

Thanksgiving is a Way of Life

by Heath Rogers

Tomorrow many of us will likely spend the day with family observing the Thanksgiving holiday. While it is good that our nation has seen fit to set aside a day to express our gratitude unto God, the Christian understands that thanksgiving is a way of life.

Thanksgiving is to be a part of our worship. Thanksgiving is a major theme in the Psalms, which was the “hymnbook” for ancient Israel.

“Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms” (Psalm 95:1-2).

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations” (Psalm 100:4-5).

“Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever” (Psalm 106:1).

Christians are commanded to sing to the Lord, and give Him thanks for all things. “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:19-20; c.f. Heb. 13:15).

God is worthy to be praised and worshiped because of His great power, mercy, goodness and love. Every good thing that we have has come from God (James 1:17). Therefore, it is only natural that thanksgiving be a part of our worship unto God.

Thanksgiving is to be a part of our daily prayers. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6). “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2).

We know that prayer consists of petitions and supplications. However, prayer is more than an opportunity to tell God about our problems and ask for His help. Prayer is also a time to show our gratitude to God for His great blessings. If we will take a moment to meditate upon the blessings that we have from God, we will find many reasons to give Him thanks.

Thanksgiving is God’s will for us. “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:18). It is God’s will that we be grateful and give Him thanks for His great blessings. At first, we may find it somewhat strange that God commands us to give Him thanks. However, knowing what we do about human nature, I believe we will admit that such a command is necessary. Children have to be taught to say, “Thank you.” Once a child has learned this good habit (good manners) from his parents, it comes naturally to him throughout his life. It is God’s will that we give thanks, but we have to learn to do so. God commands us to give thanks, but as we grow spiritually and experience God’s blessings in our lives, thanksgiving will flow from our hearts.

Thanksgiving is a great family holiday for many of us. However, Thanksgiving is more than eating turkey and pumpkin pie, watching the Cowboys, and getting ready to hit the sales on black Friday. For Christians, giving thanks to God is a way of life.