

Christian Thanksgiving  
Psalm 100  
November 25, 2015  
Thanksgiving Eve

Thanksgiving is a day set aside to pause, remember, and respect all of the wonderful blessings God has given us. Sadly, millions of people will use Thanksgiving Day as a day of indulgence and ingratitude. They will spend this day celebrating the gifts God has given them without thanking God for those gifts.

Real thanksgiving is an act of worship and praise. That worship and praise may take the form of private prayer or it might be expressed around a dinner table as each person tells what God has done for him or her.

However, unlike the American philosophy, God never intended thanksgiving to be a day in the life of his people. God wants thanksgiving to be the lifestyle of his people. Thanksgiving should be the natural disposition of a Christian. Thanksgiving should be a character trait that shows the world that you are a committed follower of Jesus Christ.

Changing one's character is never easy. Changing your character requires two things: 1) a great deal of effort; 2) a reason to change. I'm afraid I can't help you with the work that character change requires, but I can give you some reasons to make thanksgiving your new way of life.

**We should thank God for his goodness.** Jeremiah writes: "*Give thanks to the Lord Almighty, for the Lord is good; his love endures forever*" (Je 33:11 NIV). God is good to us. There's no doubt about that. We can run out an endless list of God's goodness.

However, I want you to consider an aspect of God's goodness you might never have thought of before. This particular act of God's goodness is foundational to your salvation. The apostle Paul writes: *God's kindness leads you toward repentance?* (Ro 2:4 NIV). Don't ever be fooled into thinking you are cleaning up your life. Turning from sin and turning to God can only happen when, through his goodness, God has given you faith. **Thanks be to God.**

**We should thank God for his greatness.** It's impossible for us, with our human limitations, to fully grasp the greatness of God. We realize how inadequate words are when we try to describe God's greatness. Moses said: *The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome* (Dt 10:17 NIV).

King David wrote: *Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom* (Ps 145:3 NIV). Again in the book of Psalms we read: *Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit* (Ps 147:5 NIV). Over and over we fail to do justice to our God's greatness. The greatness of God's person, power, and provision brings an endless stream of thanksgiving from the hearts of his people. **Thanks be to God.**

**We should thank God for his grace.** Grace is defined as undeserved favor. We sinners do not deserve God's favor. We sinners can never earn God's favor. All we can do is experience and enjoy God's favor. Why does God let his grace rest on us? Paul says: *I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus* (1 Co 1:4 NIV). It is through the merits of Jesus that we have God's grace.

As Christians, we live by God's grace, we learn by God's grace, we labor by God's grace, we look forward to Christ's coming again by God's grace. It's only by God's grace that we are saved. In Ephesians we learn: *It is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God* (Eph 2:8 NIV). **Thanks be to God.**

**We should thank God for his Gospel.** The word Gospel means Good News. The Gospel is the best news there has ever been. It's the Good News concerning the salvation God has provided for sinners like you and me.

However, the Gospel isn't just for you and me. It's for everyone. Because of his love for mankind, God extends his Gospel promise to everyone. Paul writes: *[The Gospel] is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes* (Ro 1:16 NIV). **Thanks be to God.**

**We should thank God for his guidance.** Our world is full of self-help books. You can find "expert" guidance on everything from how to raise your children to how to write your own last will and testament. We all need guidance because we are all flawed. The problem is, the humans we look to for guidance are just as flawed as we are.

Who can we trust to show us the way? Scripture promises: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight* (Pr 3:5-6 NIV). King David tells us: *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord*" (Ps 37:23 NKJV). As Christians, we are assured of God's personal guidance for our lives. **Thanks be to God.**

**We should thank God for his government.** The world can be a scary place. There have been, are, and always will be troubling situations in the world: dictatorships, tyrannical kings and queens, terrorists, evil religious-based governments. But we have nothing to worry about.

It may seem that things are out of hand, but all things are under God's control. In the book of Romans hear that: *There is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God* (Ro 13:1 NIV). That means that God knows what's going on. Furthermore, that means that, no matter how we see things, *we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose* (Ro 8:28 NIV). **Thanks be to God.**

**We should thank God for his gifts.** Everything that comes from God is a gift. God only does what is best and right for his people. Most of all, God gave us the gift of his Son. He gave us the gifts of pardon, peace, and eternal life with him.

God also gifted us with the wherewithal to operate his church on earth for the benefit of believers and non-believers. God gifted people for different jobs in the church. Here's how it was explained to the Corinthian church: *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.* (1 Co 12:4-11 NIV).

All of these gifts, and more, come from God so that we might be empowered to carry out his will on earth. **Thanks be to God.**

All true thanksgiving begins, continues, and ends in God. Without God there would be no reason to give thanks. As we stand at the threshold of another Thanksgiving Day, let us direct our lives away from grumbling and ingratitude, and turn to God, in every moment of every day, with true thanksgiving in our hearts.

When you get home tonight, read Psalm 100. Then, read Psalm 100 every morning for the coming year. Make these words a part of your life and your life will become one of thanksgiving. Here is what you will find.

*Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.* (Ps 100 NIV).

**Thanks be to God.**