

## Yet, I want to praise Him – 28/08/2016

*Though the fig tree should not blossom  
And there be no fruit on the vines,  
Though the yield of the olive should fail  
And the fields produce no food,  
Though the flock should be cut off from the fold  
And there be no cattle in the stalls,  
<sup>18</sup> Yet I will exult in the LORD,  
I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.  
<sup>19</sup> The Lord GOD is my strength,  
And He has made my feet like hinds' feet,  
And makes me walk on my high places. (Habakkuk 3:17-19)*

Beloved in the Lord,

The famous Bible commentator Matthew Henry was robbed one day. He wrote in his diary:

*“Let me be thankful, first, because I was never robbed before. Second, because although they took my wallet, they did not take my life. Third, because although they took my all, it was not much. Fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”*

As I read these words it occurred to me that only a true Christian, who walks daily with God, would react in this way. Henry devoted his life to God and to the study of God's Word. Being a man of God, he was able to keep things in a right perspective, and he had learnt to be thankful in all things.

Thankfulness is a good measure which helps us to assess our faith. Can we like, Henry, be thankful even when bad things happen to us? It all boils down to whether we believe what Paul writes in Romans 8:28 or not. We read: **“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”**

To those who love God, ALL THINGS work together for good. Do you believe that? These are not my words or thoughts, but it is God's Word. God tells us that that is the case. There are times when we may find it very difficult to understand, but that doesn't change the fact that it is true. At those times when we waver and doubt this truth we need to pray: *“Lord, increase my faith.”*

God is good all of the time. He is love. He loves us, and if we love Him then He works out all things to our good and His glory. Please understand that nothing ever happens outside of God's knowledge and ultimately His command. We need to constantly remind ourselves that God's ways and His thoughts are far superior to ours. God says through Isaiah:

**“For My thoughts are not your thoughts,  
Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.  
<sup>9</sup> “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,**

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**So are My ways higher than your ways  
And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Is.55:8-9)**

God's ways and thoughts are always right. He knows what we do not know. He sees what we do not see. He knows the end from the beginning. He knows all things. To put it simply we need to believe. Easy to say, but much harder to do. But when we can accept that God does all things well, and that He works all things for the good of those who love Him, then we are free indeed. When you are able to give God thanks no matter what, then you are a free person.

The prophet Habakkuk puts it so well:

***“Though the fig tree should not blossom  
And there be no fruit on the vines,  
Though the yield of the olive should fail  
And the fields produce no food,  
Though the flock should be cut off from the fold  
And there be no cattle in the stalls,  
<sup>18</sup> Yet I will exult in the LORD,  
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And He has made my feet like hinds' feet,  
And makes me walk on my high places.***

Oh, how I love this Scripture. Very often, it is my go to text. It helps me to keep a right perspective.

***Yet I will exult in the LORD,  
I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.***

No matter how bad it looks or gets, there is always a reason to be thankful, and that is that we have a Saviour – our Lord Jesus Christ. We can have everything taken from us, except for Jesus. Nothing can take Him from us. Paul puts it this way in Romans 8:

***“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; <sup>34</sup> who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup> Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> Just as it is written,***

***“FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG;  
WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.”***

***<sup>37</sup> But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

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Can you say Amen to these words? Is this your conviction? If you are a Christian then the answer should be yes.

But, we waver don't we? We waver when we lose sight of Jesus Christ and begin to look at the world. As soon as we turn away from Jesus and focus upon ourselves or our circumstances we lose faith. That is why Paul prompts us:

***"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" (Phil.4:4)***

Paul is reminding us to rejoice in the Lord always. To keep our heart and mind focused on Him always. We need to keep that eternal perspective on all things. We need to live by faith.

Paul continues:

***"Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." (vs 5-6)***

Pray with thanksgiving. Herein lays the key. Be thankful to God that He is, and that He does what He promises - always. He does all things well. Pray with an attitude of gratitude always. If you do then Paul says:

***"The peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (vs.7)***

Do you see how all this fits together so well?

When we are thankful to God, when we trust Him, then He grants us His peace, which also brings joy to our hearts and makes our feet light.

There is an old saying that there is no point in crying over spilt milk. To cry and mourn excessively doesn't help much. Be thankful to God for His love and His provision, and you will find peace.

May we be tuned correctly and may we live with an attitude of gratitude at all times. May God help us. Amen

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.***