

THANKFULNESS

It seems that in my home country, beautiful, sunshiny, South Africa, with all the majestic mountains and grass sloped valleys, clear skies, and modern cities, I tend to look at the situation with very limited vision. In the last two years we have heard more hate speech, seen more farm murders, heard of the kidnapping of young children for the purpose of prostitution, corruption in high places, and on and on and on. The local and overseas press only print the negative aspect of life in South Africa, and also that of the rest of the world. Our television screens show us in vivid reality the actual pictures of what's happening in our world. Radio, nowadays, can make the newscasts and the phone-in programs so real that you can almost see a picture of the event. From all sides families and children are being bombarded with the events that could and are effecting our lives. It seems that there is no hope for the law abiding citizens of our country, we do all we can to make our homes and property safe, spend our well and hard earned money on building walls and electric fences, install alarm systems, make our homes and our suburbs like prisons, that is we live in our prisons and the criminals walk free outside and enjoy our country. This is a very negative picture I have just painted, but the truth.

Over the last few months since Yvonne and I have moved into our own home, we have had to make some changes to our lifestyle. We moved into our home in October 2009, and we have turned a house into a beautiful home. I have made the garden more private, upgraded the fencing and walling around the property, and fitted security gates to the outside of the house. Yvonne has been very busy inside cleaning, moving furnisher around, hanging up pictures and photos of the grandchildren, (I know, as I bear on my fingers the scars of knocking in nails.) All this was done to make our lives a little more safe and comfortable. I remind myself about the articles I wrote about trusting our Father, and we have found a new Peace in our lives and it had nothing to do with the security around our home.

Every day when we leave the house we ask Father to protect our home and the stuff in the house from harm, and each evening when we return, our stuff is still there. So many times I forget to thank Father for His protection and care for us. I just seem to take all this for granted, almost like a child that feels it is their right to have this protection, it is owed to me, so give it.

A few weeks ago I was sitting in the garden and talking to the Father about my life, and saying that I really don't allow Christ in me to live His Life out through me as I should. The love affair has cooled off a bit with all the business of life, and the bombardment of news and the affairs of this world. It seems that these things have taken over my thought life, and Christ only

enters my thoughts when I need wisdom, or guidance, or stuff. As I shared these feelings with Father, I experienced an overwhelming flood of thankfulness. It was as if I was in Fathers arms, and experienced the love and tenderness and compassion of a real caring person. I did not want to get emotional, but wanted to hear Fathers voice. I felt Him say that He wanted to be appreciated, His life was in me, most of my day is taken up with doing stuff, and I spend very little of my day thanking Him for Who He is.

I started thinking about thankfulness, and quickly remembered how Yvonne responds to my saying thanks, but more, to my showing thankfulness. For example, after a meal, I always say "Thank you Yvonne, that was great", and then retire to the lounge to relax. Yvonne has just spent hours preparing a meal, I have devoured it in 5 minutes, and now she has to clear the table, and wash up or pack the dishes into the washer. She is not very responsive towards me when I ask "Honey, is there any pudding" Why ???.....

SO NOW, "I" get up and after thanking her for a great meal, "I" clear the table, "I" pack the washer and "I" offer her a cup of tea. WOW, "I" actually feel good, and I know Yvonne appreciates my help.

Thankfulness is an attitude, and a verb, a doing word. If we look at Paul in Ephesians the 5th chapter we note that most of the things he talks about is our behaviour.

Now look at verse 20 of chapter 5;

Eph 5:20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

The word thanks is a verb, a doing word, a thing we should do always, and to do it properly, we need the right attitude and mind set.

As I pondered over all the “thank you” verses in Pauls writings I found that a great many of the thanks or thankfulness are verbs. I believe that the Holy Spirit was starting to teach me to be thankful and that this thanks was not something that I should just utter with no feeling or emotion. I began to feel something stirring within me, a wanting to be genuine in my appreciation of what Father is doing for me and in me. Emotion whelmed up in me and I could shout out Abba Father, my Father my Father, I love You and I appreciate You. Praise flowed out of my mouth, and as I started to thank Him for his love, kindness, protection, and everything I could think of that He was doing for me, I was filled with immense joy. I did not want this feeling to go, but alas, as I started thinking of the problems and troubles in South Africa, the appreciation and wanting to thank Father became more of a ritual than the real thing.

I learned a valuable lesson that day, and as soon as I realised what was happening to me I went back to Father and explained my situation to Him. As I shared with Him, I started feeling the cares and concerns of my small world lifting and his love flooding over me again. With tears I asked for that sense of thankfulness that I had experienced a few hours ago. As I started expressing my great delight in all He is in me, the feelings of joy and real closeness with Father whelmed up in me again.

I realised that I am responsible for the love affair I have with the Father through His Son living in me. I have to keep my mind off the negative things of the world around me, and walk with a real practical sense of the one who is my Life. I have no other hope of surviving the things that are happening around me, there is nothing I can do to change or stop what’s happening, I can only trust my Father and express a real feeling of thankfulness for his protection and love.

As Yvonne and I leave our home, or work or whatever situation we find ourselves in, I express my thankfulness with almost a laugh as the joy of trusting Him whelms up in me. I am just now beginning to learn a little bit about the Christ who Lives in me. Thanks be to Father for the circumstances and situations that come across my path, they all are there to teach me to build my love affair with Father through Christ in me.

Eph 5:20 Giving thanks always for all things.....