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A Thankful Heart

By Pat Chadwick



Doctrine & Covenants 95:1a Verily I say unto you, my friends, Fear not, let your hearts be comforted, yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks, waiting patiently on the Lord;

When we look at all that has transpired in 2020, we may find it difficult to be thankful even when we know the Lord has instructed us to “be thankful in all circumstances”. Indeed, being thankful in all circumstances seems almost impossible as sometimes the circumstances of life can be very terrible. I want to share with you a true story, to assist you in being thankful in all circumstances. You may know this story, but I want to re-call it to your mind because we often forget the power of God to turn all things to our good.

Corey Ten Boom and her sister Betsie were arrested and sentenced for hiding Jews and helping them escape the Nazis. Now they stood in a concentration camp in a filthy barracks, looking at the wooden sleeping platforms stacked 3 high with hardly any head room, and to make it worse the place was crawling with flees.

Corey said to Betsie, “**Betsie how can we live in such a place?**” Betsie recalled a scripture they had read early that morning in the little bible she had smuggled in beneath her clothing. She turned to it and read from ***I Thessalonians 5:14-18*** “***Comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.***” Betsie stated that it seemed to especially apply to the concentration camp.

Corey questioned Betsie’s statement to be thankful for everything by asking, “**Such As?**” Betsie answered, “**For being assigned here together, for the bible we were able to smuggle in, for the crowding**



because we can reach more people as we read the bible to them. But when she added fleas,” Corey revolted and declared, “**There is no way God can make me thankful for the fleas.**”

Betsie and Corey were indeed in horrible conditions, but they found much to be thankful for. They had great freedom in their barracks because the guards would never come into the actual barracks. Each evening they had group bible study. Because the platforms were crowded together many had an opportunity to hear the word of God.

Betsie was spared outdoor labor because she was ill. She was part of a knitting group in the barracks. They were knitting socks for the German Army. One evening when Corey returned Betsy seemed very pleased with herself. When Corey questioned her, she said, “**Well, I found out something today. The reason the guards won’t come into this barracks is because of the fleas.**” Then Corey’s mind rushed back to that first day in the barracks when Betsy thanked God for fleas and Corey could not see any reason to do so.

Corey's work was changed and she was able to join Betsy in knitting socks in the barracks. She said, **"And thus began the closest most joyous weeks in Ravensbruck. Side by side, in the sanctuary of God's fleas, Betsie and I ministered the word of God to all the women in the room. We sat by deathbeds that became doorways of heaven. We watched women who had lost everything grow rich in hope. The knitters of Barracks 28 became the praying heart of the vast diseased body that was Ravensbruck, interceding for all in the camp—even guards, under Betsie's prodding, as well as prisoners. We prayed beyond the concrete walls for the healing of Germany, Europe, of the world...And as we prayed God spoke to us."** All of this ministry possible because of fleas!

Hopefully, this true story of God's ability to turn the worse things that happen to us, into things that work for good, will assist you in your own journey of being thankful in all circumstances.



Digging Deeper

F. Henry Edwards in his book "For Such a Time as This" says: "Many years ago Paul wrote to the Roman saints that, ***'All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).'*** Christian's experience confirms the testimony of the apostle. But Paul's wonderful optimism is vindicated not in the tempering of circumstances to the advantage of the faithful, **but in the strength of the faithful to meet all circumstances.** All things work together for good to those who

love God because they accept his purpose as a dominant in their lives and this gives them a new point of view, a new approach, a new courage, a new expectancy. There is in the heart of every happening the possibility of new vision of God and new approach to things divine. And since this is true, we can wish each other all the best greeting of the season with happy confidence."

Instructions and Helps for Having a Thankful Heart

F. Henry was right when he said, "Having confidence in God's ability to temper the circumstances to the advantage of the faithful gives us a new point of view." When we trust God, we can have a new **"Attitude of Gratitude"** even in the worst circumstances.

As history shows, Christians are not immune to the trials and difficulties of life. Jesus even told us to expect tribulation. ***John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*** But in this statement, He also promises us that because of Him and His power to overcome all things, we can rejoice even in our trials. God does not bring evil upon His children. The trials of life come upon us because of the fall of mankind:

1. They come from the natural man living in a fallen world.
2. Sometimes through disobedience we bring storm/trials upon ourselves.
3. Sometimes others cause them.

However they come, **we can be thankful in them.** For we know God can use them for good in our life. Look at Joseph, sold into slavery by his brothers, enduring many trials but in the end what did he say to his brothers when they were reunited? **"Genesis 50:20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."** We see

by this statement that God can take anything and turn it and use it for our good.

