

THANKSGIVING WEEK WHY WE SHOULD BE THANKFUL TO GOD?

This is Thanksgiving week. Wednesday we will get together on the Eve of Thanksgiving and partake of the Lord's table. This is what Christ commanded us to do in remembrance of Him. I don't know why the Lord chose this simplistic ordinance as central to expressing our thanks to Him for His gift of salvation. There are only two ordinances that the Lord gave us and commanded us to perpetuate in the church. These are Baptism by immersion, and the Lord's table. He instituted the communion the night in which he was betrayed. He gave the command to his disciples to Baptize new believers at His ascension. So the Lord's table is very important to our Lord, and therefore should be very important to us as well. He said this do in remembrance of Him and we are to do it often, in His memory. So let me encourage you to come out this Wednesday and show the Lord your are thankful for what He did for you on the cross.

I have heard many say, I can worship the Lord my own way, I don't need to go to Church to worship Him. That is not what the Bible says. Listen to what the Lord told the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 12:13 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest:

The Lord told His people they were to worship the Lord how, when, and where He told them to.

When they worshipped the Lord where they wanted, God called that place a high place, and He punished Israel for worshipping in the high places (Lev. 26:30).

So the Lord tells us where, why, and how we are to worship Him. But think about this, why should we worship Him?

James 1:16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

I. WE SHOULD BE THANKFUL TO HIM BECAUSE HE HAS GIVEN US GOOD GIFTS FROM HEAVEN.

1. The Lord is the giver of life. In His creation He brought all life into this world and called it good!

All physical life comes from God. Notice, when God created this world, we read the following:

Genesis 1:4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

Genesis 1:10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and **God saw that it was good.**

Genesis 1:12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and **God saw that it was good.**

Genesis 1:18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and **God saw that it was good.**

Genesis 1:21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and **God saw that it was good.**

Genesis 1:25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and **God saw that it was good.**

Genesis 1:31 And **God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.** And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Everything God created was originally good. But why is it bad things are happening. Death entered into this world and we can all agree that is not good..

Like I said last week I am not thankful for death, but I can thank God even as we face the threat of death. Nowhere in the Bible does it say Jesus came to earth to bring death. He came to give us good things not bad.

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

So it is Satan that brings death.

He is the thief who came into this world to steal and to kill.

Jesus came to give us life.

2. HE HAS GIVEN US THE GIFT OF SALVATION.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Romans 5:15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

Romans 5:16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

Romans 5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

3. HE HAS GIVEN US THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Throughout the New Testament the Holy Spirit is referred to as the gift of God.

John 4:10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

Peter, when preaching on the day of Pentecost referred to the Holy Spirit as a gift that people would receive when they accepted Christ.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

4. HE HAS GIVEN US SPIRITUAL GIFTS FROM HEAVEN.

The ability to minister is a spiritual gift.
The ability to teach and share spiritual truth is a gift.
God enables Pastors to preach his word.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

I Peter 4:10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.
I Peter 4:11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

I Corinthians 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
I Corinthians 12:5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.
I Corinthians 12:6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.
I Corinthians 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

5. The Virtues of The Holy Spirit can only be given by God Himself. These are gifts that are imparted to us from God.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
Galatians 5:23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

II. WE SHOULD BE THANKFULL TO GOD FOR HIS ANSWER TO OUR PRAYERS

God will only give us good things from heaven above. We have His promise that whatever we ask in His name that will bring Him glory he will give us..

1. GOD PROMISES TO ANSWER OUR PRAYERS ACCORDING TO HIS WILL.

John 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
John 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

I John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:
I John 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

The condition is that if we ask anything according to His will.

Now this is not a blank check for every material thing you want in this life. Though God can provide that, too. But remember Jesus Christ did not own anything but the clothes on His back.

Matthew 8:20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Jesus warned people about covetousness. He was once approached by a man who was quarreling with his brothers about material things and splitting an inheritance and he would have nothing to do with the matter. Everything in this life is passing away and does not matter. The truth of the matter is the less we could live with the better off we are. We came into this world naked and we will leave it naked.

What are the blank check promises of God to us for answered prayer?

Why do we not pray for spiritual virtues that He wants us to have?

Why not pray to love as He loved, to give as He gave, to have the virtues that He had and wants us to have. To be able to minister like He ministered.

Do you know that the Bible says that there are some things God wants to give you if only you would pray for them?

Luke 11:9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Luke 11:10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Luke 11:11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

Luke 11:12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

2. ISN'T IT AMAZING HOW MUCH TIME WE SPEND ASKING GOD FOR THINGS AND HOW LITTLE TIME WE SPEND THANKING HIM FOR WHAT HE GAVE US?

Thankful people are happy people.

John 16:24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

God wants us to have the Joy of the Lord, and what greater joy is there than to receive gifts.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Do you remember how exciting it was when you were a kid to get your Christmas gifts?

