

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: THANK THE LORD IN ALL THINGS

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 59:2

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it. Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things. Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness; yea, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

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Fear not; let your hearts be comforted, yea, rejoice evermore,  
and in everything give thanks, waiting patiently on the Lord.

The revelations quoted from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants which command us to thank the Lord in all things are not unique. Many Biblical passages also proclaim the duty, the obligation, and the privilege of giving thanks. Paul wrote one of the best known of such exhortations to the Thessalonians, saying, "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Thanksgiving is a duty and an obligation which we owe to the God who is the creator of the world, the universe, and of all things therein -- the giver of life and love and beauty and every good. Our scripture says, "Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things;" and shalt implies obligation. In a previous sermon we made use of another statement from the same section of the Doctrine and Covenants which gives us today's text. It is: "In nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments." Man owes a debt of thanksgiving to his Creator.

Yes, the giving of thanks is both a duty and an obligation -- but it is also a joy and a pleasure and a fulfillment. The thankful heart always enjoys God's blessings more than the unthankful. Think of all the happy people you know, and of the unhappy as well, and you will discover what I mean. Have you ever gone into a really good restaurant or dining room which was patronized by the class of people who have everything, and observed how the patrons enjoyed their food? All too often in my infrequent visits to such

places, I have seen and heard people complaining about inconsequential and insignificant things. They are dissatisfied with the food, with the service, with the lighting and air conditioning, with the cooking, and with everything about them. Why are they unhappy and bitterly critical? Because instead of being thankful that God has blessed them above what they deserve, they were being unhappy because they did not think they were getting what they deserved as very special people accustomed to the best.

On the other hand, most of the happy, satisfied people of earth -- not all, but most of them -- are those who don't have too much, but who eat their food in an environment of love and gratitude to the God who has blessed them with all the things actually needed, plus many things which they did not really deserve and which they could have done without. Next time you are tempted to complain, count up what you have done for God. Then count up what God has done for you beyond what you deserve, and you will be moved to gratitude and content.

"Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things." Some people take all the credit for themselves, saying "I did this," or "I earned that," or "I designed and built that." Certainly men deserve some credit for their accomplishments; but God deserves some credit too. The commandment is to thank the Lord thy God -- not yourself, or your lucky stars, or fate -- but the one Being without whom no man could ever accomplish anything, or know any peace or enjoyment in the earth.

Notice too that we are to thank the Lord in all things. Paul says, "In everything give thanks." It is easy enough to thank God for the good things of life, for the pleasant experiences and the abundant riches which come our way. It is not always quite so easy to thank him for the trials, the hardships, the deprivations, the sorrows, the misfortunes, the illnesses that sometimes come to us. Yet the heart that is truly grateful instinctively knows that even the unpleasant and painful things of life have their place in teaching us to love each other, in teaching us humility and patience and sympathy, and in developing our Christian virtues that go to make up our character. The thankful heart knows that "all things work together for good to them that love God..." and is thankful for the dark as well as the bright, the painful as well as the pleasant.

Some people divide the things of God's creation into good and bad. Their policy regarding those material blessings which they regard as bad is: "Touch not, taste not, handle not." But my Bible says that at the end of his work of creation God looked upon all he had made, and pronounced it very good. One who has the attitude of thanksgiving in all things, sees and recognizes the good in all things of God's creation, and seeks to discover the proper, appropriate, timely, beneficial, and reverent use to which each thing may be put; then he uses the gift accordingly, with thanksgiving. God has said "Inasmuch as ye do these things (i.e. keep his commandments) with thanksgiving, with cheerful hearts and countenances ..... the fullness of the earth is yours." And Paul wrote to Timothy: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." He has said again in modern revelation that all wholesome herbs and fruits, and also the flesh of beasts and fowls of the air, "I the Lord have ordained for the use of man, with thanksgiving."

The man who recognizes no debt of

gratitude to God, the giver of every good and perfect gift, who is discontented and dissatisfied with what he has received, is liable to fall into all manner of sin and error and evil. Jealousy and covetousness are frequently preludes to much more serious sins. An attitude of thanksgiving helps keep the heart and mind centered on God, and guards against temptation. Another passage of the Doctrine and Covenants counsels us to do all things with prayer and thanksgiving, "that ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men." The attitude of thanksgiving is a safeguard against evil in all its forms.

"Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things." How do we give thanks? We may utter some more or less meaningless words of thanksgiving once a year on Thanksgiving day, and go on about our business. Or we may utter sincere words of thanks. But the commandment of our text may be taken in another way. Everything we do or think or say should be an expression of our thanksgiving to God. "In everything give thanks." "Thank the Lord in all things," in whatever you do.

Our worship should always contain this element of thanksgiving, whether it be private worship in solitary prayer, or group worship with God's people in his house built as a place of thanksgiving and prayer. Our deeds should be acts of thanksgiving, as we return in loving service to others the blessings with which God has blessed us. Our lives should be a constant expression of thanksgiving. Our characters should be an expression of thanksgiving, a returning to God of what he has so liberally given to us.

God grant that as individuals and as a nation we shall never lose the spirit of thanksgiving, but that an ever increasing number of, in an ever increasing number of way, shall be persuaded to thank the Lord our God in all things. "Fear not; let your hearts be comforted; yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks, waiting patiently on the Lord." (D.C.95:1)