

Grateful – Thankful - Blessed – Nov. 21, 2023

Thanksgiving . . . one day focused on thanks.

- We're thankful for a meal . . . a gift . . . an opportunity.
- We're thankful for jobs, cars, houses, roofs, indoor plumbing...
- Thankfulness fades . . . but Gratitude remains.
 - In time, we don't recall who gave the gift. We forget . . .
 - We don't forget the people who impact us. Or God... from whom all blessings flow.
- Thankfulness is for a present moment . . . Gratitude is ongoing.
 - Gratitude begins as thankfulness, but Gratitude stays with you.
 - Gratitude is an attitude ... a condition of the heart.
 - The attitude of gratitude keeps recalling ... we're **blessed**.
 - Focus not on single moments, but the whole of life.

Grateful: Having a due sense of benefits received; kindly disposed toward one from whom a favor has been received; willing to acknowledge and repay, or give thanks for, benefits; as, a grateful heart.

- We have all experienced some tough times. This year has been hard.
- We have so many changes in life.
- Let me remind you of 4 reasons to have gratitude – never change:
 - 1. You have a future kingdom.**
 - **Heb. 12:8** – “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe.”
 - Heaven is sure. It's the home that awaits you.
 - God's kingdom will never be destroyed, never end.
 - **Isaiah 9:6-7** – “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. . . Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from that time and forevermore.”

- **Heb. 13:14-15** – “We don't have a permanent city here on earth, but we are looking for the city that we will have in the future. Through Jesus we should always bring God a sacrifice of praise, that is, words that acknowledge him.”

2. We have a kingdom b/c we're heirs to the throne... child of God.

- **Gal. 4:7** – “Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.”
- **Rom. 8:17** – “And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory.”

3. We are God's fragrant testimony

- **Cor. 12:14-15** – “But thanks be to God! He has made us his captives and continues to lead us along in Christ's triumphal procession. Now he uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume. 15 Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God. . . .”
- We are living testimonies of **God's grace** ... imperfect people, whose tests / testimonies ... our weakness / strength . . . our hurts / headlines ... end / new beginning ... failure, His success.
- We are living testimonies of **God's love** ... He changes people.

4. We are victors. No circumstance will defeat you.

- **1 Cor. 15:57** – “But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - We all have challenges: financial stress... persecution... alienation... health issues... depression... anxiety
 - **Rom. 8:37** – “in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us”
 - **1 John 5:4** – “everyone who is born from God has overcome the world. Our faith is the victory that overcomes the world.”
 - **Gratitude** for surviving, then thriving. **Pilgrims** did.
- Those 4 things give us reason for an attitude of gratitude.

Song of the week: “**Gratitude**” - by Avalon.