

Thanksgiving

by Samuel Logan Brengle

A thankful heart is a young heart, and it will banish carking care, smooth the wrinkles from the brow, and fill the life with beauty and peace.

Scripture: Psalm 9:1, Psalm 100:4, Psalm 145:19, Daniel 6:10, Luke 12:15, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Ephesians 5:20, Philippians 4:6, Colossians 3:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Topics: "Gratitude", "Thankfulness"

Description

Samuel Logan Brengle emphasizes the transformative power of thanksgiving in his sermon, illustrating how a thankful heart can find blessings even in trials. He shares the story of an elderly saint who, despite her poverty, expresses gratitude for even the smallest provisions, demonstrating that true wealth lies in a spirit of thankfulness rather than material abundance. Brengle encourages believers to cultivate a habit of gratitude, recognizing that it aligns them with God's will and brings peace and joy into their lives. He asserts that thankfulness is a divine gift that can be developed, urging listeners to actively choose to give thanks in all circumstances. Ultimately, he reminds us that a heart filled with gratitude reflects a pure and holy spirit, drawing us closer to God.

Transcript

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise be thankful unto Him, and bless His name' (Ps. C. 4).

In every thing give thanks' (1 Thess. v. 18).

As lilies of the valley pour forth perfume, so good hearts pour forth thanksgiving. No mercy is too small to provoke it, no trial too severe to restrain it. As Samson got honey from the carcass of the lion he slew, and as Moses got water from the flinty rock, so the pure in heart are possessed of a sort of heavenly alchemy, a divine secret by which they get blessings out of all things, and for which there is giving of thanks.

A jubilant old saint in Boston came down to hoary hairs in deepest poverty and had to live on the charity of such friends as God raised up, and He raised them up. Bless His name! He who fed Elijah in the wilderness by the brook and in the poverty-stricken home of the desolate widow, found a way to feed His child in Boston. God is not blind, nor deaf; nor indifferent, nor indigent. He is not 'the silent God' that some people in their self-conceit and wayward unbelief suppose. He knows how to be silent, and how to hide Himself from the proud in heart. But He cannot hide Himself anywhere in His big universe from childlike

faith and pure, obedient, longsuffering, patient love. Hallelujah!

This old saint believed, obeyed and rejoiced in God, and He raised up friends to supply her needs. Now, one day one of them went upstairs with a dinner for the old lady, and as she came to the door, she heard a voice within, and thinking there was a visitor present, and delicately wishing that her charity should not be a cause of embarrassment, she stopped and listened. It was the voice of the old Christian at her table, and she was saying, 'O Father, I do thank Thee with all my heart for Jesus and this crust.'

To her thankful heart that crust was more than a feast and a well-filled cupboard and a fat bank account to him who has not a trustful, thankful spirit.

I heard of a rich man the other day who killed himself because he feared he might become poor. He was poor. Jesus said, 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth' (Luke xii. 15), and no more does a man's real riches; but rather in the spirit with which he possesses them.

Heaven is not parceled off into lots and estates. The angels own nothing and yet they possess all things and are eternally rich. And so with the true saint that trusts God and loves and obeys and is thankful.

The stars in their courses fight for him. He is now in harmony with the elemental and heavenly forces and eternal laws of the universe of God, and all things work together for his good. Not a hair of his head falls without God's notice. Not a desire rises in his heart but God's great heart throbs responsive to fulfill it, for does not the Psalmist say, 'He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him'? (Ps. cxlv. 19). Not simply the fervent prayer, but the timid, secret desire that has not been voiced in prayer, shall be fulfilled. And how dare God do that? Because holy fear will not allow a desire that is not in harmony with God's character and the interests of His Kingdom.

Napoleon gave blank checks on his bank to one of his marshals. One complained to the Emperor that the drafts made were enormous and should not be allowed. 'Let him alone; he trusts and honors me, and I will trust him,' said Napoleon. God puts all things at the command of His saints, and trusts them while He asks them to trust Him. Why, then, should we not be thankful?

Nothing will keep the heart so young and banish carking care so quickly and smooth the wrinkles from the brow so certainly, and fill the life with such beauty, and make one's influence so fragrant and gracious and shed abroad such peace and gladness as this sweet spirit of thankfulness.

This spirit can and should be cultivated. There is much in the lot of each of us to be thankful for. We should thank Him for personal liberty, and for the measure of health we have. There is a good old soul up the Hudson who for thirty years or thereabouts has been lying in bed, while her bones have softened, and she is utterly helpless and always in pain, but she praises and praises and praises God.

We should thank Him that we are not insane, that our poor minds are not unbalanced and rent and torn by horrid nightmares and dread and nameless terrors and deep despair and wild and restless ravings. We should thank Him for the light and blessings of civilization, past mercies, present comforts and future prospects; for food, with the appetite to eat it, and the power to digest it, raiment to wear, books to read; for the Church, The Salvation Army, the open Bible, the revelation of Jesus Christ, the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, the glorious possibility of escape from the penalty and the power, the consequences and the character of sin; for home and friends, and Heaven bending over all, with God's sweet invitation, 'Come!' Truly, we have much to thank God for, but if we would be thankful, we must set

our hearts to do it with a will. We grumble and complain without thought, but we must think to give thanks. To murmur and repine is natural, to give thanks -- to really give thanks -- is supernatural, is gracious, is a spirit not earth-born, but comes down from God out of Heaven, and yet, like all things from God, it can be cultivated.

David said, 'I will praise Thee' (Ps. ix. 1). He put his will into it. Daniel 'prayed, and gave thanks' (Dan. vi. 10) three times a day. David outdid Daniel, for he says, 'Seven times a day do I praise Thee' (Ps. cxix. 164).

Know this, that if you are not thankful your heart is yet bad, your soul unclean, for good hearts and pure souls are thankful. So go to the root of the matter and get rid of sin and get filled with the Holy Spirit. Flee to Jesus for riddance from the unholy spirit, and the subtle selfishness that possesses you.

People who live in the midst of foul odors and harsh sounds cease to smell and hear them, but if for a while they could slip away to the sweet air and holy quiet of the woods and fields, and then return to their noxious and noisy homes, their quickened senses would be shocked by their noisome surroundings. And so selfish people often live in themselves so long that they do not realize their selfishness and sin, except as light from Heaven falls upon them. But when God's sweet breath blows over them and His light shines into them, then they are amazed at themselves. When some humble saint, full of faith and joy and the Holy Ghost, crosses their path, if they will but look, they may see themselves as in a glass.

But especially is this so when we look at Jesus; and if we continue, the look will transform us. It is of this that the Apostle speaks when he says, 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord' (2 Cor. iii. 18). And when this change has taken place, the joy of Jesus will be poured into the heart and praise will well up and bubble forth in thanksgiving as an unending fountain of sweet waters, filling it with joy, and earth, your little corner of earth, with peace, and gladdening all who see and hear. But if that change has not fully taken place in you, do not withhold the praise that is God's due, but think of His loving-kindness and tender and multiplied mercies, and begin to thank Him now, and your very giving of thanks will help to hasten the change. Begin now! Praise the Lord!

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