Lifelines

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Topic: Giving Thanks

Who Can Show Us Anything Good?
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Thanksgiving is quickly approaching, and the world seems to be committed to destroying itself. The television news channels are filled with violence, hatred, and mistrust, and if you get a 24 hour news channel, you get endless focusing upon evil. We think this is a new aberration, but apparently it is nothing new. In Psalm 46:6, King David states: "Many are asking, "Who can show us anything good?"

As the season of harvest and Thanksgiving approach, we need to shift our attention to God, who is the answer to David's question about "Who" can show us "anything good?" Gratitude and thanksgiving find their source in the presence of God, in having access to connect with, and marvel over, the living presence of God in our midst. Far too often we approach the season of Thanksgiving focusing on things, possessions, or material blessings.

It is appropriate to survey our physical and material blessings, and the overflowing bountiful supply of food, health, conveniences and opportunities to which each of us have access. Living in a warm dwelling with running water, and hot water, is a luxury not available to billions in the world. To have all that we have (even the poorest among us are rich by world-comparison standards), should be noted, appreciated, and a source for giving blessings to God and others. Our possessions are given to be used and shared, not to be hoarded and withheld.

But we miss out on the true goal of thanksgiving when we only focus on things that are here now, and could be gone tomorrow morning. The real goal of giving thanks is to acknowledge the generous and gracious God, who blesses us so that we might bless others. Thanksgiving is most at home in the context of personal relationships. Far too many wealthy people, due to their focus upon protecting their wealth, live very lonely and isolated lives.

While we often dream of someday being wealthy enough to live in their neighborhoods and lifestyles, the reality is that today, you most likely have and enjoy more blessings and freedom than they do. Most wealthy people live behind security walls, require security guards when they go out, and are limited in what they can "safely" do. Jesus taught us more than 2000 years ago, to not be obsessed with things, for God knows what you need and will each day provide what you need. Jesus said, "One's life is not in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15). Instead in Matthew 6:33, we are to "Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things will be added/provided to you."

The people were asking David, "Who can show us anything good?" His answer is revealed in Psalm 4:6, where he asks God: "Let the light of Your face shine on us, LORD!" Everything good finds its origins in our personal relationship with the God of the Bible.

In the creation account in Genesis we read that God spoke light into existence, which made life on Earth possible. Whenever God gets involved with us in our lives, there is an enlightenment that takes place, an opening of our eyes to see the majesty of Eternal God, and also to see how God is currently at work in and through our lives. When we see God, we see His goodness. God is constantly providing good things to us, and doing good towards us. The beginning of becoming appreciative of

life, and its complex beauty is to see life through God's eyes. It is being thankful that God shines His light and clarity into our life situation.

God is good, all the time; so whenever our eyes focus upon God's goodness, God's presence, and God's glory, we are engaging the presence of He who is the ultimate manifestation of goodness. David asks God to "Let the light of Your face shine upon us, LORD." Goodness comes from God, and when God does things His objective is to manifest His goodness.

Who can show us anything good? The answer is that we experience good when God lets us experience His love, His presence, and the smile of His face. This is what produces goodness that leads to spontaneous and life-giving thanksgiving. To become thankful in this season, focus upon God and His goodness towards you, then share His goodness with others so they too, can find lasting gratitude.

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