



REFLECTIONS

November 22, 2015

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Thanksgiving in Trying Times

Gracious God, we awaken today to a cold dark world besieged with violence and fear. Our eyes are so blinded by the evil circumstances around us that we are unable to see your brightness shining beyond our suffering and your warmth radiating from your inestimable love. Still, in these trying times, we turn to you in thanksgiving for the blessings of this life—blessings taken so much for granted that we often fail to notice.

A time of silence opens our eyes to see nature's miraculous ways—flowing streams carrying the water of life into deep blue reservoirs, breezes restoring freshness into the air we breathe, and budding leaves distributing seeds of life about the land. We give you thanks, loving God for these, the miracles of your creation.

In thanksgiving we open our eyes to the majesty of mountainous backdrops that beautify mirrored lakes, and to fertile valleys, alive with blossoms as colorful as rainbows. We are thankful for their majestic beauty, their smallness in miniscule detail, and their vastness beyond comprehension.

How blessed we are to be created in your image and to be entrusted with the duty to rule over your creation. And how grateful we are that you granted us the freedom to do it as we choose, knowing that when our judgment goes awry, we will still be blessed when you take our many mistakes and transform them for good for those who love you.

Heavenly Father, we are thankful for the freedom we enjoy in this land and the communities, neighbors, and friends who share it with us. We thank you for the gift of family, for the privileges to worship you without fear, for the liberty to move about with no restraint, and for the opportunity to pursue a way of life in ways of our choosing.

Most of all we are thankful for love. We are grateful for the people we love and the ones who love us. And we thank you for your love revealed in so many ways but none greater than the sacrifice of your Son for our sins. Though in very nature God, He humbled himself as a mortal man and He became obedient to death, even death on the cross. Through his sacrifice, our sins are washed away and we are blessed with everlasting life.

Gracious God, we awaken today to a cold dark world besieged with violence and fear. Yet in trying times, you are always with us. So we humbly bow before you today in grateful Thanksgiving for the many blessings of our lives; but especially for your love expressed in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in whose name we offer this our prayer. Amen

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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