

Can We Afford Not To?

I am well aware that “Thanksgiving” is a national holiday and not specifically mentioned in the Bible although, there are many passages which tells us to be thankful to God. “Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples!” (1 Chronicles 16:8). “Praise the LORD! Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.” (Psalms 106:1). These are just two examples of Scriptures telling us to “give thanks to the Lord.” In a time of ingratitude and what has God done for me lately, this is a holiday I think is appropriate and needed.

Our nations Founding Father’s spoke of God’s divine providence in blessing this country. George Washington said, “Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor—and whereas both of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me “to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.” (October 3, 1789).

Of all our national holidays, this is the one based on Biblical principles. Due to the Coronavirus, a number of states have tried to stop people gathering getting together for “Thanksgiving.” Some have gone so far as to threaten tickets or other types of punishment.

To me, this says something about the way some people view our nation and God. Our nation and indeed the world are going through a pandemic. Millions have been sick and many have died. We need to take steps to protect ourselves and love ones but can we afford to not think about God?

The point of thanksgiving is recognizing the blessings God bestowed on us. To see the good, we have received and praise Him for loving us. In times of trials we cannot afford to not praise God and ask for His help. Perhaps that means to have a meal with family and friends or alone but either way we

should always give God thanks.

As hard and strange 2020 has been it has been a year of great blessings. We have received good rain and crops. As Paul said at Lystra, "Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." (Acts 14:17). Perhaps a year like 2020 is needed to remind us of the blessings we have and continue to be. Personally, I don't think we could afford not to be thankful to God.

Can one afford to neglect their family? I have lived long enough to see fathers and mothers be bad parents. Some are simply AWOL as they are too busy doing their own thing and not spending time with their children or each other. Children are farmed out to someone else to rear them and simply come home to sleep at nights. Children who are not taught Bible principles; children who grow up too fast. Then there are husbands and wives who grow apart as they get too involved in their own little world. I have known various people speak with regret their neglect of their family.

Likewise, can one afford to neglect their soul? Many folks are living for today and not thinking about eternity. They are like the foolish farmer in Luke 12:16-18, who had plenty but decided to tear down his barns in order to build bigger barns. How many today are consumed by their own by desire for more things, newer things, and bigger things? "Things will not save us as pointed out by Jesus. "And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15). We, you and I, cannot afford to be so foolish. "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:20-21). Those with the most toys do not win, the one who has the reward of heaven is the winner.

Finally, Christians cannot afford to be the salt and light in this world of sin and darkness. Salt that has lost its usefulness is not much good. "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men."

(Matthew 5:13). What does it really mean? It means we are to be the influence for good, to stand up for God's word and expose false doctrine. Also, we are to provide the right example to the world. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16). In Titus the phrase "zealous for good works" is used, "*who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, **zealous for good works.***" (Titus 2:14). Christians cannot afford to drift into the background and go along with the sins of this world.

When I speak of being thankful to God, I am not talking about a meal one day of the year but each day of the year. We cannot afford to be ungrateful and negligent in our duty to Him. Dennis Tucker