

BE THANKFUL

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In Genesis 11, we read about the Tower of Babel, about how a man in his eagerness to become important began that work, but God, seeing that what came from the heart of man was not good, created languages. This caused great confusion in the men of that time, since they could not communicate among themselves to continue with the building. Nowadays, in the secular work, speaking more than one language gives us a great opportunity to progress in our careers. By studying our Bibles, we have the opportunity to see the beauty of languages, and how beautiful the origin of some words is, however, once again, mankind's desire to be important or recognized, caused that man's desire to change the meaning of words for his own benefit, above what God truly says. One of those words is **eucharist**.

This Greek word *eucharistia* (εὐχαριστία) is used 15 times in the New Testament, and carries by its meaning gratitude, thanksgiving, as it comes from two Greek words, eu, "well," charizomai, "to give freely", as is so simply explained by biblical dictionaries such as Strong's and Vine's.

Sadly, modern language dictionaries such as Webster's and Oxford's provide a totally different meaning to this word,

1. A Christian ceremony in which bread is eaten and wine is drunk as a way of showing devotion to Jesus Christⁱ
2. The Christian service, ceremony, or sacrament commemorating the Last Supper, in which bread and wine are consecrated and consumed.ⁱⁱ

Both sources recognize that the modern English word comes directly from the Greek form *eucharistia*, and

agrees that it originally means thanksgiving. This huge change in the meaning is based on Catholic doctrine, which attempts to defend her point of view according to the following passage,

“And he took the cup, and **gave thanks**, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and **gave thanks**, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: **this do in remembrance of me**. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you” [all emphasis added, MR]

(Luke 22:17-20).

The Greek form used in this passage is not eucharistia, but eucharisteō (εὐχαριστέω) which literally means, I give thanks, being the verb form “*to be grateful, to express gratitude*”. It is clear to see that Roman Catholic tradition changes not only the meaning of the word eucharist, but the purpose of the Lord’s Supper. They teach, literally, that the bread is converted into the body of Christ, and that the wine is converted into the blood of Jesus. Our Lord never taught that, in His own words, he said, “*this do in remembrance of me*”. Our Savior want us to remember the sacrifice He made for each one of us, and not that we participate in a cannibalism event. By eating the bread, and by drinking the juice from the fruit of the vine, our minds must be focused on remembering how He gave his life and blood for all of us to forgive our sins. The word eucharist, as such, is not used in the gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Dear brethren and readers, let us read some passages that clearly teach us what eucharist really is,

“For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many **thanksgivings** unto God” [emphasis added, MR]

(2 Corinthians 9:12).

In the context of the previous passage, the apostle Paul is not referring to the Lord’s Supper, but to another act of worship, the collection or offering, as a generous act of a cheerful giver.

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with **thanksgiving**” [emphasis added, MR]

(Colossians 4:2).

Does the inspired writer ask us to partake of the Lord’s Supper while we pray? Certainly, this is not the case.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created **to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth**. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, **if it be received with thanksgiving**: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer” [all emphasis added, MR]

(1 Timothy 4:1-5).

The apostle Paul, to the young Timothy, his son in the faith, warns him about those who will depart from the faith, those who follow seducing spirits and doctrines of

devils, .who give themselves to hypocrisy, and forbid marriage (just like those who command celibacy), and command to abstain from meats (just like those who command not to eat some type of meats during certain part of the year).

Eucharist is not to partake of the Lord's Supper, but to be grateful. Without a doubt, we are thankful for our Savior and His sacrifice, and we do it through our prayers when we keep in remembrance that event while we partake of the Lord's Supper, but that is not the only moment when we must be or are thankful. There are many other things to be thankful. In America, there is this holiday named "Thanksgiving Day". We must be grateful not just one day in the year, not only on the Lord's day which is every Sunday, but all the time.

In this opportunity, we will study three brief but important reasons on why we must be thankful, such as (1) our lives, (2) our families, and (3) our salvation.

BE THANKFUL FOR OUR LIVES.

