

Let's Celebrate Thanksgiving

November 23, 2016

I. Introduction:

A. Definition

Thanksgiving = Gratitude directed towards God, generally in response to God's concrete acts in history.

Thanksgiving = The offering of thanks, especially for gifts received.

Thankfulness = Heartfelt gratitude to God, expressed in response to his love and mercy.

B. Importance of giving thanks

A thorough study of the use of this word in the Hebrew Bible can lead to one conclusion: Everywhere and in every situation, God's people should continually give thanks to God, the One who has created and redeemed them.

Scripture emphasizes the importance of giving thanks to God for all his gifts and works, both as an expression of our dependence upon him and gratitude to him.

All creation joins in offering thanks to God (Ps 145:10).
Thanksgiving is linked with praise to God

It is evident that all of Israel's thanksgiving was a serious but joyous form of praise.

II. Thanksgiving in the Old Testament

A. Hebrew word:

"todah" translated = "thanks," "thankfulness."

the noun is formed from the verb yadah, which means "to throw" or "to cast."

the verb word means = "to give thanks," "to praise," or "to lead."

it also has the meaning of "affirming" or "confessing" the Name of the Lord (1 Ki 8:33, 35).

B. Thanksgiving is a faith response to God

Thanksgiving was central to Old Testament worship;

Sacrifice and offerings were not to be made with thanksgiving and praise (Ps 54:6; Jon 2:9).

Thank offering - was an expressions of thanksgiving (Lev 7:12-15; 22:29),

Pilgrimages to the temple, and worship were characterized by thanksgiving
(Ps 42:4; 95:2; 100:4; 122:4).

The temple musicians led in giving "thanksgiving and praise" (1 Chr 25:3; 2 Chr 5:13).

C. Psalms - is the praise book of God's people - in which thanksgiving ("todah") is the main theme. (see Ps 7:17-18; 28:7; 30:4-5; 50:23; 69:30-31; 86:12; 111:1)

1. Todah is used to describe an entire psalm as "A Psalm of Giving Thanks" (title of Ps 100).
2. The psalmist valued a song of thanksgiving more than sacrifice.
Ps 69:30-31 I will praise the name of God with song and magnify Him with thanksgiving. 31 And it will please the LORD better than an ox or a young bull with horns and hoofs.
3. We enter God's presence with thanksgiving
Ps 100:4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. (Ps 95:2)

D. People of faith are called to "give thanks"

(Ps 97:12; 105:1; 107:1; 118:1; 136:1-3; 147:7-9; 1 Chr 16:8, 34; 2 Chr 20:21; Isa 12:4; Jer 33:11)

David - Brought up the Ark to Jerusalem in a celebration of Thanksgiving (1 Ch 16:4).
Trained praise teams in "songs of praise and thanksgiving" (1 Chr 16:4; 23:30; Neh 12:46).

Manasseh - offered "sacrifices of thanksgiving" when he was restored (2 Chr 33:16; Ps 50:14; Am 4:5).

Nehemiah - rendered thanksgiving with two large choirs (Neh 11:17; 12:8, 31, 40).

All of **creation** offers thanks to God (Ps 145:10).

E. Thankfulness expressed for:

1. God's acts and words on behalf of His people (Ps 119:62)
2. God's goodness, grace (1Ch 16:34-35; 2 Ch 7:3-6; Ps 68:19; 100:4-5; 106:1; 107:1; 116:12-14; 118:1, 29; 136:1-3, 26; Isa 63:7; Ezra 3:10-11)
3. God's provision (Ps 147:7-9)
4. God's faithfulness to the covenant (Ps 100:5);
5. Forgiveness (Ps 30:4-5; Isa 12:1).
6. National deliverance from
enemies (Ps 44:7-8)
slavery in Egypt (Ex 15:1-20; Ps 105:1-45; 136:1-26)
7. Personal deliverance from:
troubles, adversity of various kinds (Ps 44:6-8; 66:8-9,16-20; 103:1-5; 107:22)
enemies (Ps 31:7-8, 21-23; 35:11-18)
hostile accusers (Ps 109:29-30)
sickness (Ps 116:17)
death (Ps 56:12; 86:12-13)

8. Answered prayer (Ps 66:16-20; 138:1-8)

Examples:

Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving at the dedication of Samuel (1Sa 2:1-10).

