

Give Thanks or Complain – Choose Your Life

I want to stir you up. I want you to see the root of all your troubles (separation from the goodness of God complaint) and give you a daily tool to defeat even the greatest of problems.

I. What if Normal Isn't Normal?

If you knew that **something everyone considers normal** was actually **destroying you** and robbing you of the promises of God, would you want to go on being “normal?”

The Abundant Life IS Available to You!

[John 10.9](#) I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. [10](#) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Περισσός — Exceptional, outstanding, remarkable, unusual. So abundant as to be considerably more than what one would expect or anticipate, causing a decided or distinct advantage.

II. The Gates, Doors, and Windows of Heaven Open and Close by our Choice!

[Ps 100.4](#) Enter his **gates with thanksgiving**,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!

5 For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

A gate takes you into a different realm, jurisdiction, or atmosphere... a different reality.

Gates are entry points into a **structure**, a *kosmos*.

We **enter** HIS gates with a simple act, **THANKSGIVING!**

No one is complaining, or crying needlessly in Heaven.

A. The Dangers of Complaining – the Complaints of Israel.

1. Stop Complaining and See Salvation

Exod 14.12 Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?’ For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

13 And Moses said to the people, “**Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD**, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. **14** The LORD will fight for you, and **you have only to be silent.**”

30 Thus **the LORD saved** Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.**31 Israel saw the great power** that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they **believed** in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

2. Water (3 days)

Exod 15.22 ESV Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went **three days** in the wilderness and found no water. **23** When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore it was named Marah. **24** And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” **25** And he cried to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and **the water became sweet.**

There the LORD made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, **26** saying, “**If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I**

will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for **I am the LORD, your healer.**"

3. Manna

4. No water

Exod 17.1 ESV All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was **no water** for the people to drink. **2** Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, **"Give us water to drink."** ...the people grumbled against Moses and said, **"Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"**

...6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and **you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it**, and the people will drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.

5. THE BIG ISSUE – If things aren't the way I like them, Is the Lord with me?

Exod 17.7 ESV And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, **"Is the LORD among us or not?"**

As soon as they asked that, AMALEK comes to destroy them (Agag, Haman)

III. DEFEATING AMALEK by touching the FAITHFULNESS of God

Exod 17.8 ESV *Then Amalek came* and fought with Israel at **Rephidim. (Place of rest)**

9 So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand."

- 10 So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 **Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed.** 12 But **Moses' hands grew weary**, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he **sat** on it, while **Aaron and Hur held up his hands**, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So **his hands were steady (emunah – faithfulness)** until the going down of the sun. 13 And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.
- 15 And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, **The LORD Is My Banner**, 16 saying, **“A hand upon the throne of the LORD!** The LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

In **our faith in God's faithfulness**, we touch the throne of YHWH.!

IV. FACING HUGE PROBLEMS

- 2 Chr 20.1 ESV After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle. 2 Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, **“A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; ...** 3 Then Jehoshaphat was **afraid** and **set his face to seek the LORD**, and **proclaimed a fast** throughout all Judah. ...

HUGE THREAT – Desperate Measures

Proclaimed a FAST – break from ordinary activity. The daily grind. Fast from distractions, negativity. ‘

PRAYER of Jehoshaphat:

- 5 And Jehoshaphat stood ..., 6 and said, **“O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms ..., so that none is able to withstand you.** 7 **Did you not, our God, drive out ... give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?** 8 And they have **lived** in it and have **built**

for you in it a **sanctuary for your name**, saying, **9 'If disaster** comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, **we will stand** before this house and before you—for **your name is in this house**—and cry out to you in our affliction, and **you will hear** and **save.**' ...

12 O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. **We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.**"

OUR EYES ARE ON YOU!

A FRESH WORD FROM A PROPHET

2 Chr 20.14 ESV And the Spirit of the LORD came upon **Jahaziel** ...

15 And he said, "**Listen**, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, '**Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed** at this great horde, for **the battle is not yours but God's.** **17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf,** O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you."

