

# Make Church a Part of Your Life

## WEEKLY SERMONETTE

### "Thanksgiving"

By Preacher/Teacher Terry L. Laughlin, CrossRoads Ministries

First Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

On Thanksgiving Day, families gather around their televisions to watch football games after devouring a large feast. Some have even salted a bit of sentimental religious feelings into the day by saying grace before the main meal.

In contrast to this, the apostle Paul advises us to show gratitude to God no matter what our circumstances are. Our forebears, the Pilgrims, knew that Paul was right for in the midst of what they met to express gratitude. Abraham Lincoln also knew that, in spite of the circumstances (the Civil War, "a war of extreme severity"), expressing gratitude to God the Father affirms faith and issued a proclamation for a Day of Thanksgiving to be celebrated the last Thursday of November 1863.

Three things happen personally as you express gratitude:

(1.) Gratitude Mutes Arrogance. When things are going well, it is easy to believe the myth about our own independence. Steady employment, good health and fine education contribute to our idea that everything we possess comes from our own brilliance and hard work. Self-sufficiency is part of the modern mindset tilting our thinking away from true humility and reli-

ance upon a holy God. Gratitude mutes this arrogance as the Holy Spirit reminds us that all success and achievement comes only because of God's grace and His enabling power. Without Him, we truly can do nothing!

(2.) Gratitude Motivates Action. Paul puts gratitude and living thankfully together--

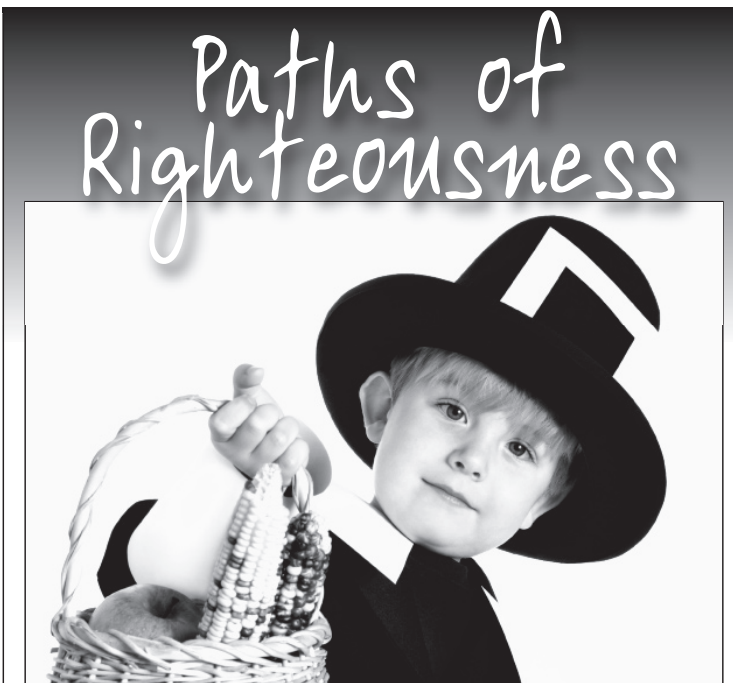
"Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father" (Colossians 3:17). To Paul, thanksgiving, words, and deeds all impact each other. Each God-given ability has some useful expression in the life of another. Every Christian has a unique circle of friends and acquaintances that God has

placed them among and to whom they can show the love of Christ. We say thanks to God by using these abilities for His glory.

(3.) Gratitude Multiplies Adoration. The cornerstone of worship is this: "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15). The gift of grace found in Jesus Christ is the starting point of our gratitude. Reasons for gratitude should not only be for the blessings God has given, but for His Son Jesus who bore your disgrace and sin. He defeated death by rising from the grave and lives in Christians now through the Holy Spirit—the One who enables them to live victoriously over the sin that desires to destroy them and their relationship with God. Adoration of the Lord will increase as you measure what you were without Christ to what you are now as you surrender to the Holy Spirit's leading.

Gratitude. Thanksgiving. What noble emotions! They express appreciation to God for talents, abilities and gifts which enable people to fulfill what He has called them to do. Gratitude motivates you to action. Obedient Christians express gratitude by dedicating their time, talents, effort and finances to lift up Christ in their communities. Gratitude multiplies adoration for Jesus who died for the sins of everyone who will receive Him.

How will you express gratitude to God with your life?



Thanksgiving reminds us of the pilgrims of Plymouth, Massachusetts. They risked their lives crossing the treacherous Atlantic on the Mayflower, suffering disease and death on their long journey in search of a place where they could worship without being persecuted for their religious beliefs. Psalm 23:3 must have comforted them on their arduous journey "... He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

Because those brave men and women paved the way for our religious freedom, we need only walk down the street or drive across town to worship. This week, won't you travel the "paths of righteousness" to worship in God's House? Have a blessed Thanksgiving.

Sunday Psalm 97	Monday Psalm 98	Tuesday Psalm 99	Wednesday Psalm 100	Thursday Psalm 103	Friday Psalm 107	Saturday Psalm 108
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