

November 18, 2018 - Psalm 95:1-7- "Come Before Him with Thanksgiving"

Introduction:

On October 3, 1863 President Lincoln proclaimed the fourth Thursday of November to be officially "National Thanksgiving Day". To a nation that has forgotten to count its blessings He said and I quote..., "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us, then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness..."

"Count your blessings!" That is excellent counsel, but sometimes we have to recognize them first! A man who owned a small estate wished to sell it. Sending for a real estate agent, he asked him to write an advertisement describing the house and land. When the ad was ready, the agent took it to the owner and read it to him. "Read that again," said the owner. The agent read the description of the estate once more. "I don't think I will sell after all," said the owner. "I have been looking for an estate like that all my life and I did not know that I owned it!" Count your blessings -- yes, but start by asking God to open your eyes to see your possessions in Christ. Begin by recognizing all that you have in Christ. That will change your entire perspective and enable you to praise God for what you have.

Truly, we don't need more to be Thankful for; we just need to be more thankful. Today, I want to share with you some pertinent truths about Thanksgiving. First, we must begin with...

I. An Attitude of Gratitude Toward God.

1) A good attitude toward life begins with gratitude toward God. A biblical review of the national life of Israel provides abundant proof of just how costly a lack of thankfulness can be. Inherent in every festive occasion of the Jewish people was a specific element of thanksgiving. When the nation forgot to publicly recognize the goodness of God, its forgetfulness was always accompanied by a spiritual decline.

2. Psalm 95 is attributed to David and he exhorts us to be thankful and to give praise to God. David begins in verses 1-2 – **O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.** David mentions three things we should be thankful for: the first one is that our God deserves our worship. A social analyst observed that America was now a country where the center of life in our great cities is no longer concentrated in churches but in huge sports complexes. Give examples (hour sitting in all kinds of weather to scream ...We have more time, more energy

and more money to put into movies, sports and personal entertainment than we have to invest in God. Sitting in service to worship pass an hour is unconscionable but people sit for hours in stadium and ballgames and in the theater. He deserves our thankfulness. Failure to recognize that God alone is the giver of all good things is fatal. Everything comes by His Hand.

By the way, it was our custom, (days of the colonies) that regular occasions were dedicated to thanksgiving for rain, good crops, and other manifestations of God's goodness and mercy. We should remind ourselves that thanksgiving is the essence of Christian living and attitude. And being unthankful is the very essence of the unregenerate heart. In the process, we are rapidly becoming a nation of ingrates-people for who too much is never enough. There is an appalling contempt for the things of God. (II Timothy 3:2)

The second one is to thank God for His power. In verse 3-6 David mentions two realms that God manifests His power: one is in the spiritual realm as a great king above all Gods.” He says that God is “a great King above the gods.” This is not an admission that other gods actually exist, but a statement that God is supreme above all, even above vain idols that are infused with importance or power by mankind’s corrupt imagination. These are false gods non-existing gods

Second, God is all-powerful in the physical realm. David is saying that God is the greatest and most powerful Being in the universe. There is nothing and no one more powerful than He. This Thanksgiving, be thankful for such an all-powerful God; our God who is supreme; is more powerful than all; is greater than all; who created it all. - I John 4:4

3) Last, David also says we should be thankful that God seeks a personal relationship with us – In verse 7 David says, “For he is our God...”we are His sheep. In the original he is speaking of Israel but of course we understand all saved persons are sheep of His pasture and He is a Great Shepherd to all His sheep. **Psalms 23**

The Old Testament speaks of Israel and the duty of God’s people to be thankful so does NT...

II Give thanks in Everything (Ephesians 5:20, I Thess. 5:18)

1. Thankfulness is foundational to the Christian life. Thankfulness is a conscious response that comes from looking beyond our blessings to their source - our God. It is the act of expressing specific gratitude to God for the blessings he has bestowed upon us. Thanksgiving is the outward and inward communication of how grateful we are for all the things God has given us. Whether those things are physical, spiritual or material, God deserves our thanks. And as we grow as Christians we should see a spirit of thanksgiving developing in our lives.

2. The reasons we may find it hard to give thanks are as many as the troubles that strike us each day. Difficulties don't pause for a Thanksgiving break.

There is a way, however, to find reasons to be thankful during even the darkest episodes of life. When the curtain of struggles seems to block out all joy, we can choose to be thankful. We can go back and be thankful for such things as we have. We can go back and be thankful for the

people in our lives who made a difference. We can go back and be thankful unto the God who gave us our being. Luke wrote, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being;

3) Despite our trials, we can give thanks for God's unfailing love. We all understand and appreciate the importance of gratitude. It can radically change relationships. It is God's will to give thanks in "everything"- (1Thess. 5:18) We don't give thanks *for* everything, but **in everything**. We recognize God's sovereign hand is in charge, and not blind fate or chance. "This is God's will, so you *can* do it. So have you thanked God yet? I am not trying to be satirical but serious in relating a truth that could revolutionize your life. (Illustration of Mrs. Niemie) "Don't thank me thank the Lord."

III. Practice Thanksgiving as Spiritual Therapy. (Psalms 100:3-4)

a) Thankfulness is the first step to recovery; it is the therapy of the soul. Now, if we're thankful it really ought to show in our lives, and I don't believe that there's any other sin quite like the sin of ingratitude. Shakespeare once said, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

b) The sooner you can get to being thankful, the sooner you'll be on the way of knowing what God's will is! However, we are not very good at saying "Thank you," are we? We're like a little boy on his return from a birthday party, his mother queried, "Bobby, did you thank the lady for the party?" "Well, I was going to. But a girl ahead of me said, 'Thank you,' and the lady told her not to mention it. So I didn't."

c) Seven principles promote thankfulness as good Spiritual therapy:

1. It leads us to knowing what God's will is and find God's answer in the trial.
2. It motivates us to look for God's purpose in our circumstances. Romans 8:28
3. It develops a stronger trust and dependence upon God. Proverbs 3:5,6
4. It is essential in learning how to rejoice in different circumstance Phil. 4:11-12
5. It focuses our attention upon God rather than our problem and circumstances.
6. It brings a peace that passes all understanding. Phil. 4:7 & Isaiah 26:3
7. It has a powerful influence on our lives. You gain God's perspective & draw closer to Him.

Isaiah 55:8-9

Conclusion:

Giving Thanks is God's will not God's suggestion. It refreshes the soul even in the harshest circumstances. It renews the inner self and gives us God's perspective. Have you truly been thankful to God? Have you thank Him today?