Fear Not (Part 21/30) – Gratitude

Alex Schneider · Luke 2:10-11 · July 16, 2025



Luke 2:10–11

> 10 And the angel said to them, Fear not, for behold, I announce to you glad tidings of great joy, which will be to all the people; 11 for today a Savior has been born to you in David’s city, who is Christ the Lord.

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"Gratitude is the lifebelt on the river of life," someone once said. Another wrote: "**Gratitude is good medicine for the soul**. It's a pity that very few people take it."

Gratitude is indeed a remedy for fear. The angel encouraged the fearful shepherds not to be afraid by pointing out what they could rejoice in. Looking at the good should help them to cast off all fear. And what was the result? After the shepherds had seen everything, they glorified and praised God!

In fact, in moments when we are particularly afraid, we have a mountain, a problem, a difficulty before our eyes. But as soon as we gratefully list what the Lord has already given us, the cloud of fear can disappear.

"We must vaccinate our souls with gratitude so that we are armed against the insidious viruses of resignation." (unknown)

The Bible has two very interesting invitations for us on this subject:

- "*Give thanks in everything*" (1 Thes. 5:18a). This means that we literally say "thank you" to our Lord, which we unfortunately often forget.
- "*Be thankful*" (Col. 3:15b). This goes much further. This is not about our mouths but about our hearts. At this point, the Bible speaks of an attitude to life, of a firm decision of the heart to be truly thankful to our Lord for everything good in life.

Here are two impressive examples of gratitude. The first is about Fanny Crosby (1844-1915), who wrote a total of 8000 poems, many of which are still sung by Christians today. When she was still a child, a doctor treated her eye disease very badly, and she lost her sight as a result. How did Fanny react? What would she do if she met this doctor? In her later years, she answered this question: "If I met him, I would say to him: 'Thank you, thank you, thank you! She explained it like this: "If I hadn't gone blind, I wouldn't have been able to see so much because my eyes would have been captivated by a thousand visible things. But now I can concentrate on writing poetry."

Gratitude is Protection against Damage to the Soul

The second example is about Richard Wurmbrand (1909-2001), who suffered terribly as a Christian in Romania under the communists. Let's listen to his story: "I was in prison underground for 14 years. For 14 years, I saw no sun, no moon, and no stars. For 14 years, no color except gray. Over time, I forgot blue, yellow, etc. We didn't have a Bible. I didn't read a book for 14 years. I won't tell you what we ate. We were very, very hungry. You never saw anyone in these solitary cells except the guards and the torturers. Nobody ever smiled at you; nobody wished you good morning. We were all alone—complete silence. You never heard a voice—only the scream of a tortured person from time to time. And you asked yourself, 'When will it be my turn? I was very grateful to God. I was sentenced to 25 years in prison, and now I have 25 years for the

most important thing in the world. Time with God." He wrote these impressive lines in his diary: "Alone in my cell, cold, hungry, in rags, I danced with joy every night."[1]

If we ask ourselves how it is possible to endure every torture so fearlessly in these circumstances and always remain faithful to our Lord, the short answer is gratitude. Because Richard Wurmbrand was grateful for what the Lord had done for him, he was able to live in the present with a calm heart and look to the future with hope.

What can we be grateful for? If we were to sit down quietly for an hour and write down all our reasons for gratitude, we would probably have to get the next sheet of paper after five minutes.

"The secret of inner peace is to dwell on the good, to dwell on the good over and over again." (John Nelson Darby)

The Lord Jesus tells you today: "Don't be afraid! There is so much in your life to be thankful for – remembering this can help you in the future! Keep in mind how many gifts I have already given you in your life and for eternity!"

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Footnote:

[1] We probably feel that we could buckle in a situation like that of Richard Wurmbrand. The Lord gives us strength for the situation we are in at the present time. Then, if we ever have to experience a particularly extreme situation, we will also experience the needed strengthening. The important thing is that we need help for the situation we are currently in.

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