

Give Thanks

Thanksgiving Sunday – October 10, 2021

Scripture Readings:

Psalm 100:1-5: *Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.*

Philippians 4:6: *Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.*

Psalm 7:17: *I will thank the Lord because he is just; I will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.*

Ephesians 5:20: *And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Psalm 107:1: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever.*

Hebrews 13:15: *Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name.*

Colossians 3:15: *And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body, you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.*

Golden Verse: *“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”* 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

On this Thanksgiving Sunday, I welcome all of you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays, when family members and friends gather to celebrate the harvest and other blessings of the past year.

I recall reading an online story that I always remember at this time of the year

And, with changing the location, the story goes like this ...

“The day before Thanksgiving an elderly man in Kitchener called his son in Vancouver and said to him, "I hate to ruin your day, but I have to tell you that your mother and I are divorcing; 45 years of misery is enough. We're tired of each other. Please call your sister in Edmonton and tell her what we've decided.”

Quickly, their son called his sister, who exploded on the phone. “Like heck they're getting divorced,” the daughter shouted, “I'll take care of this.”

She called her father and said to him. “You are NOT getting a divorce. Don't do a single thing until I get there. I'm calling my brother back, and we'll both be there tomorrow. Until then, don't do a thing. DO YOU HEAR ME?”

The man hung up his phone and turned to his wife. “Okay, honey. The kids are coming for Thanksgiving and paying for their flights.”

Many families still won't be able to gather at Thanksgiving this year because of COVID. But we still have so much to be thankful for.

Thanksgiving is a great opportunity to count your blessings and to say these rarely used words: THANK YOU.

If we would learn to use the words PLEASE and THANK YOU, we would experience more miracles around us.

It would be so nice to see around us, day by day, more people who are satisfied with their lives and with the things they have.

It would be so exciting to see them focusing on the things they have, instead on focusing on what they are missing or on the things they may not be able to reach in the future.

In this way, more satisfied, happy and thankful people would surround us.

My prayer is that the Lord will give us many opportunities to change our lives and move us from complaining, bitterness and dissatisfaction to a thankful and joyful heart during this holiday time.

May the Holy Spirit turn our hearts today to transform us to become grateful people.

Focusing closer on our private lives, we could say that there are not too many greater blessings than to live our lives in balanced relationships where both partners are blessed with a thankful spirit and are people of thanksgiving and gratitude.

Psalm 118:1 says, *“Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love endures forever.”*

I have two thoughts about thanksgiving: (1) We have and enjoy so many blessings but (2) we express it so little

We would be much happier if we would see the blessings we receive, day by day, from our caring Heavenly Father.

I admit that sometimes our circumstances are not always the best. In fact, they may be bad or very bad.

We all might have the reason to complain because of our difficulties and worries. We don't think we can resolve our issues. We feel weak and are afraid we may have a meltdown. We all can have challenging moments and days when we carry the weight of the world on our shoulders.

I would like to share with you my approach which helped me in the most difficult situations to still be thankful and to keep my inner strength and peace.

If any of us would deal with difficulties, please put your trust in the Lord. Praise Him and give Him thanks in advance, knowing He will care for you. Tell Him you are counting on His help. Knowing that **THE LORD WILL HELP** provides comfort and reassurance.

Giving thanks in advance can give us hope that “this too shall pass”.

Let us rejoice and let us say thanks that the Lord, who was there for us in the past, will be here for us very soon and He will lift up our lives. Let us rejoice now, when we are still in the darkness knowing that the Lord is not so far away that He could

not reach out for us. Let us rejoice that the Lord has a plan to rescue us from our illness, and our struggles and difficulties, and let us be thankful for Him even if we don't see Him.

I relied completely on the LORD, and he turned toward me and heard my cry for help. He lifted me out of the watery pit, out of the slimy mud. He placed my feet on a rock and gave me secure footing. He gave me reason to sing a new song, praising our God. (Psalm 40 1-3)

Let us humble ourselves in His holy presence, and let us go on our knees. I praise His name and I rejoice knowing that He will come and He will lift me up. This kind of positive way of thinking will keep us from complaining.

Psalm 77:3 says, *"I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed."*

Complaining doesn't change anything or make situations better. Giving thanks and having a positive attitude can change everything.

Philippians 2:13 *"Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe."*

A positive, thankful person is memorable and more enjoyable, often the best company.

Have you counted your blessings lately? We should not focus first on the gifts but rather on GIVING the gifts.

ADD IT UP! That's exactly what we need to do at Thanksgiving. We came into this world with nothing but the eternal soul that God gave us. Everything else is profit. We can never give too much thanks to God!

Let me share with you one of my favourite hymns, which is glorifying first the Giver then is adding up the blessings:

Thank you, Lord, I really thank you for Your immeasurable love.

Thank you for You, giving Father. Thank you for my blessed life.

Thank you for the years you gave me, which are running fast away.

Thank you for the colorful Lent. Thank you for renewing spring.

Thank you for the bright red roses. Thank you for the stinging thorns.

Thank you for the narrow but safe way. Thank you for many stones on the path.

Thank you for your sorrow clouds that often covered my sky.

Thank you for all painful tears, which bring me closer to you.

Thank you for the Holy Bible. Thank you for your daily words.

Thank you for showing me your love. Thank you for Golgotha.

Thank you for taking up your cross. Thank you for your holy blood.

Thank you for laying down your life just to save me from my sins.

Thank you for my troubles. Thank you for your kind help.

Thank you for my lovely house, Thank you for this lovely church.

Thank you that I can worship you, Thank you that you are here with me.

Thank you for the eternal home. Thanks, thanks, Lord for everything.

Being a thankful person is one of the most important things because being a thankful person will benefit us.

Today, lift up your heart and add up the blessings. Turn to your parents, your spouse or partner, your children, and your friends and say warm thanks for them, for being there for you.

If they are surrounding you now, turn towards them and say to them: "Thank you for always being there for me! I am thankful for you!"

Please never forget that these thanks today will provide you with the gifts and blessings for tomorrow. Amen