

Give Thanks

Psalm 116:1-19

THANKSGIVING

Thankfulness seems to be a lost art today. Warren Wiersby illustrated this problem in his commentary on Colossians. He told about a ministerial student in Evanston, Illinois, who was part of a life-saving squad. In 1860, a ship went aground on the shore of Lake Michigan near Evanston, and Edward Spencer waded again and again into the frigid waters to rescue 17 passengers. In the process, his health was permanently damaged. Some years later at his funeral, it was noted that not one of the people he rescued ever thanked him.

Our Daily Bread, February 20, 1994.

In his book FOLK PSALMS OF FAITH, Ray Stedman tells of an experience H.A. Ironside had in a crowded restaurant. Just as Ironside was about to begin his meal, a man approached and asked if he could join him. Ironside invited him to have a seat. Then, as was his custom, Ironside bowed his head in prayer. When he opened his eyes, the other man asked, "Do you have a headache?" Ironside replied, "No, I don't." The other man asked, "Well, is there something wrong with your food?" Ironside replied, "No, I was simply thanking God as I always do before I eat."

The man said, "Oh, you're one of those, are you? Well, I want you to know I never give thanks. I earn my money by the sweat of my brow and I don't have to give thanks to anybody when I eat. I just start right in!"

Ironside said, "Yes, you're just like my dog. That's what he does too!"

Ray Stedman, *Folk Psalms of Faith*.

The first American Thanksgiving didn't occur in 1621 when a group of Pilgrims shared a feast with a group of friendly Indians. The first recorded thanksgiving took place in Virginia more than 11 years earlier, and it wasn't a feast. The winter of 1610 at Jamestown had reduced a group of 409 settlers to 60. The survivors prayed for help, without knowing when or how it might come. When help arrived, in the form of a ship filled with food and supplies from England, a prayer meeting was held to give thanks to God.

Today in the Word, July, 1990, p. 22.

Praying to God

When we pray, remember:

1. The love of God that wants the best for us.
2. The wisdom of God that knows what is best for us.
3. The power of God that can accomplish it.

William Barclay, *Prodigals and Those Who Love*.

I fear John Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men.

Mary, Queen of Scotland

While very ill, John Knox, the founder of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, called to his wife and said, "Read me that Scripture where I first cast my anchor." After he listened to the beautiful prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17, he seemed to forget his weakness. He began to pray, interceding earnestly for his fellowmen. He prayed for the ungodly who had thus far rejected the gospel. He pleaded in behalf of people who had been recently converted. And he requested protection for the Lord's servants, many of whom were facing persecution. As Knox prayed, his spirit went Home to be with the Lord. The man of whom Queen Mary had said, "I fear his prayers more than I do the armies of my enemies," ministered through prayer until the moment of his death.

Our Daily Bread. April 11

RESTING IN CHRIST or God

In the Philippines I heard a local pastor use the following parable to illustrate Christ's offer of rest (Matt. 11:28) and the response of people who won't trust Him completely: The driver of a carabao wagon was on his way to market when he overtook an old man carrying a heavy load. Taking compassion on him, the driver invited the old man to ride in the wagon. Gratefully the old man accepted. After a few minutes, the driver turned to see how the man was doing. To his surprise, he found him still straining under the heavy weight, for he had not taken the burden off his shoulders.

Larry Chell.

Walking with God

Arabian horses go through rigorous training in the deserts of the Middle East. The trainers require absolute obedience from the horses, and test them to see if they are completely trained. The final test is almost beyond the endurance of any living thing. The trainers force the horses to do without water for many days. Then he turns them loose and of course they start running toward the water, but just as they get to the edge, ready to plunge in and drink, the trainer blows his whistle. The horses who have been completely trained and who have learned perfect obedience, stop. They turn around and come pacing back to the trainer. They stand there quivering, wanting water, but they wait in perfect obedience. When the trainer is sure that he has their obedience he gives them a signal to go back to drink.

Now this may be severe but when you are on the trackless desert of Arabia and your life is entrusted to a horse, you had better have a trained obedient horse. We must accept God's training and obey Him.

Source Unknown.

Worshipping God

To worship God is to recognize his worth or worthiness; to look God-ward, and to acknowledge in all appropriate ways the value of what we see. The Bible calls this activity "glorifying God" or "giving glory to God," and views it as the ultimate end, and from one point of view, the whole duty of man (Ps. 29:2; 96:6; 1 Cor. 10:31).

Scripture views the glorifying of God as a sixfold activity: praising God for all that he is and all his achievements; thanking him for his gifts and his goodness to us; asking him to meet our own and others' needs; offering him our gifts, our service, and ourselves; learning of him from his word, read and preached, and obeying his voice; telling others of his worth, both by public confession and testimony to what he has done for us. Thus we might say that the basic formulas of worship are these: "Lord, you are wonderful"; "Thank you, Lord"; "Please Lord"; "Take this, Lord"; "Yes, Lord"; "Listen everybody!"

This then is worship in its largest sense: petition as well as praise, preaching as well as prayer, hearing as well as speaking, actions as well as words, obeying as well as offering, loving people as well as loving God. However, the primary acts of worship are those which focus on God directly -- and we must not imagine that work for God in the world is a substitute for direct fellowship with him in praise and prayer and devotion.

James Packer, Your Father Loves You, Harold Shaw Publishers, July 1986, P. 15.