David's prayer of thanksgiving sung when the Temple was completed (Ps 30:1-12).

F. Thanksgiving (thankfulness) is expressed to God through:

1. Thank offering - was provided for the person who wanted to express his appreciation to the Lord. (Lev 7:12; 22:29)
2. Offerings (Ps 50:14; Lev 7:12-15; Jon 2:9)
3. Music (Ps 27:6; 92:1-3)
4. Song (Ps 26:7; 42:4-5; 69:30; 95:2; 96:1; 147:7; Isa 51:3; 55:12; Jer 30:19; Ezra 3:11)
5. Shouts of joy,
It is evident that all of Israel's thanksgiving was a joyous form of praise (Ps 42:4; 95:2; 100:4).
6. Dance (Ps 149:3)
7. Worship (Ps 95:2; 100:4)
8. Prayer (Neh 11:17; Dan 6:10)

III. Thanksgiving in the New Testament

A. Giving thanksgiving is an expression of faith.

1. Abraham model's the life of faith through thanksgiving.

Rom 4:20-21 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

2. We also express our faith through thanksgiving.

At all times;

Ps 34:1 I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

In everything

1 Thes 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:6)

For all things;

Eph 5:20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; (1 Co 1:4).

When we eat - Because all food is made acceptable through Thanksgiving

(1 Tim 4:3-4; Lk 24:30; Ac 27:35; Rom 14:6)

In whatever we do;

Col 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (Deut 12:7; 16:11)

Always;

Phil 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Continually;

Heb 13:15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

B. A lack of thankfulness:

1. Symptom of depravity

Rom 1:20-21 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

2. Symptom of self-righteousness

The Pharisee mistakenly thanked God that he was unlike others (Lk 18:11)

3. Symptom of unbelief

Lk 17:17-18 Then Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? 18 "Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?"

C. Communion - Thanksgiving meal of the church

(the eucharist means "to give thanks")

1 Co 10:16 Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing (Gk. "koinonia"; communion) in the body of Christ?

1 Cor 11:24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." (Mt 26:26-27; Mk 14:22-23; Lk 22:17-19)

D. Examples of thankfulness in the New Testament

1. Simeon and Anna express thankfulness to God when they saw infant Jesus (Lk 2:25-32, 36-38).

2. Jesus

Jesus gave thanks to the Father to model true thanksgiving to us (Mt 11:25; Jn 11:41).

Jesus gave thanks before feeding the 5,000 (Mt 14:19; Mk 6:41; Lk 9:16; Jn 6:11).

Jesus gave thanks before feeding the 4,000 (Mt 15:36; Mk 8:6).

Jesus offers a prayer of thanksgiving to His Father before praying for Lazarus to be raised from the dead (Jn 11:41-43).

3. Apostle Paul stressed thanksgiving -

All of Paul's letters (with the exception of Galatians) begin with a thanksgiving (Ac 28:15; Rom 6:17; 1 Cor 14:16; 2 Cor 9:11-12; Eph 1:16; 5:4, 20; Phil 4:6; Col 2:7; 4:2; 1 Thes 3:9; 1 Tim 1:12; 2:1).

4. All of heaven worships - expresses thanksgiving

(Rev 4:5-11; 5:6-11; 7:9-12; 11:15-19; 14:1-3; 15:3-8; 19:1-10)

E. Expressing thankfulness enables spiritual growth

Helps you fight anxiety (Phil 4:6).

Phil 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Helps you grow spiritually (Col 2:6-7).

Col 1:12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

Col 2:6-7 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

Helps you receive grace

2Co 4:15 For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

Helps you receive victory

Ro 7:24-25 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

2 Cor 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

1Co 15:53-57 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. 55 "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Helps you worship (Col 3:16).

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Helps you to be discipline and concentrate (Col 4:2).

Col 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

Helps you intercede for people, especially leaders (1 Tim 2:1-2).

1 Tim 2:1-2 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

The following References were used in this study:

Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary
Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible
The MacArthur Topical Bible
Dictionary of Bible Themes:
Holman treasury of key Bible words: