

Pathways To Faith

By: Dr. Willie Holley

Thanksgiving: "A Time To Remember "

We have come to the time of the year when we pause to celebrate the Thanksgiving holidays. God desires for us to pause, reflect and give thanks for all the wonderful blessings many have enjoyed throughout the year. As you enjoy this week with family and friends, I encourage you to take a minute to reflect and remember the goodness of God, His grace and mercy and the wonderful gift of salvation He made possible by giving His Son as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. **Psalms 100:4** reminds us to *"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name."* The writer is reminding us to come before God with words of thanks and praise for all that He has done and is doing in our lives. I've often pondered just what is Thanksgiving Day to the people of God in America. Is it spending time with family and friends? Is it having a feast on Thanksgiving Day to enjoy your bountiful blessings? Or is it a time to watch football on a four-day weekend and kick back from the stresses of work? What is Thanksgiving? I believe Thanksgiving Day should be a time to remember and reflect on all that God has done and is doing in our lives. Thanksgiving begins and ends with our attitude toward God and mankind. First, we must remember that *Thanksgiving is an attitude of choice*. Giving thanks is a choice we make. We can either be thankful and express gratitude for the rich blessings of God, or we can gripe, murmur, and complain about our circumstances without recognizing the gracious blessings of the Lord. The choice is ours. **Psalms 34:1** reads *"I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth."* David makes a deliberate choice to praise the Lord. We can and should make a deliberate choice to move from ungrateful with our grumbling and complaining to a thankful condition as a people filled with God's Holy Spirit. The scriptures remind us that *"In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* (**1Thess. 5:18**) (KJV) So as we celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday this week, my prayer is that you will remember three things: **(1) First, Remember God's Goodness:** Thanksgiving is a time to remember God's goodness through the storms, through the sorrows, and through the trials and tribulations that come in this life. In the book of **Nahum** at chapter 1 and verse 7 reminds us *"The LORD is good; a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him."* **Psalm 34:8** says *"Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trust in Him!"* **(2) Second, Remember God's Grace and Mercy.** Not only is Thanksgiving a time to remember God's goodness, it is a time to remember God's grace. Although you may have failed, although you may have faltered, and although you may have disappointed God and yourself, you can say with the psalmist in **Psalm 136:1-3**, (NKJV) *"O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever." O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth forever. O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth forever."* Thanksgiving is a time to remember God's grace and mercy. We must remember to give God thanks for the many blessings we enjoy this day, for it is by His grace and mercy we have come this far. Not because of anything we have done, but by His grace or the undeserved favor God gives to sinners like us. **Ephesians 2:8-9** (KJV) reminds us that *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"*. On Thanksgiving we remember God's Goodness and God's Grace. **(3) Finally, Remember God's Greatest Gift.** God sent His wonderful gift one night over 2000 years ago in a little town called Bethlehem as an expression of His love for us. **John 3:16** (KJV) teaches *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* Because of this act of love, we have the promise of the gift of eternal life. At **Romans 6:23** (KJV) we read *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Thanksgiving is a time to remember God's greatest gift to mankind, Jesus Christ the Lord. As you celebrate Thanksgiving, remember God's greatest gift, **Jesus Christ**. Remember to give Him praise, honor and thanks for the many blessings you are enjoying this holiday season. Remember to be a blessing to someone less fortunate or in need of your expressions of encouragement. Sometimes a kind word or thoughtful acts of kindness are greater ways of saying thanks than any material blessings we might share with our friends and love ones. **Remember to always give thanks and to pray for the less fortunate in the land. Enjoy your family and friends this Thanksgiving Day.**

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