

From My Bible

Sermon Notes
& Outlines

Thanksgiving

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Introduction

These messages are compiled from study notes and outlines of my own and many others. I hope they are a help to you.

I'm sure that all of us have at times "borrowed" or "used" a sermon we heard or read somewhere along the way. A thought, a word, or an idea jumped out to us from another preacher and we took that thing and ran with it. You have probably used an outline from a preacher brother but ended up preaching something that was uniquely different. Same idea, it just came out differently when you preached. Using your own thoughts, experiences, and illustrations.....the message became your own.

I heard an old-time preacher once say, "*Any message worth preaching ought to be worth preaching again!*" Well, I have certainly preached some sermons again and again. I have borrowed from others to preach theirs again too. Please use these messages as the Lord leads and preach His Word over and over again!

I make no claim of complete originality for this material. Also, please remember that these messages are not expected to substitute for your own personal study of the Word of God! The thoughts and ideas are given as a catalyst to help begin your ideas on a given passage of Scripture or trigger a seed thought to get you going. It is my prayer that the "stuff" contained here will further kindle the fire of God's message that is already in your heart. Your own thinking, praying, and studying will be necessary to guide you into the delivery of His Word to your own people.

May these sermons become *messages* from the Lord that He uses in your own life as He has used them in mine.

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A Thanksgiving Heart

Text – Psalm 100

Introduction: The first portion of Scripture that comes to mind when I think of Thanksgiving is Psalm 100. It has been memorized by students and staff at our Christian school probably more than any other part of God’s Word.

Often this over-familiarity with a passage causes us to miss some great truths we need. One thing we all need in this day and hour is a thankful heart. What can help us have and maintain this thankful heart. Three things come to mind:

1 - IDENTIFICATION

- Our God – **THE** Lord (note the definite article)
- Ourselves – How we are described as sheep, but specifically **His** sheep)

2 - INSTRUCTIONS

- **Make**.....a joyful noise...to THE LORD
- **Serve**.....THE LORD
- **Come**.....before HIS Presence
- **Know**.....HE IS GOD
- **Enter**.....HIS Courts

3 - IMPACT

The *Impact* that understanding our *Identification* and following these *Instructions* has on each of us is real. These things do not make us think that God is BAD, we do not get sour and bitter by considering these things, His mercy is made even clearer to us by heeding His Word.

Our heart, mind, attitude, and spirit is caught up in being reminded that the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth to all generations.

A Thanksgiving List

Text: Psalm 100

Introduction: One of the most beautiful Psalms of thanksgiving is the 100th Psalm. With all my heart I believe we are a people & a nation that has truly been blessed by God. And of all those who "give thanks to Him & praise His name" we should be at the top! It is not uncommon to compile wish lists at Christmas, & draw up a list of resolutions for New Years. But there is another list we often overlook - a Thanksgiving Day list of all for which we are thankful.

- **ILL. Thanksgiving Day List** (Housewives):
- "For automatic dishwashers because they make it possible for us to get out of the kitchen before the family comes back in for their after-dinner snacks.
- "For husbands who attack small repair jobs around the house because they usually make them big enough to call in the professionals.
- "For children who put away their things & clean up after themselves. They're such a joy you hate to see them go home to their own parents
- "For teenagers because they give parents an opportunity to learn a second language.
- "For Smoke alarms because they let you know when the turkey's done.

1. The Principle of Thanksgiving - vs. 1-2

Taking a quick look around, it might be easy to see the world as becoming ungrateful and in a bad mood all the time. Words like *please* and *thank you* seem to be heard less and less. However it is not just the world at large that

has become thankless . . . how about you? Is thanksgiving a holiday thing or a principle thing in your life?

For the Christian it was a principle thing . . . you could see on his face and hear in his voice he lived with giving thanks to God.

The psalmist speaks of the principles of thanksgiving. Principles are eternal and therefore they never change with the culture or circumstances we might happen to find ourselves in. Regardless the principles are to rule our voice and conduct before the Lord and others.

1a. Joyfully Thankful ... *Make a joyful shout*

To make a joyful shout is more than hollering or screaming ... the emphasis is upon what we are to shouting about ... the psalmist is speaking of making an open air confession. In fact the Hebrew word means "an extension of the hand." It is as if the psalmist is saying to cup the hand to the mouth and speak out loud a very joyful confession to the Lord.

1b. Serving Thankful ... *Serve the Lord with gladness*

When our lives are governed by a joyful heart that speaks words of thanksgiving to the Lord . . . naturally or better yet "supernaturally" our lives will fall in line to become servants filled with glad works.

1c. Come Thankful ... *Come before His presence with singing*

As the called of God we are to come into His presence with our hearts filled with the joy and gladness of knowing

Him. We are to come singing with joyful voices of praise and thanksgiving.

Ephesians 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

Think about this the next hymn we sing . . . listen to yourself sing. How would you measure it? Thankful or thankless?

If we live ego centered or self centered lives we will never become principled centered people who understands the realm of thanksgiving.

2. The Perception of Thanksgiving - vs. 3

The psalmist moves from the principle to the perception of thanksgiving. He looks to the mind of the matter with the affirmation "to know" God. It speaks to the intimate level of the heart and soul and moves beyond a mental ascent of a knowledge of a higher power.

Today, many want only a God to fill their "emotions" to make them feel good, rather than a God who is involved in the intimate details of their lives.

A Christian reminded me that God is so intimately involved in our lives that He has numbered the hairs on our heads!

Matthew 10:30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

How we perceive things to be is usually what motivates us. What is your perception of God? How we perceive God ...

who He is and what He is doing will make or break our spirit of thanksgiving.