We must be grateful to be alive. God gives us a new day and an opportunity to be at peace with Him, to repent of what we are doing wrong, and to walk the path that He has drawn for us in His Word.

A brief study of the first chapter of the book of Genesis shows us how God is our creator (Genesis 1:1), and how, during six days He created everything we know today and more, and at the end of each day, He saw how everything was good, however, when He created us, male and female as He created us, when He saw what He had done, He saw that it was very good (Genesis 1:31). Beloved brethren and readers, we are not only a good creation, we are very good creations, let us not doubt it at any moment of our lives.

The males, yes, we strong men, we must be thankful to be created that way because that is how God created us.

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”

(Genesis 2:7).

God breathed the breath of life to us. He gave us such a beautiful difference from everything else He created. We are not just a simple figurine made of clay, nor a puppet, but being to whom God gave a mind (keep in mind the wonderful task he assigned Adam to do, to give a name to everything that God created).

Ladies, you are special too, very special, and you must be thankful for being that way too, the way God created each one of you.

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man”

(Genesis 2:21-22).

Many have used this explanation, however, the first one this writer heard saying it was our brother Tomás Haughton, and it says, “*God did not take a bone from Adam's head to make Eve superior, nor did He take it from Adam's foot to make her inferior. God took a rib from Adam to remind us that we are going side by side, our helpmeet, our equal, our complement*”. Ladies, never forget it, without you we are not complete, and we thank God for it.

We must be thankful for what we have. The patient Job, a man who is told by the Scriptures as a perfect and right man, fearful of God and who eschewed evil (Job 1:1), gives us, in the opinion of this writer, the most beautiful description of what our earthly possessions are,

“And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord”

(Job 1:21).

Beloved, this writer always remember the occasion when he boarded a cab, and the taxi driver commented, *“Every day I thank God because, as simple as it seems, just the fact that I wear underwear today is a blessing that I did not have when I came to this world.”* Everything, absolutely everything we have, is not because we have acquired it, but because God blessed us to have it.

And one of those things that we have today, and for which we should thank, is Christian suffering. The apostle Peter wrote, *“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf”* (1 Peter 4:16). We will experience many things that may not be pleasant, but our attitude and response to them must always be to glorify God, and just as Job suffered, we should remember to be thankful for them.

BE THANKFUL FOR OUR FAMILIES.

God did not create Adam and Steve, nor Ada and Eve, but Adam and Eve. Marriage, as instituted by God, is a blessing!

“Therefore shall a man leave his father
and his mother, and shall cleave unto his
wife: and they shall be one flesh”

(Genesis 2:24).

These same words were cited by our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew 19, when he clarified the much-needed doubt about the divorce letter. Both the Hebrew and the Greek terms that were translated as “cleave” carry by meaning the fact of being together as attached by glue. Imagine for a moment that we stick something with the popular “*crazy glue*”, once stuck and dry, it is not easy to separate it, and in order to separate it, one of the two items must be destroyed. Hence, the Word of God is so wise that teaches us that the only two ways in which a marriage can be separated are death, or the horrible act of fornication.

When God created man and woman, He blessed them, and, the first order He gave them was, “*Be fruitful, and multiply; and replenish the earth...*” (Genesis 1:28). This mandate can never be carried out by Adam and Steve, or by Ada and Eve. A simple explanation, from the beginning of time, of why homosexuality is an abomination.

The children, without a doubt, are a blessing! The psalmist wrote,

“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord:
and the fruit of the womb is his reward.
As arrows are in the hand of a mighty
man; so are children of the youth. **Happy
is the man that hath his quiver full of
them:** they shall not be ashamed, but they
shall speak with the enemies in the gate”
[emphasis added, MR]

(Psalm 127:3-5).

An archer without arrows is not profitable on the
battlefield. You can imagine an archer in front of his enemies

without any way to defend himself, more than a shame, if something is for sure is going to be his death. Those of us who have the blessing of being parents can understand the beauty of the psalmist's words. Our children not only keep the name of the family alive, but also what they lived and learned, and the best thing we can teach them is to love and obey our heavenly Father, as a sign of gratitude to God for the inheritance He has given us.

