Thanksgiving 2022

Perhaps you read the article I wrote last year for Thanksgiving. A lot has changed in the last twelve month.

Depending on your political perspective, the country is in trouble, or it is in serious trouble. What was once called reasonable, sensible, or normal is now declared evil. What was once called not normal is now the standard of “true freedom”. The economy, gas prices, the stock market, the overturn of Roe-v-Wade are all causing fear and/or outrage. The war in the Ukraine. The brutality in Myanmar. The devastation in parts of Florida. It is easy to be distracted by the life storms all around us. It is easy to gripe about this year, but the truth is we still have good cause to be thankful.

When Peter had his eyes on Jesus, he had the courage to step out of the boat and walk to Jesus on the water. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink. He still had enough faith to cry out “Lord, Save me!” And Jesus immediately reached out His hand and caught him. At that moment, do you think that Peter was thankful?

In 1 Kings 19 we have a story about Elijah. He had just called down fire from heaven and proved who was the true Lord of all, but he fears the wrath of a women – Jezebel. He flees into the desert and asked God to let him die. The Lord does not grant his request.

Then we have this amazing scene.

“And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; ***but the Lord was not in the wind***: and after the wind an earthquake; but the ***Lord was not in the earthquake***: And after the earthquake a fire; ***but the Lord was not in the fire***: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, ***What doest thou here, Elijah***?

My translation -- “What are **YOU** doing ***Here***, Elijah?” said softly and gently as to a small crying child who is found by his father after being lost in the woods. Do you think in that moment that Elijah was thankful?

I am thankful for the still small voice that comforts me when I am discouraged. I am thankful for the hand that grasps mine and lifts me up when I think I am drowning. I am thankful that He is always near. He does not punish me for my lack of faith. He shows Himself faithful. Loving like a father. Closer than a brother. He is my friend.

We have every reason to be thankful. Do we express it?

We need to express our gratitude every day and our heart will flow forth with true joy. Don’t be distracted by the ferocious winds swirling around us. Keep your eyes on Jesus.

And be grateful. Full of thankfulness. Understand the value of what God gives us every day.

So how can I tell if I am truly grateful and not just “whistling in the wind” to cover up my fear and lack of faith?

It is simple. Grateful people are generous.

In recent days – are you more generous than you were last year? Or are the economic storms causing you to be “conservative”. Change that word to greedy and it will be closer to the truth. Call it what it is. It is a lack of gratitude for what the Lord has given you. It is self-focused and not a Biblical World View. It is a limited resource worldly view.

The Lord says He will bless a grateful person. He challenges us to test Him with our generosity. Not “give to get” but true generosity. Giving because it is His, not ours. Investing in eternity and not a plush retirement.

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose. - Jim Elliot

This Thanksgiving where is your focus? I want mine to be on being truly thankful, grateful, and generous. May the Lord strengthen me to make it so.

Tom Jones