2a. God's Authority ... *He is God*

The first perception we must see is God's authority. The psalmist states emphatically, "He is God!" Any questions?

1 Chronicles 17:20 O LORD, there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

Whose authority are you under today? Your own, someone else's, or God's? How you answer shows who God is in your life.

2b. God's Authorship ... *He who made us*

From authority to authorship the psalmist uses the positive and negative . . . God is our Maker! We cannot make ourselves! There are no "self made" men, only those who refuse to recognize God as Creator.

Hebrews 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The Author of our lives places in us works and words of thanksgiving. Give thanks to your God!

2c. God's Assurance ... *We are His people*

When we live recognizing God's authority and authorship in our lives we live in the assurance of knowing we are His people.

Thanksgiving tends to place itself in the realm of the material objects of our lives . . . food, clothes, houses, cars, etc. These things are temporary and could be lost in a moments time. We should be thankful for those things, but our thanksgiving must reach into the assurance of the things we cannot lose.

- Eternal life . . . John 10:28
- Forgiveness . . . 1 John 1:9
- Access to God through Prayer . . . Hebrews 4:15-16
- God's presence . . . Hebrews 13:5

Some folks remind me that when we are God's we ought to be prepared to be used by Him. What's your perception of God and are you doing what He asks you to do with a thankful heart?

3. The Progression of Thanksgiving - vs. 4

The psalmist shows us that the state of thanksgiving in our hearts and lives has a progression to it. Thanksgiving takes on a note of praise. The words of a Christian should give proof that our praising God is a privilege both public and private. The private or personal invades to enhance the public and the public praising creates a host for personal praise.

3a. Public Praise ... *Enter into His gates*

Corporate worship is the time we enter into the gates ... the opening of praising God. What is your attitude in worship .

. . . get it over or I can't get over it? Are you thankful the service is over or are you thankful to be serving? Public praise worship is the real barometer of our personal worship of God. The heart and voice attitude is . . . "We praise You God!"

3b. Personal Praise ... *And into His courts*

The gates made entry into the presence and the courts lend themselves to our private or personal times of praising God. Do you have those times? The personal worship impacts the public. The heart and voice attitude is . . . "I praise You God!"

3c. Privileged Praise ... *Be thankful and bless His name*

If our hearts are geared to the public and private arenas of praise we will discover the privilege of praise.

Warren Wiersbe states, *"I have felt for a long time that one of the particular temptations of the maturing Christian is the danger of getting accustomed to his blessings. Like the world traveler who has been everywhere and seen everything, the maturing Christian is in danger of taking his blessings for granted and getting so accustomed to them that they fail to excite him as they once did."*

Why did only one cleansed leper return to praise and give thanks to Jesus?

- One waited to see if the cure was real.
- One waited to see if it would last.
- One said he would see Jesus later.
- One decided that he had never had leprosy.
- One said he would have gotten well anyway.

- One gave the glory to the priests.
- One said, "O, well, Jesus didn't really do anything."
- One said, "Any rabbi could have done it."
- One said, "I was already much improved."

Do they sound like us? Have we become accustomed to God's blessings? The progression of our thanksgiving will lead us to see it as a privilege in both public and personal praise.

4. The Person of Thanksgiving - vs. 5

A Christian's words should be, "Hey folks, God is so good!" He was right in line with the psalmist who identifies God as good, full of mercy and truth. What else could we want to stimulate our hearts to be thankful?

4a. God is Good ... *For the Lord is good*

God is good all the time! All the time God is good! God cannot help but be good! His loving acts toward mankind are always wrapped in His goodness and love. God is good!

4b. God is Mercy ... *His mercy is everlasting*

Mercy always triumphs over judgment. (James 2:13) Christ is God's mercy to man! Think about that a moment. Let it sink in our hearts and lives and it will be geared our hearts to giving thanks to God for His everlasting mercy that is directed to us today and will be in the tomorrow and into eternity!

4c. God is Truth ... *His truth endureth to all generations*

God doesn't lie. What He tells us today will be true tomorrow and into all generations. It was true for the psalmist who penned these words and it is true to you and I who read these words. Now give Him thanks!

Conclusion: Let me put this entire psalm into a perspective with this story ***Take Your Goat into the Room with You***

In Budapest, a man goes to the rabbi and complains, “Life is unbearable. There are nine of us living in one room. What can I do?” The rabbi answers, “Take your goat into the room with you.” The man is incredulous, but the rabbi insists. “Do as I say and come back in a week.” A week later the man comes back looking more distraught than before. “We cannot stand it,” he tells the rabbi. “The goat is filthy.” The rabbi then tells him, “Go home and let the goat out. And come back in a week.” A radiant man returns to the rabbi a week later, exclaiming, “Life is beautiful. We enjoy every minute of it now that there's no goat—only the nine of us.”

Will you be a one who fills the table and room with a bountiful supply of thanksgiving? Be thankful!

A Thanksgiving Thought

Text - Eph. 5:20 / 1 Thess. 5:18

Introduction: The very thought of Thanksgiving may seem like an intrusion to many people today. The concept of gratitude is swiftly eroding. Also, some people confuse thanks-saying with Thanks-giving. The biblical meaning of giving thanks to God needs rediscovery.

Some people probably question the reason for Thanksgiving. They look at the cost of living, the hardships of life, the increase in crime and many other natural disasters as wonder if there really is a reason to be thankful. As we think on the subject of Thanksgiving, these verses reveal how the grace of gratitude should be expressed.