In the same way we appreciate our children, we must also be thankful for our parents.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise)”

(Ephesians 6:1-2).

There are three words in the previous passage that are ignored often, those words are *“in the Lord”*. We must not obey our parents in everything, but we must do it when it is according to what the Word of God teaches us. We must honor and be thankful to our parents because they are the reason we are in this world. They provided us with shelter, clothes, and education. When they are no longer able to take care of themselves, we must do it, that is just one simple way to thank them for everything they did (and might keep doing) for us. How can we honor God who we do not see, if we dishonor our parents whom we can see?

There might be a chance that our parents, siblings, and any other relative set us apart because we do not follow their traditions, customs, or beliefs, for the plain reason that what we do we do it according to the will of God, putting God first. When that happens, we have a huge blessing to be thankful, our spiritual family, our Christian family!

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and

making melody in your heart to the Lord; **Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself” [emphasis added, MR].

(Ephesians 5:19-28).

¡How wonderful is to know that we are part of the church that our Lord expects to receive back! Let us give thanks to God for such a blessing, worshipping as we must do, in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

BE THANKFUL FOR OUR SALVATION.

There are many things to be thankful, but, let us close our study with, probably, the most important of all, our salvation. There is a song that we usually sing in Spanish that is a translation of,

Without Him I could do nothing
Without Him I'd surely fail.
Without Him I would be drifting
Like a ship without a sail.

Jesus, O Jesus,
Do you know Him today?
You can't turn Him away.
O Jesus! O Jesus!
Without Him, how lost I would be!ⁱⁱⁱ

The apostle Paul, when beautifully explained to those in Corinth about the Resurrection of our Lord, wrote,

“But thanks be to God, which giveth us
the victory through our Lord Jesus
Christ”

(1 Corinthians 15:57).

Beloved brethren and friends, there is only one mediator between God and men, and that mediator is not the Pope, nor the Priest, nor the Pastor, neither the preacher, but Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). Let us be thankful to God like the psalmist,

“Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks,
unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy
name is near thy wondrous works
declare”

(Psalms 75:1).

God is near, nearer than what we can even imagine. Let us be thankful to Him because He is good, and His mercy endures forever (Psalm 118:1). If by any chance, you are needed of additional encourage to thank Him, read Psalm 136, you will find 26 great ways to comprehend how His mercy endures forever.

Finally, let us not only pray and sing, let us also live according to the plan that He set for us in His powerful Word,

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, **giving thanks to God and the Father by him** ... And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” [emphasis added, MR]

(Colossians 3:17-23-24).

CONCLUSION.

How thankful are we? We thank the boy from the market store who take our packages to the car, to the one who is keeping an eye on our car while we go shopping, to the one who picks and returns something to us when it falls from us, to the waiter or waitress when they bring our food and drinks, but, do we also thank God for all of that? Do we thank God for everything else? Did we thank God this morning for the opportunity to be alive one more day? It is my sincere hope and prayer that it be that way.

Only in Christ, we can be victorious, only in Him, we can be saved. The Bible is clear, the Bible is simple,

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with

him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin”

(Romans 6:3-7).

Let us not deceived ourselves, let us be doers of the word and not hearers only (James 1:22). We have been studying on this occasion on how to be thankful to God for everything. Let us not let the opportunity to thank Him escape today, tomorrow could be too late. God wants you to be at peace with Him, to come to the family, to come back home, but that is a decision that only you can make. He is not going to force you to do it, He already gave you everything that you need to do it, it is up to you to be grateful to Him and show Him that.

God bless you!

ENDNOTES

ⁱ <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/definition/Eucharist>

ⁱⁱ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/eucharist>

ⁱⁱⁱ Mylon R. LeFevre, “Without Him”, Praise For The Lord Songbook, p.779.