

Understanding Thanksgiving

Introduction:

- A. [Understanding fatherhood]
- B. [Thanksgiving compared to other holidays]
- C. Today...fresh appreciation for thanksgiving.
- D. Ps. 50:14
- E. “We strive to understand the real reasons to celebrate Thanksgiving.”
- F. What so special...?
- G. Let’s answer 3 questions to help us understand Thanksgiving.
- I. What does it mean to offer Thanksgiving?
 - a. We need to understand what thankfulness means.
 - i. Thankfulness
 - 1. Hard to define...
 - 2. “An expression of gratitude” – Webster
 - 3. {Grateful} “Appreciative of benefits received” – Webster
 - ii. It’s a choice and an emotion.
 - 1. To make acknowledgments to one for kindness bestowed...but also
 - 2. To be glad of what one receives.
 - 3. [Little children saying “thank you.”]
 - b. We need to understand who to be thankful to.
 - i. We should show thankfulness toward every act of kindness given to us, but as especially...
 - ii. God – (Text)
 - 1. Our acknowledgements should be towards God.
 - 2. He is the author of all our blessings.
 - 3. “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above....*” – James 1:17a
 - iii. {But if we are Christians – Christ}
 - 1. “*And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry*” – 1 Tim. 1:12
 - 2. We never stop being thankful for the sacrifice He paid.
 - 3. Thankful to how He changed our lives.
 - c. We need to understand what to be thankful about.
 - i. Our salvation
 - 1. “*Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with*

thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.” – Ps. 95:1&2

2. This should be first on our list.
 3. We should be grateful of the saving grace given to us.
- ii. The Salvation of others
1. *“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.”* – Rom. 6:17
 2. It should bring gratitude to our hearts to see the others come to Christ.
 3. [When someone comes to Christ...]
- iii. For others
1. *“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men”* – 1 Tim. 2:1
 2. We should be thankful for the people in our lives.
 - a. Our family
 - b. Our friends
 - c. “All men”
 3. We should be thankful for how God has shown mercy and blessing to others.
- iv. For provisions
1. *“And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat.”* – Acts 27:35 ~ {Paul}
 2. We pray before our meals as an act of thanking God for what He has provided.
 3. God is the source of all our provisions.
- v. After a great accomplishment
1. *“So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs.”* – Neh. 12:31
 2. Nehemiah and the Israelites rebuilt the wall.
 3. A task they did, yet they thanked God?
 4. If God hadn’t blessed it would never have been finished.
 5. The same is still true today.
 6. [Good habit – Thank you Lord]

“Next question...”

- II. Why should we offer Thanksgiving?
- a. We are commanded to give thanks – (Text)
 - i. This is an idea of offering a thanksgiving sacrifice.
 - ii. But they were commanded to be thankful.
 - iii. The same is true today.
 - iv. We must never take light the commands of God.
 - 1. How quickly we forget His commands.
 - 2. They are not suggestions.
 - 3. If we are truly His children, then we must obey...be thankful.
 - b. It is good for us to give thanks
 - i. *“It is good to give thanks to the LORD, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High”* – Ps. 92:1
 - ii. The act of giving thanks is appropriate.
 - iii. It is good for our whole being.
 - 1. Brings us peace.
 - 2. Brings us happiness and contentment
 - iv. It is good because it helps to shift our perspective from us to God.
 - c. God is worthy of our thanks.
 - i. *“Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.”* – Ps. 97:12
 - 1. God is holy.
 - 2. He is supreme.
 - 3. He is our focus.
 - ii. *“Praise the LORD! Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”* – Ps. 106:1
 - 1. He is a good God.
 - 2. He is good to us.
 - 3. He has shown so much mercy towards us.
 - iii. *“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* – 1 Cor. 15:57
 - 1. He has given us the victory over our sins.
 - 2. [Song – Victory in Jesus]
 - 3. *“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)”* – Eph. 2:4&5
 - 4. Our hearts should overflow with the thankfulness for God’s victory.

“Final question...”

III. How do really offer Thanksgiving?

a. We are to give thanks through Christ

i. *“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.”* – Rom. 1:8

1. For Christians, Christ is our mediator to God.
2. Without Christ, we never could real give thanks to God.

ii. In Jesus name

1. *“Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* – Eph. 5:20
2. We pray and give thank in Jesus’ name to remind us that it all is through him.

b. We are to give thanks in every situation.

i. *“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”* – Col. 3:17

1. We are to engage every action with a heart of thanksgiving.
2. Do we have thankful lifestyles?
 - a. Can it be seen in how we talk?
 - b. Can it be seen in our actions?

ii. *“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”* – Heb. 13:15

1. “Continually” – Constantly
2. “giving thanks” – {connects to praise} Thanks, confession, acknowledge, or promise. **WORSHIP**
3. Thanksgiving should not be a once a year event.

c. We are to give thanks wherever we are.

i. In private

1. *“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”* – Dan. 6:10
2. We should have a habit of giving thanks when it is only God and ourselves.
3. It is at the private times that we give our vows – (Text)

ii. In public

1. *“I will give You thanks in the great assembly; I will praise You among many people.”* – Ps. 35:18

2. This is why we are here today!

Conclusion:

- A. Are you ready to offer Thanksgiving?
- B. Do you have the greatest reason to be thankful?