

Reflecting On Thanksgiving

For the last 155 years, Thanksgiving has been a federal holiday. It was in 1863 that President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the fourth Thursday in November to be a national day of “Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens.” That being said, do we really focus on giving thanks for the things that have been given to us? Do we actually spend the day of Thanksgiving actually giving thanks? Most of the time, all that is thought about when it comes to this holiday is the amount of food that will be consumed, or perhaps the football game that is playing that day. There are far more important things to consider, not only on this day, but every day.

The central theme of Thanksgiving is being thankful for blessings that have been granted to us. It’s important in using the term “granted to us” because that’s exactly what has happened. We have been given every good thing in our life. There is no good object, opportunity, relationship, etc. whose origin does not come from our God in heaven. The brother of Christ makes this claim in James 1:17 saying, “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with who there is no variation or shifting shadow.” God is always there to bless us, but more than that, God wants to continuously bless us. He tells David after rebuking him in 2 Samuel 12:8, “I also gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these!” If God is willing to do that for his servant David, even after he has done wrong, how much more is He willing to do the same for us?

So what are some specific things that we can be thankful for? We can be thankful for the families we have around us. First Timothy 5 tells how the family is the first source of help and care for the widows. God, through His wisdom, has set the world in a way that we are surrounded by those who love us. Speaking of love, the love which God gives is such a tremendous thing; John writes in 1 John 4 that God is the manifestation of love, and we can also see just how much love God has for us in John 3:16. Also, we can be thankful that God is the one in control, and not only that He is in control, but He will continue to look out for us. Consider what Jesus says in Matthew 6:25-26, “... do not be worried about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”

In summary, there are so many things we have to be thankful for. Whether physical or spiritual, God is always in the background giving you more and more reasons to be thankful. Especially as Christians, we should always be humble enough to admit what has been given to us. This year, we should really set our mind on things above and not only on the physical things around us.

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