MESSAGE You won't have to lift a hand in this battle;

WORSHIP – the response of faith

2 Chr 20.18 ESV Then Jehoshaphat **bowed his head** with his **face to the ground**, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem **fell down** before the LORD, **worshipping** the LORD. **19** And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, **stood up to praise** the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

Hallelujah! Loud and high!

THE NECESSITY OF AMEN

2 Chr 20.20 ESV And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of

Jerusalem! **Believe** in the LORD your God, and you will be **established**; **believe** his prophets, and you will **succeed**."

Believe (*amon*); **Established** (*amon*); **Believe** (*amon*);

Succeed (*tzalach*) to prosper, succeed, thrive, to accomplish what is intended.

2 Cor 1.20 **ESV** For **all the promises of God find their Yes in him.**

That is why it is through him that **we utter our Amen** to God for his glory.

NIV For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him **the "Amen" is spoken by us** to the glory of God.

V. Visualization: All the promises of God

HOLINESS LOOKS BEAUTIFUL

2 Chr 20.21 **NKJV** And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed

those who should **sing to the LORD,**

and who should **praise the beauty of holiness,**

as they went out before the army and were saying:

"Praise the LORD,

For His **mercy endures forever.**"

It is in our singing and celebration of the Lord that we CONNECT to His GOODNESS

And his UNENDING love.

It's **simple** and it's the opposite of the **complaint**, "Is the Lord with us?"

ALL THEY SAW WAS VICTORY!

2 Chr 20.22 **ESV** And **when they began to sing and praise,** the LORD set an ambush ...

24 When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, **they looked toward the horde**, and **behold**, there were **dead bodies** lying on the ground; **none had escaped**.

MAIN FOCUS: Never forget any kindness that we have received!

How about “fasting” from all negativity?

Gratitude is the source of all GOOD, it connects us with the goodness of God.

Prov 18.21 ESV Death and life are in the power of the tongue,

Deut 30.19 ESV I call heaven and earth to witness ... that I **have set before you life and death**, blessing and curse. Therefore **choose life**, that you and your offspring may live,.”

He leads us on the path we choose! Choose gratitude!

The courtroom of Heaven:

Oh, you like to give thanks, then we will give you plenty to give thanks for.

Oh, you like to complain, then we will give you plenty to complain about.

Basic task of parents: To teach a child to recognize and appreciate the good they are given.

If I deny the kindness of my friend, I will eventually deny the kindness of God!

Continual gratitude is continual repentance.

Brain chemistry – we like new, surprise, it has a chemical response. **We get used to it.** Just from a physical basis, we begin to feel we deserve it, that we are entitled to it. It stops thrilling us.

It takes deliberate action to stay thankful, to stay humble, to be childlike.

Never forget any kindness that we have received!

Rom 2.4 NIV Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

VI. Action: How about a simple NOTEBOOK of every blessing and kindness that occurs during your day?

BECOMING A CHAMPION OF THANKSGIVING:

- 1. Avoid all whining, complaining, needless crying, sadness and despair as if it were the Bubonic Plague!**
- 2. Focus on the Kindnesses we receive. Keep a NOTEBOOK of the kindness of God that comes to you.**

It changes your prayers from ASKING to THANKING

It changes your heart from sullen to grateful

It opens the gates, doors and windows of Heaven to shower you with every blessing!

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This is the BEST THING to which you've ever applied yourself!

The Will and Testament of God! (The FULL INHERITANCE!)

1 Thess 5.16 Rejoice always,

17 pray without ceasing,

18 give thanks in all circumstances; for **this is the will of God** in Christ Jesus **for you.**

FREEDOM is the capacity to live with purpose, to grow, to inherit. Sons inherit, slaves survive.

Repentance!

(In the will of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit, I'm changing the lense through which I see and interpret the world around me and within me.)

Thanksgiving! No whining, no complaining, no needless tears!

(I'm not perfect, I'm just cooperating with the Holy Spirit to become aware of complaining, unwarranted sadness, needless tears.)

Rom 15.13 NIV May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.