I. Thanksgiving Should be Continuous

Look at the word, "**always.**" We should always be giving thanks. You can never express your gratitude to God in a single day. The happy Christian lives in a spirit of gratitude to God continuously.

Seasonable-during the Thanksgiving Holiday season

Reasonable-during all times and seasons

Thanksgiving should be offered to God under all circumstances. When all is well and we are happy, we should give thanks. But, when we are in the hour of disappointment we should also give Him thanks.

2 Corinthians 2:14 Now **thanks** be unto God, which **always** causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

Ephesians 5:20 Giving **thanks always** for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Colossians 1:3 We give **thanks** to God and the Father of

our Lord Jesus Christ, praying **always** for you,

1 Thessalonians 1:2 We give **thanks** to God **always** for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

II. Thanksgiving Should be Comprehensive

Look at the words, "**all things.**"

We must consider all the blessings of God in every area of life. Think of God's blessings to you physically, mentally, spiritually, financially, psychologically, etc. We are told in God's Word to forget not "**all**" his benefits.

Thank & Think come from the same root word

"If we would THINK more, we would THANK more!"
-Wiersbe

We must be thankful for the blessings God gives which are known and unknown to us. Yes, God's unknown blessings too.

THINK about it! **Think** about ALL things: "**We Move from the Known to the Unknown**"

The Known Things...What we know and experience, observe, see, feel, etc.

The Unknown Things...Accidents avoided, Diseases not contracted, Breakdowns that didn't occur, Stroke avoided, Heart attack halted, etc.

III. Thanksgiving Should be Christian

Paul tells us that we should give this thanks, "**in the name of the Lord.**" The Christian lives and moves, and has his being within the will of God.

A man was telling another about traveling over a certain road and how he had a crash but was not hurt. He was expressing his thanks. The other man said, "I

Gratitude & Grace come from the same root word, Gr. *charis*

can tell you something better than that. I have driven over that road a hundred times, have never crashed and never had a problem." Dear friend, how often we forget that as believers we are in the hands of the Lord.

Let us give our thanks as **Christians!**

That for which we should be most thankful is the grace of God in Christ. This grace is ours because of God's Love (John 3:16). Love cannot be compelled, forced or bought.

Paul was always giving thanks unto God for what he called God's "**unspeakable gift.**" (**2 Cor. 9:15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift**)

Thanksgiving is pleasing to God. 1 Thess. 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. "

God does not need our thanks; He dwells in continual praise in Heaven.

The Biblical meaning of giving thanks to God needs rediscovery in all of our lives.

A Thanksgiving Psalm

Text: Psalm 100

Introduction: One of the most striking Psalms of thanksgiving is Psalm 100. Psalm 100 is the summons to universal worship of the Lord with gladness and praise. The Pulpit Commentary put it this way:

The hundredth psalm has for its title, "A Psalm of praise," or "of thanksgiving," and to this description it well answers. There is not a single mournful note in the composition. God is praised from the beginning to the end, and all the earth is called upon to join in blessing and thanking him. It has been suggested that it was probably written to be chanted by a festive procession as it approached and entered the temple (see ver. 4). The whole runs on without any break or division.

I. THE BASIS OF OUR THANKSGIVING

The 100th Psalm was written for the people of Israel. God said to them, "When you come into the Promised Land, & settle down in your warm homes, & you have plenty to eat, don't forget Me. I led you out of the wilderness & I brought you into a land flowing with milk & honey."

But it doesn't take very long to realize that the people of Israel needed a reminder, and I am afraid that we need it, too. Maybe God had us in mind, too, when this Psalm was written. Did you notice to whom it is addressed? The first verse says that it is addressed to "all the earth," & the last verse says that it includes "all generations." This message of thanksgiving is so deep & wide that it applies to every person in every era in every stage of life.

ILL. It's sad, isn't it, that we are the only country in the world, except for Canada & the Philippines (as far as I know), that has a Thanksgiving Day? I wonder how our

world would be changed if suddenly **all nations** would begin to observe Thanksgiving?

I think that there is something about giving thanks together to God that breaks down barriers between people & brings about a unity, much like that which occurred as the Berlin wall began to crumble. I think also that there is a real danger in this season of determining our thanksgiving on the basis of how much we have. "Do I have enough turkey to gorge myself sufficiently? Is my money in the bank secure? Am I healthy?" And we let these things determine whether we are or aren't thankful. The Psalmist says that all of these things may change at any time. They may drift away, or burn up, or someone may steal them. The only thing we have for sure is our relationship with the Lord.

Just scan the Psalm and see what it emphasizes. In vs. 1 you'll find the name of the Lord. In vs. 2 you'll find the name of the Lord. In vs. 3 you'll find the name of the Lord. In vs. 4 it says, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving." And in vs. 5 you'll find the name of the Lord.

The basis of our thanksgiving is the Lord.

ILL. Alex Haley, the author of "Roots," had an unusual picture hanging on his office wall. It was a picture of a turtle on top of a fence post. When asked, "Why is that there?" Alex Haley answered, "Every time I write something significant, every time I read my words & think that they are wonderful, & begin to feel proud of myself, I look at the turtle on top of the fence post & remember that he didn't get there on his own. He had help."

II. FIVE THANKSGIVING COMMANDS

1. **Command #1** is in vs. 1, "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands."

It means to "shout with the force of a trumpet blast," a shout of joy to the Lord that comes from the very depths of your being.

Maybe He solved your problem. Maybe He has given you the direction to go. Maybe He has provided a blessing, & you realize that it has come from God. So from the depths of your being you proclaim your praise.

