



A letter from **ALISTAIR BEGG**

NOVEMBER 2020

Dear Friend,

You will probably be reading this letter within days of the election. If, as we are led to believe, the result will not be known for some time, here is an exercise for us—it is biblical, and practical, and extremely beneficial:

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances.” (1 Thess. 5:16–18)

It is the comprehensive nature of this exhortation (always, constantly, all) that makes it so demanding. The good news is this: the exhortations of the Bible are never there without the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

When it comes to physical exercise, it’s not uncommon for me to sidestep it because I don’t feel like it. Whatever the outcome of the election, we may find ourselves responding similarly: “I don’t feel like being joyful, thankful, and prayerful. Why should I?” The answer is in the balance of the text: “for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

The Thessalonians had received the Word in much affliction. Life was no cakewalk, and so, if they functioned on the strength of their emotions, they would never have had the impact for which they were commended (1 Thess. 1:7). They had learned, as Spurgeon put it, to trust Him whose power is inexhaustible, whose love is unbreakable, whose kindness is unchangeable, whose faithfulness is unfailing, whose wisdom is unfathomable, and whose goodness is impregnable.

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It is surely providential that these political events come in the context of Thanksgiving. We may not sing around our tables, but we can at least recite these words from a harvest hymn:

We thank you, then, O Father,
For all things bright and good:
The seed-time and the harvest,
Our life, our health, our food;
No gifts have we to offer
For all your love imparts,
But that which you desire now:
Our humble, thankful hearts!

Okay, let's have two sets of three: rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks always!

With my love in the Lord Jesus,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alistair". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent initial 'A'.