



Spirit of Grace

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Herald

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Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart

Thanksgiving is associated with God's miraculous preservation and blessings upon the early American settlers. It is interesting to read some of the stories which give the specific ways those blessings and protection abounded in their lives. One of the most fascinating stories is that of New Englander Ephraim Howe.

In September, 1676, Ephraim set sail from Boston for New Haven with his two sons and three other men. A terrible storm blew them far off their intended course deep into the Atlantic. Now a great distance from shore, they were exposed for days to the weather and spray of the ocean, and with little food on board things looked very bleak indeed. The ship's rudder was lost and they had nothing to do but drift with the currents of the rough seas.

Ephraim's two sons died as storm after storm fell upon them. Eventually they were able to create another rudder and make some progress

toward home, but when the second rudder was lost, they simply allowed the ocean to take them where it willed. Finally the ship was blown toward a desolate island near Cape Sable. They were glad to be on dry land, but due to lack of food and shelter the other men soon succumbed to death and Ephraim was left alone on the island.

By crude fishing and scavenging Ephraim was able to provide for himself a diet that would sustain him and lived his solitary life on the island for month after month. Being a godly man he devoted much time to prayer for rescue, even forsaking his meager diet for the purpose of fasting and prayer on certain days. Day after day he confessed his sins, which he decided must have brought him to such an end, and prayed for deliverance. Occasionally he saw fishing vessels on the horizon, but none had the least interest in coming near the island which had become his prison.

After nearly a year on the island a thought suddenly came to him.



Although he had spent so much time in prayer, pleading for rescue, he had never thanked God for the mercies shown him in preserving him and keeping him alive thus far. Ephraim decided to set aside a day of thanksgiving, where he would spend much time in prayer, not begging for rescue, but thanking God for His mercies in keeping him alive and providing him the means to feed himself. Although his sons had died, they had died with their faith firmly placed on the Lord Jesus. He saw that, with all his troubles and tragedy, divine grace had been intermixed, and he had not been appropriately grateful. He was struck with conviction over his forgetfulness and selfishness in not properly recognizing the goodness of God to him throughout this trial. Although clueless as to what day in the calendar it might be, Ephraim created his own, personal Thanksgiving Day (minus the turkey and pumpkin pie, of course!).

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Thank you!

Thanks so much for your faithful support, in prayers and financial gifts, to Spirit of Grace Ministries! What a blessing it has been to see the hand of God working to open doors of ministry for us, and to supply the needed resources for us to go through those doors and accomplish His assigned tasks.



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Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart

In the words of Cotton Mather, "Immediately after this (within a few days), a vessel belonging to Salem did pass by that island, and seeing this poor servant of God there, they took him in." Ephraim's release came over ten months from the day he departed, but within days after his time of thanksgiving!

The apostle Paul's admonition that we should "in everything give thanks" may seem impractical or even impossible, but in truth it should be the natural language of the believer. Regardless of how dismal our present circumstances, if we are among the redeemed of the Lord, if heaven is our destination and Jesus is our Savior, we can never give thanks enough. Psychologically a thankful attitude is healthy for us, but beyond that, prison doors come open and ships of rescue come to our doorstep when we give thanks to our God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Ways of God Series

"Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.'" (Hebrews 3:10)

God has ways! God's ways are the regular patterns by which he deals with His people, and it behooves every Christian to learn the ways of God. The Bible is our textbook in learning these ways, but it is in our life experiences that they are demonstrated and made real to us.

As we become familiar with the ways of God, faith becomes easier and life less fearful. To this end Dennis has produced a series on the ways of God, which gives abundant Scriptural evidence of the means and ways by which our great triune God relates to those who have become His children through faith in Jesus Christ.

This 10-CD series includes teachings on "The Slowness and Speed of God," "The Father's Generosity," "The Power of Repetition," "When God Remembers," "Death Sentences & Deliverances" and more. Order it today!

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