I remember I couldn't wait for Christmas, we would be sleeping upstairs and would sneak down and look at the Christmas tree to see if the gifts arrived. And there they were under the Christmas tree. There was so much excitement. I remember one year opening a package and inside were some boxing gloves. Wow. My own set of boxing gloves.. My brother and I used to put them on and we would pretend we were professional boxers. I used to beat him up. That

was the year when I was practicing my accordion one day and I got bored practicing, so I put on my boxing gloves and pretended to beat up the devil. I think God smiled down from Heaven and said, Bissol when you get older I am going to make you a preacher and you can fight the real fight with the devil. You see, every Sunday I try to beat the devil out of you. In fact a few years back I was preaching at a camp and a little boy came up to me and said, Pastor Bissol, I like your preaching because you beat the devil right out of me.

Don't you get a warm fuzzy feeling around Christmas time? WHY, is it not because of the spirit of gift giving. Who doesn't get happy when they receive gifts?

God says, He wants to answer our prayers so that we can experience true joy.

John 16:24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

THANKFUL PEOPLE ARE HAPPY PEOPLE.
UNTHANKFUL PEOPLE ARE MISERABLE PEOPLE.

Don't forget what He has done for you.

Do you want to experience joy? Learn to pray and learn to thank God and remember when He answered your prayers.

I remember praying to be able to build our house. We prayed for 10 years. In fact, at one point we were having family devotions and I said to our kids, maybe we should forget about building the house and maybe buy a little get away cabin somewhere for vacations. I remember the reaction I got that day, oh what sour grapes, one said, you promised we would have a house, no no they said, we want a house. I said, all right all right, but don't complain when we start building it because of how much work it is going to be.

I remember praying and saying to the Lord, "Lord I opened a can of worms, if we don't build that house my kids are going to think you are not able to answer our prayers. I went to Randy LaCroix, and asked him how much money I could get for a loan for \$450 a month. That was my housing allowance. He said I could get \$60,000. So for years I prayed I could build our house starting out with that loan of \$60,000. Shortly after this I met a preacher who was a builder. He invited me over his house, I asked him how much it cost him to build his house. He said \$60,000. I showed him some blue prints of a house I wanted to build, I asked him if he could help me build just the shell of the house, sided, insulated and closed in completely for \$60,000. He said he would help me. So that year I went to see Randy, we built the shell of our house in 1996, and moved into the house in 1998. Everything in our house we prayed for, and everything is a reminder of the goodness of God. Do we really spend enough time thanking God? For big things and little things.

In the little things, how many times have you lost something and prayed to find it and the Lord helped you find it? But how soon we forget to thank the Lord. How many times have we been in peril of sickness to the point of thinking we would die, and the good Lord healed us and we forget to thank Him!?

Isn't amazing how we soon forget God's blessings and answers to our prayers.

ASK THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL!

What Joy there is in answered prayer.

Thankful people are joyful people.

III. WE SHOULD BE THANKFUL TO GOD BECAUSE HE HAS GIVEN US LIFE MORE ABUNDANT. THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL IS THE ABUNDANT LIFE THAT CHRIST OFFERS US. THIS LIFE IS ALL THESE GIFTS COMBINED IN YOUR LIFE.

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

What is the abundant life? It is all these good things wrapped up in one life. How exciting it is to live a life with a God who is there to answer our prayers.

How exciting it is to see God work in your life.

How exciting it is to receive these gifts from the Father of lights in whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning.

What is life? Is it not a gift that God gives and keeps giving?

What is life? Is it not what God is? I AM THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE.

John 14:6

What is life? Life is the opposite of death.

What is death but separation from God. When Adam and Eve died in the garden they were ousted from the presence of God. This was death.

DEATH IS TO BE SEPARATED FROM GOD.

DEATH IS DARKNESS.

DEATH IS TO PERISH.

But Jesus came to give us life. So He says,

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

John 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

DO WE BELIEVE THIS?

We will never die, those who have trusted Christ and are saved will never die.

You say wait I know people who were saved yet they died.

No, they did not die, they just shed their bodies and the Bible says they are sleeping, so to speak.

What do you do when you are asleep? You are inactive, you are not talking or doing anything, you are inactive. You are just resting.

Revelation 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Invitation:

This is Thanksgiving week. What are you thankful for? Tonight I am going to challenge you to come and share a testimony of thanksgiving. I am not going to preach. You will have the whole service. There is a verse in the Bible that says:

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Thankful people are joyful people. You have heard me for an hour thanking God, but it is your turn. Come tonight and thank God. We will pass the mic around and give you an opportunity to offer a sacrifice of praise, even the fruit of your lips, giving thanks to His name.

What are you thankful for, small and big, the little things, the big things, what are the gifts He has given you, what are the good things from heaven you have experienced? Come, and tell us about them.