

I Thessalonians 5:16-18 - Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

As I was reflecting yesterday, Independence Day, on freedom, I realized that we only truly appreciate the fullness of freedom after we have been released from captivity. It doesn't matter what has held us captive; it could be physical or emotional illness, addictions of any kind, incarceration, unjust political imprisonment. The gratitude that comes from release from bondage is indescribable. But how often do we remember to thank the One who purchased our freedom at the highest price? Let me share a story with you that was sent to me by a fellow chaplain.

"I dreamt that I went to Heaven and an angel was showing me around. We walked side-by-side inside a large workroom filled with angels. My angel guide stopped in front of the first section and said, 'This is the Receiving Section. Here, all petitions to God said in prayer are received.'

I looked around in this area, and it was terribly busy with so many angels sorting out petitions written on voluminous paper sheets and scraps from people all over the world.

Then we moved on down a long corridor until we reached the second section.

The angel then said to me, 'This is the Packaging and Delivery Section. Here, the graces and blessings the people asked for are processed and delivered to the living persons who asked for them.' I noticed again how busy it was there. There were many angels working hard at that station, since so many blessings had been requested and were being packaged for delivery to Earth.

Finally, at the farthest end of the long corridor we stopped at the door of a very small station. To my great surprise, only one angel was seated there, idly doing nothing. "This is the Acknowledgment Section," my angel friend quietly admitted to me. He seemed embarrassed.

'How is it that there is no work going on here?' I asked.

'So sad,' the angel sighed. 'After people receive the blessings that they asked for, very few send back acknowledgments.'

'How does one acknowledge God's blessings?' I asked.

'Simple,' the angel answered. Just say, 'Thank you, Lord.'"

Today, no matter what your circumstances, you can choose to say, "Thank you, Lord." Even if you do not feel thankful, you can offer a sacrifice

of thanksgiving to God for His unchanging love and mercies that are new every morning. You can choose to prophetically - by faith - offer your thanks to God even before you see evidence of His answer.

No matter if you are sick, grieving, angry, unemployed, or still waiting for an answer, there is freedom in giving thanks, for we offer our trust to the One who knows our every need and will supply it according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.