

Good Things to Remember in Tough times

Opening Scripture: Philemon 1:4-7

Introduction: Here's the record of a prayer that Paul prayed for Philemon. He was the pastor of the church of the Colossians (in Asian Minor, modern Turkey).

Paul gives thanks to God for this man's love for the church and for his faith in Jesus. Philemon also had a love for lost souls because Paul mentions the '*sharing of your faith*'. Philemon was a pastor but loved sharing that faith with people beyond the walls of the church. Paul prays that the sharing of his faith would become effective. The word in Greek for *effective*, literally means *energized and perfect*.

"6 that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus"

The Passion Translation says, ... "*every good thing that belongs to you in Christ*"

These good things, in the words of Paul, needed to be acknowledged – in other words, recognised, highlighted. Philemon needed to be mindful of those good things. Ultimately, that is what would make the sharing of his faith effective, energized, robust, even desirable, by the unsaved.

1. The gospel is fundamentally a message of *good things*

Romans 10:15b - ... *As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"*

Matthew 7:11 - *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*

Luke 1:53 - *He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.*

Hebrews 9:11 - *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.*

2. I believe that even when it comes to our own relationship with God, we too need to be mindful of "*every good thing that belongs to us in Christ*".

Sometimes we forget.

Psalms 103:2 - *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:*

The acknowledgement of those ‘good things’ which belong to us because we belong to Christ, not only energizes our testimony with those outside, but it also does something to our own lives:

a) It energizes your prayer life

When you know where you stand with God and what He has given you because of Jesus, you pray with confidence. Sometimes we forget our covenant benefits and we pray deflated prayers. I believe that the effectiveness of our prayers is largely connected with knowing what is ours in Christ.

The Bible says that *some things* belong to us in Christ! In fact, the actual wording is ‘*all things*’

2 Peter 1:3 - *as His divine power has given to us **all things** that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.*

1 Corinthians 3:21-23 - *Therefore let no one boast in men. For **all things** are yours: ²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—**all are yours.** ²³ And you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.*

We shouldn’t live our lives as if Jesus had nothing to add to our existence on earth, and nothing to offer us in this world! No, He has given us all things that pertain to life here and obviously eternity. We need to acknowledge what belongs to us in Christ.

b) It impacts the quality of your worship

The grateful acknowledgement of what God has given us is so important. Gratitude fuels perfect worship. Gratitude and recognition for the grace of God in our lives is so important.

Here’s what the opposite of acknowledgement and gratitude looks like:

Nehemiah 9:35 - *For they have not served You in their kingdom, or in the many **good things** that You gave them, or in the large and rich land which You set before them; Nor did they turn from their wicked works.*

When you recognise every good and perfect gift as proceeding from the Father of lights, it energizes your worship to new levels!

So, ***the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you, in Christ Jesus*** impacts sinners, your prayer life, your worship but also...

c) Your mental well-being

When we go through tough times it is easy to focus on what we don’t have, what we can’t do and how powerless we may be feeling. It is easy to succumb to anxiety, catastrophic scenarios, and depression.

When Paul speaks about **acknowledging every good thing** which is in us, he is giving us an antidote against depression. Our focus suddenly is not on what we don't have – but on what we DO have.

Philemon says that we have good things! Focusing on the good things we have, will result in soundness of mind and peace.

Philippians 4:8-9 tells us to think on *good things*: “*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of **good** report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. ⁹The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the **God of peace** will be with you”.*

Mental health is a huge topic we hear about in the news every day. Anxiety, stress, and depression rates are higher than at any other time in history.

Proverbs 12:25 - *Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, but a good word makes it glad*

Acknowledging that we belong to Jesus and that *good things* belong to us in Christ, is a good word! Let us feel our minds with good words like:

Numbers 10:29b - *... for the Lord has promised **good things** to Israel.”*

Joshua 23:14 - *Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the **good things** which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.*

This is a good word. It is a word that comes to pass.

Psalms 103:5 - *Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

When your heart acknowledges all the good you have in Jesus, those same things will flow into your life

Matthew 12:35 - *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.*

We can't always control what is outside but we can what is inside. Let us make sure we have a treasure of good things inside. Those things will eventually overflow into our lives.

Conclusion

The acknowledgement of those good things that we have in Christ, is crucial for our testimony with those outside, it is crucial for our prayer life, it is crucial to the quality of our worship and, ultimately even to our mental health

Jesus has given us all things we need for this life and the one to come. We are not without resources, promises, tools, ability, and anything we need. Let us acknowledge that.