

# REASONS TO BE THANKFUL

## Introduction; Thanksgiving is this coming Thursday.

- A. It is a national holiday that has been around a long time.
1. After a very terrible first year in the new land, where many died, the Pilgrims had a good harvest in the fall of 1621 —with the aid of the local Indians. They had a **harvest celebration** to thank God with the Indians.
  2. It wasn't until 1789 that the new Congress of the United States recommended a day of **public thanksgiving and prayer** for our new nation. Our first president, George Washington, declared that November 26, 1789 be that day.
  3. In 1865 President Lincoln established the last Thursday in November as **a day to acknowledge the gracious gifts that the Most High God bestowed upon America.**
  4. Every President after him made the same decree until 1941. Congress then officially made Thanksgiving a national holiday.
  5. Christians need to be thankful every day. However it is good to have a national day of thanksgiving. It is good that we as a nation are a thankful people.
- B. Unfortunately we do not fully celebrate Thanksgiving as it was intended.
1. It has become just a day off for many. While it is a time for families it has lost its main purpose in thanking God for the blessings of our nation, as it was intended.
  2. Also we are not allowed to thank God in public as we were once were. References to God and the Bible are being diminished every year.
  3. We are becoming like the atheist that had been greatly blessed through no effort of his own. He felt grateful but had no one to thank.
- C. Many wonder what they have to be thankful for.
1. James 1:2 says to, "**Count it all joy.**" Several have made some suggestions for those who do not think they have much to be thankful for.
  2. *Count your blessings instead of your crosses;  
Count your gains instead of your losses.  
Count your joys instead of your woes;  
Count your friends instead of your foes.  
Count your smiles instead of your tears;  
Count your courage instead of your fears.  
Count your full years instead of your lean;  
Count your kind deeds instead of your mean.  
Count your health instead of your wealth;  
Count on God instead of yourself. —unknown*
  3. *Even though I clutch my blankets and groan when the alarm rings each morning. Thank you, Lord, that I can hear. There are those who are deaf. Even though I keep my eyes tightly closed against the morning light as long as long as possible. Thank you, Lord, that I can see. There are many who are blind. Even though I huddle in my bed and put off the physical effort of rising, thank you, Lord, that I have the strength to rise. There are many who are bedfast. Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when socks are lost, toast is burned, tempers are short, thank you, Lord, for my family. There are many who are lonely. Even though our table never looks like the pictures in the magazines and the menu is at times unbalanced. Thank you, Lord, for the food we have. There are many who are hungry. Even though the routine of my job is often monotonous. Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to work. There are many who have no work. Thank you, Lord, for the gift of life. —The Evangel*

C. Today we will talk about some reasons the Bible gives to be thankful.

## I. First, our physical blessings.

A. Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has given us many blessings.

1. We all have blessings whether we recognize them or not and whether we give thanks or not —Act 14:17. Many are not thankful people. Some had described one difference between the righteous and the unrighteous. The righteous say, “Thanks”, for what God gives them —Luke 17:17.
2. *Matt 5:44-45 “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”*
3. *Rom 1:20-21 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, <sup>21</sup> because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*
4. God commands us to be thankful —Heb 13:15. Many are not. A blessing of being thankful is that we recognize what we have comes from others and especially God. Thankful people are appreciative. They recognize they need help from God and others. They are therefore more willing to help others —Eph 4:32.
5. *1 Thess 5:16-18 Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*
6. *Col 3:17 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.*
7. There are some who are thankful but for the wrong reasons. Or they have the wrong character and attitude —Jam 4:3-4. Their prayers reach no higher than the ceiling —Matt 6:5-7.
8. *Luke 18:11-12 “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men; extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’”*
9. We need to recognize that God has greatly blessed us. We need to be thankful people. Prayer is not just for asking for things. It is for praising God and thanking Him for all He does for us.

B. Lets consider some of our physical blessings that we should thank God for.

1. In Matthew 6:11 Jesus taught us to ask for our ‘**daily bread**’. We ask God as a loving Father to help us obtain the things we need. When He gives them to us we need to say thanks. Jesus set the example for us —1 Tim 4:3-4.
2. *John 6:10-11 Then Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. <sup>11</sup> And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.*
3. *Acts 27:33-36 And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored them all to take food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. <sup>34</sup> Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you.” <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.*
4. We should also pray and thank God for our **nation and leaders**. We recognize that we have many reasons to be thankful in our nation. However even those in oppressive nations should pray for them.
5. *Psa 122:6-7 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you. <sup>7</sup> Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces.”*
6. *Jer 29:7 And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.*
7. *1 Tim 2:1-3 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. <sup>3</sup> For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,*
8. We are greatly blessed in this nation. We still have much to be thankful for. We can still read our Bibles and