ILL. Roland Allen tells about a veteran missionary who came up to him one day after he had delivered his sermon. The missionary introduced himself & said, "I was a medical missionary for many years in India. And I served in a region where there was progressive blindness. People were born with healthy vision, but there was something in that area that caused people to lose their sight as they matured."

But this missionary had developed a process which would arrest progressive blindness. So people came to him & he performed his operation, & they would leave realizing that they would have become blind, but now they were going to be able to see for the rest of their lives.

He said that they never said, "Thank you," because that phrase was not in their dialect. Instead, they spoke a word that meant, "I will tell your name." Wherever they went, they would tell the name of the missionary who had cured their blindness. They had received something so wonderful that they eagerly proclaimed it.

And that is what the Psalmist is saying. "Suddenly you realize that God has been so good to you that you can't keep it inside any more. From the depths of your being you shout your joy unto the Lord."

2. **Command #2** is, "Serve the Lord with gladness."

It doesn't say "serve the church." It doesn't say "serve the preacher, or serve the leaders, or serve the organization." It says, "serve the Lord."

The Bible teaches that if we witness on behalf of the Lord, if we feed the hungry, if we clothe the naked, if we do the work of the Lord, whatever it might be, we are serving the Lord.

Jesus said, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me."

I'm not sure that we grasp that. Maybe we serve at times out of a feeling of obligation or a fear of guilt if we don't serve, or maybe even because we want to draw attention to ourselves. It's natural for us to desire appreciation when we do something that is worthwhile. But the Psalmist says, "In whatever you do, serve the Lord with gladness."

3. **Command #3** is, "Come before his presence with singing."

Have you noticed? In these first 3 commands, God has said, "I want you to be happy. Shout with joy, serve with gladness, & come with joyful songs."

ILL. Now just take a moment & look at the people around

you. Do they look happy? Or are they just sitting there with scowls on their faces?

The Psalmist says, "Come before Him & serve Him & sing His praise with joy in your heart."

4. **Command #4** is, " Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."

1. God took every bone, every joint, & He welded them together with sinews & muscles & covered them with skin & gave us eyes that see, brains that think, & fingers that can pick things up. God made us, inside & out. He made you the way He wanted you to be. And He made me the way He wanted me to be.

ILL. That is a mystery, isn't it? I don't understand why, but somehow in God's providence He decided that He wanted a medium sized man, not too good looking, not outstanding in anything, but just a normal or not so normal person. So He made me. Somewhere along the way He had you in mind, & He made you.

And He is still making us. He's not satisfied with the unfinished product. He's not satisfied with your temper. He's not satisfied with the weak areas of your life where you are giving in to temptation. So He's still making us. He's still working on our lives.

2. Then He says, "We are His people, the sheep of His pasture." Most of us want to be shepherds, not sheep. "It's not any fun being sheep," we say. But the problem is, we don't know where the still waters & green pastures are.

And every time we go out searching for them, we invariably end up in the far country.

He is saying, "You be the sheep. Let me be the shepherd, & I will lead you beside the still waters & the green pastures. Just let me lead."

5. **Command #5** is this, " Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."

In the O.T. the temple symbolized the presence of God. So whenever the people came to the temple & entered the courtyards they knew that they had come into the presence of God.

Now that temple no longer exists. But oftentimes the place where we meet to worship God is called a "sanctuary," indicating that God is there. But God is everywhere. You know that. He is with you as you drive on the highway. He is with you when you work. He is with you as you care for your children. He is with you every moment of your life.

That is the source of our thanksgiving, isn't it? But I'm worried. What if God began to treat us like we so often treat Him? What if God met our needs to the same extent that we give Him our lives?

What if we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when God sent the rain? What if God stopped loving & caring for us because we failed to love & care for others? What if God took away His message because we wouldn't listen to His messenger?

What if He wouldn't bless us today because we didn't thank Him yesterday? What if God answered our prayers the way we answer His call for service? What if God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we did not follow Him today?

“He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.” [Psalm 103:10].

CONCLUSION: I pray that this will be a meaningful Thanksgiving week for you & all your family. Take time to read the 100th Psalm again. And if you'll listen to those commands, your heart will overflow with thanksgiving to the Lord.

YOU KNOW YOU'VE OVER-DONE THANKSGIVING IF:

- Paramedics bring in the Jaws of Life to pry you out of the oversize Lazy-Boy
- Your after dinner moans are loud enough to signal Dr. Kevorkian
- The potatoes you ate set off another famine in Ireland
- You get grass stains on your bottom after a walk, but you never sat down
- Your "Big Elvis Super-Belt" won't even go around your waist
- Pricking your finger for a cholesterol screening only yielded gravy
- That rash on your stomach turns out to be steering wheel burn
- Your arms are too short to reach the keyboard & delete this note.

A Thanksgiving First

Text - Leviticus 7:12

Introduction: We have to go back roughly three and a half centuries to consider the first occasion of Thanksgiving, when the Plymouth Pilgrims sat down for a feast with their Indian neighbors in the fall of 1621. However, we have to go back roughly three and a half millennia to consider the first occurrence of the word, "thanksgiving," in the Scripture. In **Leviticus 7:12**, Moses mentioned a peace offering that is offered "for a thanksgiving."

Over the Years

Though many competing claims exist, the most familiar story of the first Thanksgiving took place in Plymouth Colony, in present-day Massachusetts, in 1621. More than 200 years later, President Abraham Lincoln declared the final Thursday in November as a national day of thanksgiving. Congress finally made Thanksgiving Day an official national holiday in 1941.

