

Thanksgiving Devotional #1

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This devotional is intended for several of the men to be involved. I did the leaders part then had other men to do the rest. As the leader of the devotional, put up the first slide that says “Being Thankful Unto God”, then follow outline below. You can print out page 3 & 10 for people to have and read.

Slide 1

Read slide 1, first part of page titled “**THANKSGIVING**”, found on page 2 below. Next, read the story about the “young boy who prayed”. Then read the rest of the page titled “**THANKSGIVING**”.

Slide 2

Read the next slides of George Washington’s proclamation. Then read first part of page 4 below, then when you get to the scriptures put up slide 5.

Slide 5

Read scriptures then last part of page 4 and go to slide 6.

Slide 6

Now, have someone read “**Blessings**”, page 5 below. Then have someone lead the song, “**Count Your Blessings**”.

Do same thing for “**God’s Love**” and “**The Bible**”. Have prayer. Now, do same thing for “**The Cross**” and “**Heaven**”.

Do the devotional “**Being Thankful**”, page 11, and offer invitation. Have closing song and prayer. Remember, if it is Sunday evening be sure and do the Lord’s Supper.

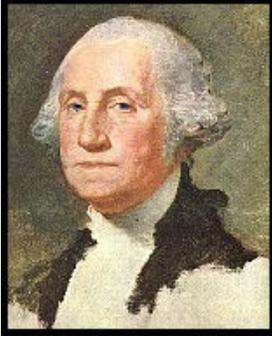
THANKSGIVING

We need to be thankful to God for everything that we have in this life and as Christians we should never take anything for granted but in everything give thanks. Ephesians 5:20 tells us, "Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Tell story of the young boy who prayed.

There was a 4-year-old boy who was asked to give thanks before they ate the Thanksgiving dinner. The family members bowed their heads in expectation. He began his prayer, thanking the Lord for all his friends, naming them one by one. Then he thanked the Lord for Mommy, Daddy, brother, sister, Grandma, Grandpa, and all his aunts and uncles. Then he looked out over the table and began to thank the Lord for each item of food. He gave thanks for the turkey, the dressing, the fruit salad, the cranberry sauce, the pies, the cakes, even the Cool Whip. Then he paused, and everyone waited-- and waited. After a long silence, the young fellow looked up at his mother and asked, "If I thank the Lord for the broccoli, do you think He will know that I'm lying?"

We should thank God for everything that is good. God has given us everything that we need to help us through this life, even broccoli. Thanksgiving Day is one day out of the year when we as a nation set aside a time to honor and pay tribute to God for all the blessings that He has given us. We often say that the first Thanksgiving was held by the Pilgrims in the fall of 1621 but in fact Thanksgiving celebrations have been held in one form or another for centuries. The ancient Greeks, Romans, Chinese and Egyptians all had days of Thanksgiving. During the American Revolution, in the late 1770's, a day of national thanksgiving was suggested by the Continental Congress. In 1789, our first president, George Washington gave a Thanksgiving Proclamation. Today, we are told by many in our nation that it is not proper to mention God in any public ceremony. That our great nation was not founded on Christian principles and that many of our founding fathers were agnostics. That is, they neither believed nor disbelieved in an All Mighty God. I want you to listen to the Thanksgiving Proclamation that our first president made in 1789 and see if you can determine his views concerning the importance of All Mighty God in the affairs of our lives and that of our nation.



George Washington's 1789 Thanksgiving Proclamation

Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me to *"recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:"*

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been able to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand, at the city of New York,
the 3d day of October, A.D. 1789.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "G. Washington".

G. Washington (his actual signature)

After reading the Thanksgiving Proclamation of George Washington I can't help but notice that he gives total credit to God for the existence of the United States of America and that the freedoms that we enjoy as a nation are totally dependant upon our continual thanks to God for such blessings. It is good that we, as a nation, can set aside a day of thanksgiving so we may remind ourselves how truly blessed we are. But we, as Christians, need to be careful and not think that one day out of the year is going to be enough thanks to God for what He has done for us. We do not observe Thanksgiving Day as a religious day. God's Word no where tells us to set it aside as a religious day of celebration or worship. But for those of us that are Christians each and everyday should be a day of Thanksgiving.

Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

1Thessalonians 5:18, "...in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Hebrews 13:15, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."

Psalms 75:1, "We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks!"

For the next few minutes let us praise God and give Him thanks for the many blessings that we enjoy not only as Americans but more importantly, as God's children.

We are thankful for all things. But a few of the things that we should be thankful for and what we will be talking about are the many blessings that we receive, God's Love, the Bible, the Cross and Heaven.

Let us begin by looking at our many blessings.

BLESSINGS

God has given us all blessings, both physical and spiritual. Ephesians 1:3 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus gave us assurance that God will also provide for our physical needs if we put Him first in our lives.