- meet to worship as the N.T. teaches. This was the original purpose of Thanksgiving, to pray for our nation.
9. We need to thank God when He answers our prayers for **our health and the health of others**. Many times we pray for healing and God says, "Yes."
  10. Not every prayer is answered yes. Jesus prayed for the "*cup*" to pass from Him in Matthew 26:39-42. God's answer was, "No." Likewise we pray for health. Many times the answer is yes but sometimes it is no. When it is yes we need to be thankful.
  11. *Luke 17:15-17 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"*
  12. *Phil 2:25-27 Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; 26 since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick, 27 For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.*
  13. Paul was very grateful for Epaphroditus being healed by the Lord. There is no evidence that he was healed miraculously. They did not use miracles for personal use —2 Tim 4:20. God had mercy on Epaphroditus and Paul. He had mercy on Paul evidently by answering his prayer for Epaphroditus.
  14. We also need to thank God for our **families and brethren**, both physical and spiritual. Some do not have good and helpful families. But many do. When we become a Christian we have a new family to depend on.
  15. *Acts 28:15 And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.*
  16. Paul had been imprisoned in Caesarea for two years. He had been shipwrecked for months on an island on the way to Rome. He did not know what to expect in Rome. When brethren went out of their way to meet him he was thankful.
  17. We also need to be thankful for **persecutions**. This does not mean we are happy to be mistreated or hurt. But it means we are glad that the world sees that we are not a part of it and rejects us because of that. We are thankful for what the persecutions mean —Matt 5:10-12.
  18. *Acts 5:40-41 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.*
  19. *2 Thess 1:3-5 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, 4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, 5 which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;*
- C. We see then just a few of the physical things we should be thankful for.

## II. Second, for spiritual blessings.

- A. Jehovah God has given us many spiritual blessing as well.
1. Just as many do not appreciate the physical blessings God gives, many do not appreciate the spiritual blessings, nor do they give thanks. Yet God tried to save all men despite whether they deserved it or not — Rom 5:6-8, Act 17:30-31.
  2. *Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,*
  3. *1 Tim 2:3-4 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*
  4. Despite God's desire and great efforts most will be lost. Men will not be lost because they have no choice or because they are predestined to be lost. They are lost because they are not thankful for what God has done for them.
  5. *John 12:37-38 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, 38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"*
- B. Now let us consider some of the spiritual blessings we should be thankful for.

1. We need to be very thankful for the **love of God**. If God did not love mankind then we would all suffer the consequences of our sins and be without hope —John 3:16, 2 Cor 9:15.
  2. *1 John 4:9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.*
  3. *Titus 3:4-6 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*
  4. God's love caused Him to give His Son to die for us. Without the **sacrifice of Christ** we are without hope in this world and in the one to come. We need to constantly thank God for the sacrifice of His Son. Jesus Himself taught us to be thankful for this.
  5. *Eph 2:4-5 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),*
  6. *Matt 26:26-27 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.*
  7. The Lord's supper is a continual reminder of the love of God and the sacrifice of His Only Begotten Son. We need to be reminded of these things continually and thank God.
  8. We also need to be thankful for the **Gospel, the way of Salvation**. God loved the world and sent His Son. Jesus loved us enough to die on the cross for our sins. The H.S. gives us the Gospel to know how to be saved.
  9. *1 Thess 2:13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*
  10. *Acts 8:39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.*
  11. *2 Cor 9:15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*
  12. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is a gift. It is not something we work for nor deserve. God's love gave His Son. Jesus sent His disciples into all the world so men could hear, believe and obey and be saved —Matt 28:18-20.
  13. We also need to be thankful for the **church**, the family of God. The saved are in the church because it is the body of Christ —Eph 1:22-23, 5:30, Col 1:24. We are not alone in the world. We have brethren of like precious faith to encourage and be encouraged by.
  14. *Mark 10:29-30 So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time; houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life."*
  15. Many would fall away without the encouragement of the church. Few would be as strong as Noah and his family. We need to thank God for His church and be a strong part of it —see Heb 10:23-25.
- C. We must especially be thankful for the **plan of salvation**.
1. We must believe in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins and be buried with Christ in baptism. We are buried in a watery grave and our sins are washed away —see Act 8:35-39, 22:16, Rom 6:3-7.
  2. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
  3. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*
  4. *Acts 22:16 'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'*
  5. Baptism is for those who sincerely believe and repent of their sins. It washes away the sins of the sincere believer. We need to be very thankful that we can be saved from hell in eternity.
- D. These are a few of the spiritual blessing we have in Jesus Christ —Eph 1:3 ff.

**Conclusion: We need to be thankful.**

A. There are many lessons in the world about the need to be thankful to God.

1. *A godly farmer was asked to dine with a well-known gentleman. While there, he asked a blessing at the table as he was accustomed to do at home. His host said jeeringly, "That is old fashioned; it is not customary nowadays for well-educated people to pray before they eat." The farmer answered that with him it was customary, but that some of those on his farm never prayed over their food. "Ah, then," said the gentleman, "they are sensible and enlightened. Who are they?" "My pigs," the farmer answered.*
2. **"Even the hen lifts her head toward heaven when swallowing her grain."**
3. *Thank you, dear God  
For all you have given me  
For all you have taken away from me  
For all you have left me.*
4. If men thanked God for good things, they wouldn't have time to complain about the bad.
5. *Heb 13:5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

B. If any need to respond to the Gospel of Christ today, please let us serve you.