

# Father, Thank You for Tomorrow!      Ephesians 1:3-14

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Maybe you watched part of the funeral for Michael Jackson this past week. And according to the claims of the speakers, he brought the whole world together through his music. And some of his music was pretty good. He was a gifted person. 31 Million watched his funeral on TV, and twenty thousand were in attendance at the Laker's basketball arena.

And then there was the death of Robert McNamara who was Secretary of Defense under Kennedy and Johnson. He oversaw the Vietnam war in which 52,000 Americans lost their life. Later he said that the Vietnam war had been a monstrous, colossal mistake.

Both those men had influence and power. One was called the king of Pop and the other a hated official in a completely unpopular war which affected a lot of lives He didn't have a lot of fans. I never heard anything about his funeral

Contrast that briefly with two of the men listed in the Gospels. We are told in the Gospel that John... "When His disciples heard about it (His death), they came and took His body, and laid it in a tomb." No big time funeral. And yet Jesus said of John. He was the greatest of the prophets.

And then there was Jesus Himself, but Jesus' own disciples didn't show up to bury Him, He was buried by strangers in a borrowed tomb. Jesus too was labeled a King - King of the Jews - King of the world - A servant King.

Funerals obviously do not tell the whole story about a person, what their life meant or what they did. Whether there are a lot of people there or just one person. They don't always mean that much. They do however tell us that we are all mortal.

And even though John didn't have much of a funeral, he was the one who was able to point to the Messiah and declare, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

And Jesus we believe was the Messiah who lived and died and rose again to usher in the Kingdom of God and to share with us God's blessings that alert us to the reality that we are able to thank God for our Tomorrows, regardless of what our circumstances are today.

The boy was little when his mother died. Along with his grief, the father had to deal with the overwhelming task of trying to be both mother and father to his son. To that end, Dad had planned a picnic. The day before the event, the father and the son had picked their destination, packed a lunch and loaded the car. Then, before getting an early start, it was time for a good night sleep, right? The boy couldn't sleep. The excitement of what was

coming kept him tossing, turning, and twisting as only a little boy can. Eventually he got up, crept into his Dad's room, and waited until a sleepy father's eye opened, "Son, what are you doing up at this hour?"

"I can't get to sleep." "Why can't you get to sleep?"

"Daddy, I can't wait until tomorrow."

"Son, we're going to have a great time. But it won't be nearly as great if you don't get some sleep first. Just go back to bed and try to turn off your mind. You'll fall asleep."

The son did as his father asked, for a while. Within 10 minutes, a freshly sleeping father felt himself being prodded and poked. "Dad, dad are you awake?" "I am now son."

"Dad, I wanted to say something before I go to sleep."

"And what do you need to say that won't wait?"

"Dad, I just wanted to thank you for tomorrow."

I like that story. I like that boy. I like his thought: "Dad, I wanted to say something before I go to sleep. I wanted to say thank you for tomorrow."

How many of us are ready to say, "Heavenly Father, thank you for tomorrow." Think about it for a moment. Many of us are fearful for today and dreading what the rest of the week may bring. It's human nature to look to the past. Somehow, the bad and dark things of yesteryear get dimmer with the passing of time. The future, our tomorrows, well, those things are unknown. They can be scary. You don't want to go there. Tomorrow is anybody's guess. Nobody knows what the next day will hold, but most of us are willing to gamble that it won't be good. That's why, if we were to give our druthers, most of us would go back into the past than run into the future. The only exception to that rule I can think of is children.

Children can't wait for tomorrow. Maybe that's part of what Jesus meant when He said we should have the faith of a little child. And yet as good as things are now, or as bad as they are now, that's nothing. Your best days and tomorrows are ahead of you. You and I can always resound in our lives the refrain, "Father, I thank you for tomorrow." It's something to think about when we go through those worst days of our lives.

Originally, Paul wrote this letter to the church at Ephesus, but he says, "I am not only writing to those who are at Ephesus, but to everyone who is faithful in Jesus Christ." And here we are 2000 some years later reading the same letter he wrote in prison.

In verse 3... "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

We are reminded that in Christ physical blessings are only a visual aid of something deeper, richer, more lasting and eternal. Deep in our lives there is a longing for life, growth, creativity, beauty, significance, acceptance and joy. The soul craves and thirsts for these things.

But Paul is in prison. He is the scum of the earth, an outcast. Yet he says that he is able to enter this life in the midst of his bad circumstances because he has this life in Christ. Christ has given him everything. This is good news for us: If we are in Christ, we have everything. Nothing is held back.

The Particulars of God's blessings. 1:4-14

The blessings of God take in the entire panorama of history. Paul begins in prison around 60AD and his mind goes back to eternity past where the blessings began. Imagine: God the Father thought of you and chose you in eternity past.

History moves on to the coming of Jesus, the Messiah who gives his life to make the choices of God possible. Once Jesus died, was buried, and risen from the dead, there were witnesses, the apostles, who saw and wrote about it. Thus, this gospel having been written in a book and passed on from generation to generation has arrived at our geographical location. When we hear the Gospel, God's Spirit working through that Word seals us for the future of eternity. We see the tremendous scope of what God has in store for us.

The amazing thing is that before creation began the Father thought of you and wrote your name in the book of life. And he placed you and Jesus together. Then he put all of history on track so that you might enjoy the fullness of Christ. I hope you think of that when you move into the experiences that don't seem to hot.

Hear him in verse 7,8.

It is one thing to have in your mind plans and choices. It is another thing to actualize those plans in history. It is amazing thing to our worth when someone not only thinks of us, but plans ahead and sets resources aside to accomplish his plans for us. This creates tremendous worth

I want you to know the Father did that for you. He not only thought of you, He then worked out history to save you. He set aside all his resources and emptied His bank account on your behalf.

It says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us."

When you look at the cross what do you see? There are many things present. There is sin in its blackest hues, for Jesus became sin. There is the full measure of God's wrath poured out on His son. Justice is satisfied. There is the obedience of the innocent Lamb who went to the cross without speaking to defend Himself. But behind the cross, foremost of all, the message communicated by the apostles is the love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ. Paul says He lavished it on us. He wants us to bathe in it and rejoice.

Worth comes from the sense that you and I have been chosen of God and that you have also been redeemed. It cost God everything to redeem you.

I don't know what your current situation is. Scripture teaches us that changing circumstances are not the issue. The issue is, how are you going to deal with them. You have two choices. You can be like a pig in a python or you can be like Paul, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." May our lives resound to the Father, "Daddy, thank you for all my tomorrows!"