

CHIEF MINISTRIES

November 2012

It was early autumn in 1620 where after enduring great hardship, 53 surviving Pilgrims celebrated a successful harvest at Plymouth Rock. The Indian leader Massasoit took 90 of his men and brought provision to bless these new comers to the land. We continue the celebration today. This month, "Thanksgiving" takes place, so this "Chief" wishes you the best and reminds you to be grateful for those things you should be grateful for and maybe for some things that you don't realize you should be. I'm not sure there would have been a "Thanksgiving" were it not for the "Native Americans" who initially brought and gave various foods of the land to the new people amongst them. Freely giving and sharing what the Creator and giver had blessed them with. So..... Are we truly thankful? Last month we talked about destiny. Many a man has asked me, "what is the will of God for my life? I don't know where to begin"! "All I've known is a life of crime, or street life, drug selling, 'pimpin' and whoring around."

Well, let's start here. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 tells us to *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*

No matter what comes your way, do you rejoice? The word rejoice in Greek literally means to dance and spin like a top. Now I know we don't see each other doing that much. But rejoice is a word we use in worship quite a bit. You know, it wasn't until I had my Jesus encounter that I began to realize just how "free" I was on the inside that my "outside" just couldn't help but show it. I've never been a dancer, but I have danced before the Lord in worship and it truly has been a liberating experience. I had a friend who would go to church with me and he'd look at me all crazy sometimes when I would bounce up and down during the praise service. These were precious times at a revival going on in Pensacola, Florida in the late 90s. It truly was an "experience" that will remain with me forever. Well, my friend thought I was a bit out there, bouncing like on a pogo stick, but I guess I felt a little like David must have when he danced before the Lord with all his might. At least I kept my clothes on! I was free! The realization that He took every weight, every sin and stain from me I just couldn't stop myself from expressing my joy, my rejoicing. I looked at my friend as he sat there in a joyful, jubilant celebration of praise and I said, "what's wrong with you?" And he looked at me smugly and said, "I don't need to be seen praising the Lord, I'm doing it right now," and he tapped his chest. "I'm doing it in my heart." Okay, whatever, I thought. Well, a few months later my friend asked me to go to a district championship basketball game where his son was playing and being a ballplayer, I said "sure". Well, it was a nail-biter, down-to-the-wire and it wound up with two seconds left, his son going to the free-throw line for a one-and-one (make the first, get to take the 2nd shot). They were down by one, so they needed both to win the game. Well, up went the first shot and it went in! I thought my friend was going to wet his pants! He was jumping up and down like crazy and yelling and screaming. I clapped my hands, but decided to stay reserved. But, when the 2nd shot went up and in, I literally was scared this guy was going to have a heart attack! He ran down the stands around the court, knocked a cheerleader over, he was borderline ridiculous. And me? I just sat there watching him run around like a chicken with its head cut off. Finally, he looked up and saw me just sitting there in the stands and came running up to me and grabbed my jacket, and shook me yelling, "what's wrong with you? Don't you realize what's happened. Look at everyone going nuts and you're just sitting there." It was then that I looked up at him and said, "what are you talking about? I am excited about what's happening, as I tapped my chest. "I'm rejoicing, "in my heart". I immediately saw the

realization of when you're really into something like basketball, your kids, or Jesus praise will always be visible. People will know that you love something by the passion and enthusiasm that you have for it. Joy will always be a mark of a believer! Rejoice ALWAYS, not just when you feel like it. Put a smile on your face. Learn to worship your creator with ALL that is within you (Psalms 34:1). And learn to take everything to your God in prayer. Even the littlest things! The guy that bothers you. The food that needs some seasoning, your celly whose hygiene is hurting you. The boss man or lady that won't leave you alone. Pray about everything and don't stop. There is more to a Christ-centered life than just a few moments at the end of the day,.....now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep..... Pray without ceasing at anytime of the day regarding everything. "Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble everywhere? We should never be discouraged! Take it to the Lord in prayer."

And finally, in EVERYTHING give thanks. Everything means what it says! But how often we murmur, grumble and complain because it's not how we want it to be, or how we would do it or it just doesn't make sense to our super minds that have everything already figured out (I'm being a bit sarcastic, sorry). The good, the bad, and the ugly. The issues, people and things that come our way, if we profess to be believers, we must possess the faith in God that pushes us to realize that He's filtering everything that comes our way. Everything! We are His children, and some lessons need to be learned. If He leads us to them, He'll lead us through them. So why are we so ungrateful?

I suppose we can trace it back to the Israelites who were given everything they needed to make it to the promised land, yet they always wanted the easy way. They were like we are today - the "my way" generation. Read all about them in Exodus 16 and on. A lot of times we're guilty of viewing our circumstances without understanding that the Lord brought us to this place. The Lord is merciful to never leave us to ourselves or our circumstances. You can count on that. So, my friends, do His will by remaining faithful and give Him thanks for your situation. I hate being in prison, but I'm thankful I'm free! I hate not making money to live on, yet God provides all my needs according to His riches in glory, so I thank Him. It seems I'm surrounded on every side by unruly, ungodly men, yet I thank Him because I must love the unlovely and be compassionate to those that seem destined for hell, for we too once were.

Men of God and followers of Christ, I challenge you this month and for the rest of your existence to live out these three verses. Live full of the joy of the Lord, let it be seen in you. When those around you complain, maybe you can simply say "let's pray about it," right there, right then. And finally, be thankful and begin to fulfill His will for your life.

I thank God every day for each one of you.

With Gratefulness flowing from my heart,

Chief

P.S. if this ministry has somehow touched your life. Could you please write to us and tell us? We'd like to share some testimonies with our website viewers. Your story may help someone, so faithfully help us continue to help others rise above the wire. Thank you!

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