Thanksgiving On the Table

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Minnesota is the top turkey-producing state in America, with a production total of 46.5 million in 2011. Six states—Minnesota, North Carolina, Arkansas, Missouri, Virginia, and Indiana—account for nearly two-thirds of the 248 million turkeys that will be raised in the U.S. this year.

In a survey conducted by the National Turkey Federation, nearly 88 percent of Americans said they eat **turkey** at Thanksgiving. The average weight of turkeys purchased for Thanksgiving is 15 pounds, which means some 690 million pounds of turkey were consumed in the U.S. during Thanksgiving in 2007.

The **sweet potato** is most plentifully produced in North Carolina, which grew 972 million pounds of the popular Thanksgiving side dish vegetable in 2010.

According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the largest **pumpkin pie** ever baked weighed 2,020 pounds and measured just over 12 feet long. It was baked on October 8, 2005 by the New Bremen Giant Pumpkin Growers in Ohio, and included 900 pounds of pumpkin, 62 gallons of evaporated milk, 155 dozen eggs, 300 pounds of sugar, 3.5 pounds of salt, 7 pounds of cinnamon, 2 pounds of pumpkin spice and 250 pounds of crust.

Interesting facts but these items are not the focus of Biblical Thanksgiving!

1. THE FOCUS OF THANKSGIVING

One of the great themes of Leviticus is approaching God, which is indicated by the frequent use of the term "offer" or "offering" meaning - "to approach."

- **Approaching God's Presence**

So, if the worshipper was to "*offer unto the LORD*" (7:11), then the focus of this thanksgiving offering was approaching the presence of God.

- **Appreciating God's Provisions**

Leviticus 7: 15 tells us that the "*peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered.*" As **Andrew Bonar** stated, "Israel might hereby be taught to offer thanksgiving while the benefit was still fresh and recent," because the focus of this thanksgiving offering was appreciating the provisions of God.

2. THE FEAST OF THANKSGIVING

Warren Wiersbe noted that "after the priest had completed the sacrifice, a large portion of the meat went to him; the rest went to the offerer who could then enjoy a feast with

his family and friends.

- **The Menu**

The menu for the peace offering of thanksgiving consisted of some animal of the herd or flock, or a goat, accompanied by unleavened bread.

- **The Meaning**

It is fascinating to consider the meaning of these components in the peace offering of thanksgiving. As someone said, "We may not always be able to say what the exact relation is between the type and the antitype," but it seems clear that the animals offered in the peace offering - whether bullock, lamb, or goat - - all pointed to Christ, "For He is our peace" Eph. 2:14).

The lack of leaven in the, cakes" and "wafers" of Leviticus 7: 12 further reminds us of Jesus, in Whom was "no sin" (1 John 3:5).

3. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THANKSGIVING

Q: If April showers bring May flowers what do May flowers bring? A: Pilgrims!

Q: Why did the turkey cross the road? A: It was the chicken's day off.

Q: What sound does a space turkey make? A: Hubble, Hubble, Hubble.

Q: What kind of music did the Pilgrims like?A: Plymouth Rock

Q: Why do pilgrims pants keep falling down? A: Because their belt buckles are on their hats!

Q: How do you keep a turkey in suspense? A: I'll let you know next week.

Q: Which side of the turkey has the most feathers? A: The outside.

It is interesting to note that this peace offering is sometimes called the "*fellowship offering*." It was the only offering that was shared with the offerer, when both priest and worshipper become partakers of the remaining portion.

- **A Lovely Fellowship**

There is a lovely fellowship as, in this offering alone, we have the combination of "unleavened cakes" (7:12) and "leavened bread" (7:13), reminding us that the sinless Christ fellowships with the sin-laden creature.

- **A Limited Fellowship**

However, we are also reminded that continuing sin and uncleanness in the believer's life brings a limited fellowship, and "that soul shall be cut off from his people" (Lev. 7:20, 21).

Conclusion: It was an amazing thing for the Puritans of the Plymouth colony to sit down and fellowship with the "heathen" Indians of the Wampanoag tribe so many years ago. But even more amazing is that the God of heaven would commune with savage man because Jesus, "having made peace through the brood of His cross" (Col. 1:20), has become our peace offering.

In a letter dated December 11, 1621, one of the Pilgrims named Edward Winslow, recalled that preparations were made for that first Thanksgiving "so we might, after a special manner, rejoice together." He began the letter by saying, "God be praised. And, to that, our thankful hearts can say, "Amen."

A Thanksgiving Grace

Texts - 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 9:15

Introduction: In studying the language of the New Testament, it is fascinating to find that one Greek word may be dressed in an assortment of garments. In other words, it may be translated numerous ways. This is true of *charis*, the word selected for this message. Used over 150 times, it is primarily rendered "grace" (130 times, in fact). However, it has its own clothes! And, you may find it wearing these special outfits: *favor, pleasure, acceptable, benefit, gift, joy, liberality, and **thanks***.

I have become fascinated with one of its special garments, "**thanks**". It is seen in this attire 12 times (Luke 6:32, 36, 39; 17:9; 1 Tim. 1: 12; 2 Tim. 1:3; Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14; 8:16; 9:15; 1 Pet. 2:19). Although at first glance "grace" may not seem to look like "thanks," it is the same basic truth in different clothing. Both outfits highlight the magnitude of this great principle.

1-A Matter Of Association

"Grace" and "thanks" are not frequently found together in the Scriptures. However, there is a noticeable relationship between them.

- Grace is the **producer**; thanks is the **product**.
- Grace is the **root**; thanks is the **fruit**.
- Grace is the **foundation**; thanks is the **framework**.
- Grace is the **origin**; thanks is the **offspring**.
- Grace is the **inflow**; thanks is the **overflow**.

