

Day 3 — Rev. Dr. James Gimbel — Convention Essay (May 6, 2015)

Reported by Rev. Paul Schallhorn

Kitchener, ON — Building on the two previous topics of “rejoice always” and “pray without ceasing,” Dr. Gimbel concluded his 3-part essay by directing us to “give thanks in all circumstances” for that is “the will of God for us in Christ Jesus.” We have difficulty giving thanks because we constantly wonder what God’s will for us is when we are experiencing hardship. Often we can’t see the “why” behind our struggles and so begin to doubt God’s presence in our lives. It boils down to a trust issue in the “deus absconditus”/the “hidden God” who promises to always be with us – even when we can’t see Him.

This has implications for our lives as our part in God’s will - that all should be saved - is both a privilege and a burden. We go out as God’s “ambassadors” sharing His saving grace but do so in the arena of the world which does not acknowledge or thank God for His blessings. The reason the world follows this practice is that it is spoiled to the point of overindulgence – always seeking more and bigger and better – never being satisfied with what it has from God. As sinners, we fall into this temptation and doubt God’s presence and love when we believe we are hard done by. The will of God for us is that we are made new creations in Christ not so we are blessed physically in this world, but so we can become a blessing to others. The cure is to allow God to open our eyes and see His hand working in our lives on a daily basis.

We do so by recalling our baptism where we were claimed by God and made one with Him in Christ, receiving the righteousness of Jesus for our sin in this blessed exchange. That is all we need to face our days ahead and give thanks in all circumstances because we know His presence and the end of the story.

Therefore we rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances because we are one with Christ and each other both now and forever.