

For This We Are Truly Thankful

We have just read the history of our nation's beginnings in celebrating the tradition of Thanksgiving. Most Americans, at least those who pretend to be Christian, will make some arrangement to be thankful on Thanksgiving Day. Even those who are not, may express some form of gratitude for their current status or condition in life. For us, the true Christians following God's commandments and way of life, being thankful is a daily event.

Being thankful is an expression of appreciation or gratefulness for kindness or blessings that have been bestowed upon us. It is an open admission and acknowledgment that we are appreciative of said kindness and blessings. We do not take them for granted and are humbled by them as there are so many in need.

Our being thankful does not focus on what we do not have but what we do have. Our attitude reflects our state of mind and our values. We are content no matter the circumstances.

Philippians 4:11-13- "I am not saying *this* in respect to being destitute; for I have learned *that* in whatever *circumstances* I am, to be content. For I have experienced being brought low, and I have experienced abounding. In everything and in all

things I have been taught both to be full and to hunger, both to abound and to be without. I can do all things through Christ, Who empowers me.”

We are so blessed just to have food and clothing and a roof over our heads, things so many in this world do not have.

1 Timothy 6:6-8- “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, *and it is* evident that neither do we have the power to carry anything out *of the world*. But having food and clothing, we should be satisfied with these,”

Sadly, in our present society, being content equates with being stuck. More is better and adequate is never enough. Greed is the way of life. I have seen that here in Naples for over 35 years as it is such a wealthy area. You have the true wealthy people and the pretenders. Discontentment and jealousy are the opposites of thankfulness and contentment. I have seen so many people live way beyond their means trying to “keep up with the Joneses” so to speak, their lives revolving around material things and missing out on what really matters in life.

Of course, the TV shows and sports figures do not help the situation any. With shows depicting how much money they make and the “bling” they all wear and the

“cribs” they live in, only add to the frenzy of more, more, more, more! I am sure you have all seen the bumper sticker that reads, “he who dies with the most toys, wins!” Actually, he who dies with the most toys, is dead. There is no substance to anyone anymore. Greed is the norm.

There is certainly nothing wrong with trying to better oneself or improving one’s lifestyle. God wants us to prosper but not at the cost of our character. We are not to covet or have a covetous attitude.

Exodus 20:17- “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Working to earn and improving your status with the proper motive and desire is the correct state of mind. God will bless our efforts if our hearts are in the right place and greed is not our motive. Being content and thankful with what we have will give us the patience needed when God may not see fit to give us what we seek when we think we have earned it. We need not compare what we have ourselves to others.

1 Thessalonians 5:18- “Give thanks in everything, for this *is the* will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

The Gifts of God

We have been given gifts that are far greater than any material possessions than anything on earth. These gifts have been given to all mankind but we have been fortunate enough to have acknowledged them.

God made man in His image and gave him the breath of life.

Genesis 1:26- “And God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that crawls upon the earth.”

Genesis 2:7- “Then the LORD God formed man *of the* dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

He has given us dominion over all of His creation. Beyond that, out of all humanity, we have been given a tremendous responsibility to grow a righteous character as we have the potential of living and serving eternally in His Kingdom. This purpose alone should keep us focused to be thankful every day.

Psalm 8:3-6- “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for him? For You have made him a little lower than God and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet:”

God gave us His only Son, Jesus Christ, to pay for our sins.

John 3:16- “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.”

God did this while we were still sinners.

Romans 5:8- “But God commends His own love to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

We did nothing of ourselves to earn or pay for this gift. Jesus Christ died for all mankind, the just and the unjust alike.

Psalm 118:1- “O, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good because His steadfast love endures forever.”

It is God’s will for us to be thankful towards Him. When we are it does not leave any room for ungratefulness in our lives.

Psalm 118:29- “Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.”

God gave us the gift and power of His Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit who anointed Jesus to fulfill His ministry has been sent to empower you and me to do the same works He did! In fact, Jesus prophesied that we would do even greater works.

John 14:12- “Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the works that I do; and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father.”

Acts 2:4- “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit; and they began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them the words to proclaim.”

God gave us the understanding of His word.

Matthew 13:16-17- “But blessed *are* your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see what you see, and have not seen; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard.”

Think about that! Of all those TV preachers and Sunday worshipers missing the mark, God has called and chosen you to know the truth of His word! He has given us the understanding of His plan of salvation for mankind through His Sabbaths and Holy Days. We have been chosen for sonship!

Ephesians 1:3-5- “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ; According as He has personally chosen us for Himself before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be holy and blameless before Him in love; Having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will,”

He has given us the power of prayer. We have Jesus Christ as our intercessor to the very Throne of God! Praying with thanksgiving will brighten our prayer life. It will lift us up and give us a more positive outlook. A grateful attitude will help to remove any doubts we may have as we pray. Remember, half-hearted prayers are basically telling God you do not have confidence in Him.

Ephesians 4:6- “Do not be anxious about anything; but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God in everything;”

So many people have lived and died upon this earth and never known the truth we have been given. So many today have a false hope of going to heaven without knowing God’s truth and plan of salvation that is known to us. We have been given that truth and peace. A peace that surpasses all understanding.

Philippians 4:7- “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.”

Allowing the peace of God to rule in our hearts rather than the cares of the world influence us with worry and doubt will keep us in a more thankful mindset. It is not easy in this day and age with all the chaos and turmoil constantly in our face. But it is a choice. Being thankful for our blessings keeps our focus on God.

Colossians 3:15- “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you were called into one body, and be thankful.”

We have been given the hope and promise of salvation and eternal life in God’s family, serving as kings and priests in Christ’s Kingdom.

John 6:54- “The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day;”

Revelation 1:6- “And has made us kings and priests to God and His Father; to Him *be* the glory and the sovereignty into the ages of eternity. Amen.”

Revelation 5:10- “And did make us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.”

Such tremendous gifts we were given and we did absolutely nothing to deserve them. But to put them in perspective, the giver of these gifts, Jesus Christ, the Creator God of the Old Testament, gave up that position to become a little lower than the angels to come to earth to die for our sins.

Philippians 2:5-8- “Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus; Who, although He existed in *the* form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, But emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant; And being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross.”

He certainly did not have to do this. He did not have His life taken from Him. He freely gave it for all mankind.

John 10:17-18- “On account of this, the Father loves Me: because I lay down My life, that I may receive it back again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of

Myself. I have authority to lay it down and authority to receive it back again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

John 10:11- “I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”

John 10:15- “Just as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.’

There is no greater love, no greater gift that we should be thankful for. There was never a greater price paid. Remember to thank Him every day.

John 15:13- “No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends.”

As chaotic as our nation is at present, we are still blessed to live here. You could be in Gaza. Almighty God has bestowed upon us countless physical and spiritual blessings. Our future is in His Hands. It simply requires our obedience to His way of life. We can never thank God enough for what He has done for us. He is always deserving of our praise and thanks.

From the air we breathe, to the legs we stand on, the eyes we see with, the food we eat, the roofs over our heads, to the things we take for granted every day, His truth from Genesis to Revelation and, the blessed hope and promise of eternal life through our Savior Jesus Christ, for this we are truly thankful. Amen.

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