To put it another way, **gratitude is grace in action**. Thanksgiving is grace at work. As the Lord works in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13),

He enables us "in every good work to do His will" (Heb. 13:21). As He works in us "mightily," we, in turn, "labour, striving according to His working" (Col. 1:29). **When grace works in us, thanks will work out of us!**

2-A Message Of Appreciation

Giving "thanks" exhibits an humble appreciation for the grace that has been received. Certainly, this was the idea in Paul's mind when he expressed his gratitude to God, "But thanks (*charis*) be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57). Again, with an appreciative heart, he wrote, "Now thanks (*charis*) be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place" (2 Cor. 2:14).

Of course, thankful hearts are not only grateful to God for His undeserved favor, but are **also appreciative of the kindness of others** in life's journey.

The grace of God extended to us through those around us keeps our hearts from pride and selfish independence. When writing to the saints at Corinth, he praised the ministry of Titus, saying, "But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you" (2 Cor. 8: 16).

3-A Measure Of Adoration

The term, "grace," represents the favor, or loving-kindness, that issues from God, the Giver, to a needy heart, the receiver. On the other hand, "thanks," as W. E. Vine so ably stated, is "on the part of the receiver, a sense of the favor bestowed, a feeling of gratitude," and that to the Lord, the Giver! . Therefore, grateful hearts respond in worship and adoration.

We sense this spirit of intensity in Paul's utterance, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15). From the sanctuary of his heart, the Apostle, as J. H. Bernard explained, "bursts out here into a characteristic doxology." He is caught up with things above. His affections move toward the throne. And, in prostration of soul, he gratefully worships the God of his salvation.

When I was in the grammar school, one of the high school boys brought a boomerang to the ball field. Most of us had never seen one of those interesting objects. I remember watching it sail out into the air, and then amazingly return in a circular pattern. Similarly, the Lord directs His grace our way and works in our hearts and lives. Then, completing the cycle, that same grace goes back to Him in the form of thanksgiving and praise.

1 Corinthians 15:57 But thanks (*charis*) be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks (*charis*) be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

2 Corinthians 8:16 But thanks (*charis*) be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

2 Corinthians 9:15 Thanks (*charis*) be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

A Thanksgiving Measurement

TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Introduction: In spite of what some churches think or even teach, God has clearly expressed Himself through His Divine Word. It is to this Word that we all must "measure up" one day. One important area of our lives that needs attention is the giving of thanks. When it comes to thanksgiving, how do you measure up? Our text reveals a measurable approach to Thanksgiving and is all-encompassing.

1. THE BREADTH OF THANKSGIVING

- **1 Thessalonians 5:18** In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
- You are to uphold a thankful heart in spite of what is going on **around** you!
- Your situations do not dictate to nor control God in anyway. Regardless of what your eyes see or ears hear, God is still true to His Word and His purposes.
- Some days it may seem that the devil is winning, but he cannot be the ultimate winner because the victory is ours through the finished work of Christ.

2. THE HEIGHT OF THANKSGIVING

1 Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

- You are to maintain a thankful heart knowing what is going on **above** you!

- In Heaven, the will of God for us is to be thankful. We are to pray that that will be manifest in our lives here on earth.
- God is ruling and over-ruling. He is still Lord over all.
- God is working all things together for good even though they may not be good.
- God is still God and in charge and has the power to coordinate things toward His purposes.

3. THE DEPTH OF THANKSGIVING

1 Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

- You are to maintain a thankful heart embracing what is going on ***within*** you!
- God really does use what is going on around you to do a deeper work in you.
- It is God who is at work in you both to will and do according to His good pleasure.

He is making you more like Jesus. So we can always be thankful for that and most of all for that!

Conclusion: What is the level of gratitude in your life today? Would it be in order for you to ask the Lord to grace you to let go of any bitterness, complaining, resentment? Could you humble your heart before God right now and thank Him for his abiding love and continued care for you?

A Thanksgiving Look

Text - Psalm 95:1-11

Introduction: Rudyard Kipling, author of “The Jungle Book”, at one time was so popular that his writings were getting ten shillings per word. [about \$10!] A few college students, however didn't appreciate Kipling's writings; they facetiously sent him a letter enclosing ten shillings. It read, "Please, send us your best word." They got back a letter from Kipling, "Thanks."

1. A Thanksgiving Look Upward
2. A Thanksgiving Look Outward
3. A Thanksgiving Look Inward

1-A Thanksgiving Look Upward

A. An Upward Look Brings Thanks For God 's Power.

v. 1-3

It's time we develop a habit of thanking God, not just thanksgiving, but thanks-living!

Harriet was an atheist. One morning she & a Christian lady-friend stepped out into the glories of a beautiful fall morning. As Harriet saw the brilliant sun peaking through the haze, & the frost on the meadow, & the brightly colored leaves making their way lazily to the ground, she was filled with the beauty & said, "I am so thankful. I'm just so grateful for it all." And her believing friend asked, "Grateful to whom, my dear?"

B. An Upward Look Brings Thanks For God 's Plans.

v. 4-5 and Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

C. An Upward Look Brings Thanks For God 's Presence.

v. 2, 6, 7

We can come, and kneel...we're in His hand! [no pluck!]

Psalm 46:1

H. A. Ironside was in a crowded restaurant: Just as Ironside was about to begin his meal, a man approached and asked if he could join him. Ironside invited him to have a seat.