It's just amazing to see how He works in our lives in this manner. Just as the individual ingredients in a cake are by themselves not something we would want to eat. Who loves raw eggs, vanilla or a spoon full of flour by itself? But when stirred together by a master chef, they become a delicious cake. So it is with our trials. When God steps in and turns them to our good, they become something **good, even delicious to our souls.**



That is how we can be thankful, even in our trials, because we know God will use them for good. Sometimes it takes a while, but in due time, we will see His hand at work in all our circumstances.

Now one thing I want to make note of is that, in His instruction to us to “Be Thankful”, it does not say **be thankful for the trials** but rather **be thankful in them.**

Mosiah 11:149 Being commanded of God to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks **in all things.**

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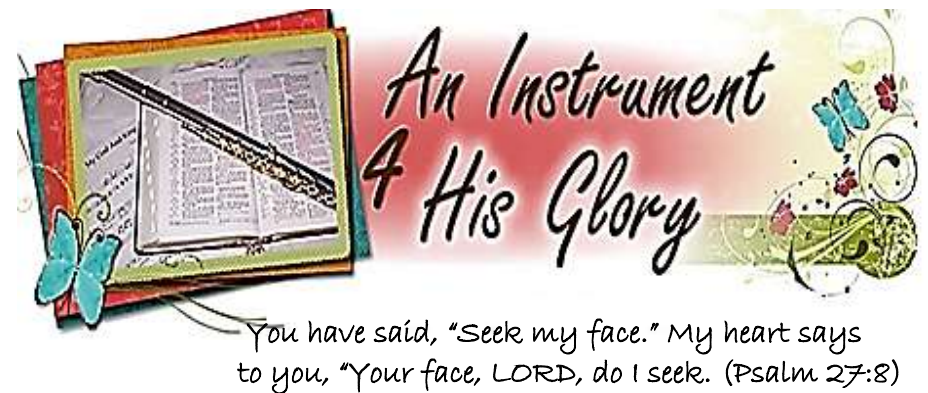
1 Thessalonians 5:18 **In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.**”

So, we see a key here. We don't have to be thankful for the trial itself but rather **in the trial.** For we know God will at some point turn it to our good. **It's a matter of faith you see, believing that God has the power to turn all things to our good and waiting on Him to do so. In our trials we must keep our eyes on Jesus, trusting Him and waiting patiently for Him to move on our behalf.**

Actually, I believe God is much more concerned about us growing spiritually than about us always being happy. Just as gold must be put into the fire, to become pure, we too must suffer through the fiery trials of this life, to be made pure and in His image. **Through our trials He makes us instruments in His hands.**

Alma 14:82 **And this is the blessing which hath been bestowed upon us, that we have been made instruments in the hands of God, to bring about this great work .**

Paul said it this way: **2 Corinthians 1:2-4** **Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.**



Actions to Help Us Live in Thanksgiving Daily

1. Grow Your Faith by Prayer, Fasting, Study, and Church Attendance:

The stronger your faith the easier it will be for you to endure the trials of life in a triumphant manor, with the assurance that God will turn all your trials into something good!

2. The second thing we can do is open our hearts to God:

We must let go of the negative emotions that bind our hearts and instead fill our souls with love, faith, and thanksgiving. Anger, resentment, bitterness and fear stunt our spiritual growth. Would you bathe in impure water? Then why do we bathe our spirits with negative and bitter thoughts and feelings? Be joyful even in your trials, trusting God to turn it all to your good. *Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice;*

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

3. The third thing we can do to live in thanksgiving daily is

Open Our Arms to Others: One of the best ways we show our gratitude is by blessing the lives of those around us. The great King Benjamin taught his people: *Mosiah 1:49 And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God.*

We can live in thanksgiving daily by opening our arms to those around us. When was the last time you told someone you love how much they mean to you? When was the last time you expressed your gratitude to someone who has always been there for you, someone who has sacrificed for you? Someone whose heart has always been filled with hopes and dreams for you? **When was the last time you unselfishly reached out to help another in need?**

Every time we cheer another's heart, every time we ease another's burden, every time we lift a weary hand, we show our gratitude to that God to whom we owe all that we have and all that we are. Be an instrument in His hands.

4. **Be Thankful every day for your Abundant Blessings:** Every day count your blessings. This will help you to have a daily attitude of gratitude. Everyday God blesses you. Look around you at all the daily blessings of life. Make a list of your everyday blessings. You will be surprised at how many you have on a daily basis.



And that ye live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which he doth bestow upon you (Alma 16:238).