (which is of incalculable worth, and "deserving of full acceptance"), but all that everyone has is from the hand of God: "He himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:25). God brings us into existence and sustains us (with or without our awareness)—we are thus recipients twenty-four seven. In every aspect of our lives, we're beneficiaries. How fitting, then, for beneficiaries to express flabbergasted appreciation to their benefactor. And how wrongheaded to fail to do so! Such appreciation or lack thereof is not benign, like whether you part your hair on the right or left. No. Like a continental divide determining whether adjacent raindrops flow to the Atlantic or the Pacific, gratitude and ingratitude are a dividing line, bringing vastly different outcomes..." **Sam Crabtree**, *Practicing Thankfulness* (pp. 16-17)

"Paul rhetorically asks the Corinthians (and us), "What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7), the correct answer being obvious. If everything we have is received, then the giving of thanks for everything is fitting.

God has not only supplied everything we currently have, but in the future he'll supply everything we will ever have. "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). There will never be an end run around his provision. If God doesn't supply something, we won't have it. There will never be an occasion when we rightly think, "I don't need to thank God for that, because it didn't come from him." The soul that is vibrant and aware will gratefully recognize God's gifts more and more, as more and more of his grace arrives.

God owes us none of this. He never has. Not a thing. All that we have is by grace—undeserved, unearned, and even unsolicited. God has supplied each of us with a zillion things we never requested or had the good sense to order in advance. Did you request two kidneys? Two? Tear ducts that lubricate your eyeballs? An ozone layer around the planet? Synapses in your brain? No. He just gave them to us. Such incalculable generosity calls for a response. How are we responding? The right response is gratitude—thankfulness." **Sam Crabtree**, *Practicing Thankfulness* (p. 17)

"EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION"

Rom 1:21 *For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

eucharisteō: **to be grateful, i.e. (actively) to express gratitude (towards)**

Categories of the Mercies of God

Spiritual Mercies (Eph 1:3-11; Heb 6:4-5)

Eternal Mercies (the new heaven & earth, the full presence of God, the end of death & sickness & suffering & pain & tears, seeing in fullness, no more sin or Satan, etc.)

Temporary Mercies (Education, vehicle, electricity, good food, music, sports)

Physical Mercies (Health, strength, abilities, talents, few illnesses,

Relational Mercies (People who have cared, comforted, and contributed to our life journey, companionship, camaraderie, belonging)

Family Mercies (Mom & dad, siblings, vacations, discipline, education, encouragement, correction)

Marital Mercies (companionship, romance, commitment, care, support, adventure)

Church Mercies (sound doctrine, discipleship, maturity, community, friendships, mission, meaningful activity, strengthened faith)

Provisional/Financial Mercies

Career Mercies

Global Favor Mercies (comforts, conveniences, prosperity, resources, healthcare, air conditioning, indoor plumbing, peace, freedom)

Creation Mercies (autumn leaves & breezes, the sound of the ocean, the sunset, the majesty of mountains, hiking, fishing & hunting, sweet potatoes, your pet dog)

Salvific Mercies (the gospel finding you, enlightenment & understanding, wisdom, meaning, the presence of God)