Then, as was his custom, Ironside bowed his head in prayer. When he opened his eyes, the other man asked, "Do you have a headache?" Ironside replied, "No, I don't." The other man asked, "Well, is there something wrong with your food?" Ironside replied, "No, I was simply thanking God as I always do before I eat." The man said, "Oh, you're one of those, are you? ... I never give thanks. I earn my money by the sweat of my brow and I don't have to give thanks to anybody when I eat. I just start right in!" Ironside said, "Yes, you're just like my dog. That's what he does too!" [headache prayers]

2-A Thanksgiving Look Outward

A. An Outward Look At Supplies Make Me Thankful.

v. 7

I AM REALLY CONTENT...

- I am really content — until I start looking through the Sears catalogue.
- I liked my car — until I saw the new Dodge Magnum.

- I am satisfied with my clothes — until I stroll through the Mall.
- I love our home — until I think of what it would be like to have a mansion or a log cabin on the shore of some remote lake.
- I am satisfied with every area of my life — until I start comparing with someone else's life.
- I feel like I have enough of everything — until I see someone who has more.

Let's focus and look at what we have! The secret of a joyful life is not to get what you want but to live with what you've got. Most of us spend our lives focused on what we don't have instead of thanking God for what we do have.

You Don't Know What You've Got Till It's Gone

Our power is shut off, and suddenly we become thankful for electricity. Our garbage is not picked up, and suddenly we become thankful for the garbage collector's weekly stop. A good friend dies, and suddenly we discover how much he meant to us. Our water becomes too polluted to drink and suddenly we appreciate having good water.

We are much like the little boy who was given an orange by a man. The boy's mother asked, "What do you say to the nice man?" The little boy thought and handed the orange back and said, "Peel it."

B. An Outward Look At Scenery Makes Me Thankful.

v. 4-6

In regions of Mexico hot springs and cold springs are found side by side, and because of the convenience of this natural phenomenon the women often bring their laundry, boil their clothes in the hot springs, and then rinse them in the

cold springs. A tourist watching this procedure commented to his Mexican guide: "They must think Mother nature is generous to freely supply such ample, clean hot and cold water." The guide replied, "No senor, there is much grumbling because she supplies no soap."

C. An Outward Look At Sinners Makes Me Thankful.

v. 8-11

Description of the lost world, headed for Hell!

If we could shrink the earth's population to a village of one hundred people:

- There would be 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 from the Western Hemisphere, and 8 Africans.
- 50 would suffer from malnutrition and one would be near death.
- 80 would live in substandard housing.
- 70 would be unable to read.
- 6 would possess more than half of the world's wealth and all 6 would be from North America.

We attend church without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death. We are better off than 3 billion people in that regard.

We have money in the bank, or could if we wanted to, and spare change in a dish, food in the refrigerator, clothes on our backs, and a roof over our heads. We are richer than 75% of this world. [richest poor people!]

D. An Outward Look At Salvation Makes Me Thankful.

v. 1b, 6-7

Alex Haley, the author of "Roots," had an unusual picture hanging on his office wall. It was a picture of a turtle on top

of a fence post. When asked, "Why is that there?" Haley answered, "Every time I write something significant, every time I read my words & think that they are wonderful, & begin to feel proud of myself, I look at the turtle on top of the fence post & remember that he didn't get there on his own. He had help."

3-A Thanksgiving Look Inward

A. An Inward Look At My Heart

v. 7b-8a

In a sense, gratitude is an expression of modesty. In Hebrew, the word for *gratitude* is the same as the word for *confession*.

To offer thanks is to confess dependence, to acknowledge that others have the power to benefit you, to admit that your life is better because of their efforts. and when we have a truly transparent heart and look at Christ in our heart, our attitude changes!

I am Thankful for...

1.the taxes I paybecause it means I'm employed.
2.the clothes that fit a little too snugbecause it means I have enough to eat.
3.my shadow who watches me workbecause it means I am out in the sunshine.
4.a lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning andgutters that need fixingbecause it means I have a home.
5.the spot I find at the far end of the parking lotbecause it means I am capable of walking.
6.my huge heating bill....because it means I am warm.

7.all the complaining I hear about our government
....because it means we have freedom of speech.
8.the lady behind me in church who sings off key.
....because it means that I can hear.
9.the piles of laundry and ironingbecause it means
my loved ones are nearby.
10.the alarm that goes off in the early morning hours
....because it means that I'm alive.
11.weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day
....because it means I have been productive.

B. An Inward Look At My Health

It was Thanksgiving season in the nursing home. The small resident population was gathered about their humble Thanksgiving table, and the director asked each in turn to express one thing for which they were thankful. Thanks were expressed for a home in which to stay, families, etc. One little old lady in her turn said, 'I thank the Lord for two perfectly good teeth, one in my upper jaw and one in my lower jaw that line up so I can chew my food.'

A 12 year old boy named David was born without an immune system. He underwent a bone marrow transplant in order to correct the deficiency. Up to that point he had spent his entire life in a plastic bubble in order to prevent exposure to common germs, bacteria, and viruses that could kill him. He lived without ever knowing human contact. When asked what he'd like to do if and when released from his protective bubble, he replied, "I want to walk barefoot on grass, and touch my mother's hand."

C. An Inward Look At My Home

Psalm 127:3-5

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.

Here is a list of things housewives are most thankful for:

- "For automatic dishwashers because they make it possible for us to get out of the kitchen before the family comes back in for their after-dinner snacks.
- For husbands who attack small repair jobs around the house because they usually make them big enough to call in the professionals.
- For children who put away their things & clean up after themselves. They're such a joy you hate to see them go home to their own parents.
- For teenagers because they give parents an opportunity to learn a second language.
- For smoke alarms because they let you know when the turkey's done."

