

REASONS FOR THANKSGIVING

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. . . . Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" Psalm 107:1, 8.

Under the watchful care and guidance of the Lord, we have been carried safely through another year. God has graciously opened His hand and dealt bountifully with us, even far beyond what we have deserved. Consequently, we should bow in gratitude to Him for His many favors and blessings.

In praising God for His goodness, the Psalmist said, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High; To show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night." Psalm 92:1. But what is this thanksgiving to which he refers? It is an expression of gratitude, the acknowledgment of kindnesses, or mercies received. It is one of the emotions which help to enrich every life which is fortunate enough to develop it.

Surely none will deny that it is right to give thanks for all that we receive. This thanksgiving begins with our attitude of appreciation. The heart of our Heavenly Father is warmed when we express our thanksgiving to Him. Not only is it right, but there is something beautiful in the thought that we at times approach our Heavenly Father, not with a plea for some blessing or gift or help, but with a hymn of thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving for the common and ordinary things of life creates an enthusiasm for living that can be had in no other way. God becomes even more real to us when we begin to be grateful to Him for what He has done for us. He is at work, watching over us, caring for us, preserving us from danger, leading us in paths that are better for us than those we would seek for ourselves. If we are grateful to God and give thanks to Him as we should, He becomes more real to us, like the loved ones who minister to us, or the friends who give us gifts. Real thanksgiving also makes us mindful of the many things which are kept away from our lives, or of the things we are saved from. It gives us a correct perspective with reference to all that we have or do not have.

We all know that to give thanks to God is a duty. Not only is this duty taught in the Bible, but it is felt to be right in itself. If anyone bestows a gift on us, the least we can do is to thank him for it. Since we know that from God we receive every good and perfect gift, we are naturally obligated to give Him thanks for that which He has bestowed upon us.

If there is one thing lacking today more than any other in the realm of religion, it is the spirit of gratitude. The beautiful note of thanksgiving is too often silent in many of our religious services. We readily accept the manifold gifts of God, but so many times we fail to recognize the Giver. Far too many eat and drink, enjoy good health, boast of their possessions, revel in their liberty, glory in their land, etc., but never stop to render thanks to the Giver of all these wonderful gifts. Thanksgiving is a Christ-like attribute. Over and over again He gave thanks to the Father. Over and over again we should do the very same thing. Let us say with the Psalmist, "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for his mercy endureth for ever." Psalm 107:1. He also said, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" Psalm 107:8.

Gratitude is a grace that struggles for expression. It does not shut itself up in the heart. It does not merely allow itself to be felt. It wants to speak. It wants to say something. The one hundred and seventh Psalm recognizes the giving expression to grateful feeling as a duty. It says, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." Let them give voice to their grateful feelings in regard to the favors received.

Giving thanks to the Lord for His mercies and blessings is always a comely thing for us to do. We ought to bestir ourselves to perform this important duty at this time of our national Thanksgiving. When the human heart is thankful for past mercies, new mercies are not very far away.

I. Thank God For Life.

Let us thank God for this mysterious, wonderful, yet unfathomable thing called life. Thank Him for your senses. Watch a blind person and thank God for eyes to see. Thank God for the sense of hearing. Thank Him for the ability to hear the glad sound of the early morning birds and the evening nightingale, the chatter and laughter of little children, the conversation of friends and loved ones. Thank God for the ability to speak, to think and to remember.

II. Thank God For Physical Blessings.

Have you ever thanked Him for the good health which you have enjoyed? Let us thank God for every beam of light that delights our eyes, every breath of air that cheers our spirits, every drop of water that quenches our thirst, every bite of food that satisfies our hunger, and every minute of comfortable repose.

III. Thank God For Family.

How grateful we ought to be for our loved ones! How much poorer we would be without them! How much we would miss them, if they should be taken from us! Have we thanked God for them, as we should?

IV. Thank God For Friends.

For us they make life rich and full, bright and joyous, tender and sweet.

V. Thank God For Home.

Only those who do not have a home know the preciousness of it. Think of the thousands of boarders and their lonely days and nights.

VI. Thank God For The Saviour.

Let us thank Him with the gratitude of our hearts, with the praises of our lips, and by the obedience of our lives. Let us consider it a joyous privilege to love, to obey, and to serve Him Who for more than nineteen centuries has been the center of the best thought, the inspiration of the best sacrifice, and the motive of the best living.

VII. Thank God For The Scriptures.

The Scriptures are supernatural in origin, universal in appeal, unerring in guidance, regenerative in force, timeless in appropriateness, deathless in destiny, with man's hand behind their penmanship but with God's heart behind their authorship. They involve the highest responsibility, promise to reward the greatest labor, and condemn those who trifle with them. They ought to be in our homes, our hands, our heads, our hearts, and our habits.

VIII. Thank God For Our Church.

It is a place where the Word of God is preached, the power of God is felt, the spirit of God is manifested, the love of God is conceived, and the salvation of God is received. It is a place to go for communion with God, for Christian fellowship with

the best and most devout people, for Bible instruction, for spiritual inspiration, and for real service. It is a necessary institution, the best teacher of righteousness which we have, the friend of childhood, the inspirer of youth, the strengthener of middle life, and the comforter of old age.

IX. Thank God For The Assurance Of A Home In Heaven.

"For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." II Corinthians 5:1. This is a description of our new home, which is the best home of all. I am so thankful that I have made my reservation for a home in heaven. I am grateful also that I have the assurance that when He calls me home, I shall have a rest from my labors, a reward for my service, a residence with the Lord, and will enjoy a reunion with all of the saved.