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Yes, God blesses us with all physical and spiritual blessings and in return God wants us to put Him first in our lives. As a nation and as God’s people we truly have been blessed.

Let us count those blessings one by one!

GOD'S LOVE

God's love is a love that we will never be able to understand or comprehend, but is a love that we should be thankful for each and every day. Without the love of God we would not have salvation, there would be no hope of heaven and we would be lost eternally. But thanks be to God that He "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We love Him because He first loved us." I John 4:7-10,19

Without the love of God each one of us would die in our sins. But because of God's love Jesus came into this world and shed His blood on the cross so that we may have eternal life. May we never take the love of God for granted.

Come, let us all unite to sing, that God is love!

THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's will revealed to man through the Holy Spirit. (II Peter 1:21)

To the Christian the Bible is many things;

it is a lamp unto our feet (Psalms 119:105)

it is our food (I Peter 2:2)

it is our sword (Ephesians 6:17)

it is our life (I Peter 1:23)

it is our guide (Psalms 119:133)

it will set us free (John 8:32)

it is what will judge us (John 12:48)

But the Bible can only help us if we hear it and allow it to bear fruit in our lives as Jesus spoke of in Luke 8.

“A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.” When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.” (Luke 8:5-8 & 11-15)

Through His Word God “has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.” (II Peter 1:3)

We should love and study God's Word because the Bible is the only book that “has the wonderful words of life!”

THE CROSS

Everything in the Bible points to the cross. Everyone in the Old Testament looked forward to the cross and those of us who live under the New Testament look back to the cross. For it is at the cross that God's love for all of mankind is shown and it is at the cross that we can have our sins washed away. Without the cross there would be no salvation. Without the cross there would be no hope. Jesus gave up heaven, came to this earth and then gave his life for you and for me.

“So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands. Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him." Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!" Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him." But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus. As the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. But the angel...said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen!"

Let us always be thankful for and never forget..... The Old Rugged Cross!

(Jn. 19:1-6;15-18;28-30;41-42 & Matt.28:1,5,6)

HEAVEN

God has promised us eternal life with Him in heaven if we will obey Him and keep His commandments. Revelation 2:10 tells us to, “Be faithful until death and I will give you a crown of life.”

Many times in the New Testament heaven is spoken of as a place of peace and beauty where we will forever spend eternity with God.

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:20-21

“In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” John 14:2,3

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Revelations 21:4

“There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.” Revelations 22:5

What a privilege and an honor it will be to spend eternity with God and forever give Him praises. As James says, our life on this earth is but a vapor and soon vanishes away. So, no matter what trials and tribulations we have to go through in this life it will be short lived but heaven will be for all eternity.

As the song says, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passing thro.”

THANKSGIVING

INTRODUCTION

BLESSINGS

Song: 118 “Count Your Blessings”

GOD’S LOVE

Song: 180 “God Is Love”

THE BIBLE

Song: 788 “Wonderful Words of Life”

PRAYER

THE CROSS

Song: 645 “The Old Rugged Cross”

HEAVEN

Song: 684 “This World Is Not My Home”

DEVOTION “Being Thankful”

INVITATION SONG

Song: 9 “A Wonderful Savior”

SONG:

Song: 888 “Thank You, Lord”

PRAYER

Being Thankful

As we have seen, we have a lot for which to be thankful. We have talked about God's love, the Bible, the Cross and Heaven. But even if we tried, we could never count all the blessings that God has bestowed upon us. Every blessing that we have, both physical and spiritual has been given to us by God.

But too often we take all of these blessings for granted and fail to thank God for all that He has done for us. We live in the best country in the world. We enjoy freedoms, each and every day, which others in the world can only dream of. We have the freedom to express our ideas and beliefs, come and go as we please, live and work where we want, worship as we believe to be right and not how the government tells us and many, many, many other blessings that we enjoy by living in the "land of the free and the home of the brave!". I believe that this land and the freedoms that we enjoy have been given to us by the providence of God and may we never forget the price that has been paid for us to enjoy those freedoms.

To those of us that are Christians, God has also given us all spiritual blessings. Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." To whom is the Apostle Paul speaking when he says this verse? To Christians! Not everyone has the benefit of receiving "every spiritual blessing" but only those who have chosen to obey God and have become Christians. As children of God, we have been given all spiritual blessings but one of the greatest is that of having our sins washed away and the promise of spending eternity with God. No matter the trials and suffering we may face here in this life, if we remain faithful to God, we know we have an eternal home in heaven waiting for us where there is no pain, suffering, sorrow or tears. May we never forget the price that has been paid for our spiritual blessings, the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Yes, we truly have been blessed as Americans but most of all as Christians! Let us be thankful, not only during the Thanksgiving Holidays, but each and every day!

If you are not a Christian then you need to come in obedience to His word by believing, repenting, confessing Jesus Christ, being baptized for the remission of sins and being a faithful child of God and you too can receive "every spiritual blessing" from God.