POEM: “Forgive Me When I Whine”

Today upon a bus I saw, a lovely maid with golden hair;
I envied her – so beautiful, and how, I wished I were so fair;
When suddenly she rose to leave, I saw her hobble down the aisle;
she had one foot and wore a crutch, but as she passed, she wore a smile.
Oh God, forgive me when I whine, I have two feet -- the world is mine.
And when I stopped to buy some sweets, the lad who served me had
such charm;
he seemed to radiate good cheer, his manner was so kind and warm;
I said, "It's nice to deal with you, such courtesy I seldom find";
he turned and said, "Oh, thank you sir." And then I saw that he was
blind.
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine, I have two eyes, the world is mine.
Then, when walking down the street, I saw a child with eyes of blue;
he stood and watched the others play, it seemed he knew not what to
do;
I stopped a moment, then I said, "Why don't you join the others, dear?"
He looked ahead without a word, I realized--he could not hear.
Oh God, forgive me when I whine, I have two ears, the world is mine.
With feet to take me where I'd go; with eyes to see the sunsets glow,
with ears to hear what I would know.
I am blessed indeed. The world is mine;
oh, God, forgive me when I whine.

Conclusion:

- 1. A Thanksgiving Look Upward**
- 2. A Thanksgiving Look Outward**
- 3. A Thanksgiving Look Inward**

A Thanksgiving Stimulant

Text - Psalm 147:7

Introduction: According to the American Dictionary of the English Language - Noah Webster, 1828.

Stimulant, a. *L.* Increasing or exciting action, particularly the action of the organs of an animal body; stimulating.

Stimulant, n. A medicine that excites and increases the action of the moving fibers or organs of an animal body.

Other Dictionaries define it as follows:

1. substance making body part work faster. a substance that makes a part of your body work faster or better

1a. substance making you feel more awake. a substance that makes you feel more awake when you eat it or drink it

2. something encouraging something to happen, develop, etc.. something that encourages something to happen, develop, or improve

The Psalmist said in Ps. 147:7, “*Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving.*” As we walk through the Bible, it becomes evident that God intends a spirit of thanksgiving be the possession of all His people.

Since God is the source of everything good that has ever entered into our lives, it should not take a special national holiday to motivate and stimulate us to give thanks to the Lord. It should be an all year expression that should arise out of and from our redeemed life. All blessings flow from Him. Consider three things that will stimulate us to be more thankful to God.

I. Looking Out Will Stimulate Thanksgiving.

First, looking out at:

THE STRIKING SCENERY (PS.147:8).

God has made a beautiful world for us to live in and enjoy. Only God could create the natural beauty that never ceases to amaze us. Secondly, looking out at

THE SHATTERED SINNERS (See Luke 15- the prodigal son).

Seeing people whose lives sin has wrecked should not give you an air of superiority as a Christian, but rather a spirit of thankfulness that God has brought you out by His great grace. Thirdly, looking out at God's

THE SUFFICIENT SUPPLY (Phil.4:19).

God has granted us far more than we have deserved.

II. Looking In Will Stimulate Thanksgiving.

When we look inward, what do we see? First, we see a:

NATURE (2 Pet. 1:4).

All born again people have a "divine nature." We would have no inclination to holiness of thought and life without it. In the second place, there is a:

NEIGHBOR (Rom.8:9 - The Holy Spirit living within).

The Holy Spirit of God comes to take up abode in the heart of everyone saved by grace. In the last place, there is a:

NOTHING (Ps. 119:165).

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary states the following: **nothing shall offend them**-or, "cause them to offend, be offended".

The Treasury Of David By C. H. Spurgeon: 1885 records this: And nothing shall offend them, or, "shall really injure them." "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." It must needs be that offences come, but these lovers of the law are peacemakers, and so they neither give nor take offence. The wicked do not know real, satisfying, lasting peace (Isa. 57:21), but saints do.

III. Looking Up Will Stimulate Thanksgiving.

When we look toward heaven through the eyes of the Bible we see several things. Number one, an:

ADVOCATE (1 Jn. 2:1). As our Heavenly Lawyer He represents us before the throne of God. Then, we see an:

AUTHORITY (Ps.147:15-19). It is obvious when God unleashes His omnipotent power that no one can successfully stand against Him. Last but not least, the:

AWARENESS that will move us toward thanksgiving. In Acts 7:55, when Stephen was being stoned we see Jesus standing. He gave attention to the plight of His servant-godly Stephen. Never have an attitude of ingratitude.

A Thanksgiving Revelation

Text - John 11:41

Introduction: In view of the thanksgiving idea emphasized in this passage, my attention has been drawn to the tomb of Lazarus where we are told that, "*Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me*" (John 11:41). I can't help but observe, firstly, that:

Thanksgiving Is Revealed In Association!

Being in constant association and communion with the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ could give thanks without indecision and without insincerity. He simply "lifted up His eyes" toward Heaven and said, "Father, I thank Thee." Undoubtedly, as His disciples, we should try to be like our Lord in this regard!

Thanksgiving Is Revealed With Assurance!

Prior to Jesus calling out Lazarus' name, with great assurance in his Father, he gave thanks to him. It is interesting as well, that before he voiced one request, believing that the Father had "heard" him, he expressed his thankfulness for answered prayer. We agree with the old hymnist who wrote, "Oh, for grace to trust him more"

Thanksgiving Is Revealed Through Adversity!

In the face of a apparent impossibility, Jesus gave thanks unto his Father. Being certain that God's will is best, we can be thankful in the face of adversity and conflict.

Conclusion: May the same attitude conform us more to the image of Christ in this matter of thanksgiving!