

Thanksgiving, 2020

Before we get into our 2020 Thanksgiving message, I need to make a comment concerning the previous message on **Q Anon, a religious movement**.

As I have considered what has taken place or is taking place, we have no reason to think that Q anon is honest in all it says. Q could be spreading lies like "the official ballots were marked with watermarks, so the fraudulent ballots could be excluded in the count," or "the National Guard will protect the counting of the ballots." The National Guard has been sent out, but they have not gone into the polling places to watch the counting. Lies could keep the masses from rising up in open rebellion against the wicked in high places. Q could be throwing the conservative movement a bone in order to keep them under control. No one knows...

Now onto our message for Thanksgiving.

Thankfulness
Deuteronomy 26

I do not know how it has happened so soon, but Thanksgiving is upon us again.

This season at the end of the year reminds all of us of families and friends. It reminds us of eating too much and dieting. If any people ever had a reason to be thankful, it is the people in the US.

I must pass over so many tremendous thoughts in our text, because of time. As Christians, we must **keep Thanksgiving within a Christian context**, or we will become as ungrateful as the Sodomite of our day. A proper relationship to the Lord must start in thankfulness to Him.

Romans 1 has been called the record of the devaluation, rather than the evolution of man. In it, we see the downgrading of man: 1) they knew God, for **all men know God, and are without excuse**; 2) they failed to glorifying him; 3) they became **ungrateful for his goodness**; 4) the last step is vain imaginations and a darkened heart.

Romans 1:21 *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

In November 1620, the founders of this nation made a Covenant with God the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. That Covenant, which is spelled out in the Mayflower Compact, has been written out of history. (Do a *duckduckgo* search, and read it yourself.) Though we have forgot about that Covenant with Almighty God, we can rest assured that God has not forgotten. He is holding this nation to that Covenant made with Him 400 years ago.

This nation at one time knew God, glorified him as God and was thankful to God, and the results have been blessings beyond compare. But now we see the promise found in Hosea are coming to pass up on our forgetful nation:

Hosea 4:6 *seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.*

How many who have prospered in our once Christian land are genuinely thankful to God for his blessings? We are now an openly apostate nation serving the gods of sex and Mammon. We are serving the works of our own hands. We are serving the gods of gold and silver. Sadly, it seems God has given us what we have been asking for over the past century; that is, a tyrannical government. The result is that not only "Christian" America, but the once Christian "West" is passing into history. **Without a return to the God of the 1620 Covenant, we will be no more than a mark in history as is Rome, and the Byzantine Empire.**

Psalms 106:1 *Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. 13 They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel:*

The Lord never leaves anything, such as love, as just some abstract feeling or emotions. He always explains and defines exactly what He means. **We find the definition of love and thankfulness in the law of Moses.** As we have mentioned many times, the New Testament only applies what was already in effect. We know that love for God is defined by action not feelings nor emotions; that is, by keeping His commandments toward him and toward our fellow man.

Let us now consider **thankfulness in action**: I surely am not discounting an emotion or feelings anymore than I would discount an emotion of love toward God or man. Emotions do not mean Biblical or thankfulness toward God nor man. Love and thankfulness must be **shown by action.**

Naves Topical Bible has two pages of passages and examples of things that refer to **thankfulness or thanksgiving.** The one that caught my attention was **Proverbs 3:9**:

*Honour the LORD with thy substance, **and** with the firstfruits of all thine increase:*

The phrase *firstfruits of all thine increase* called out to me, Preach me, preach me!" So, here we are.

Firstfruits points us back to the law concerning the *firstfruits*. Without doing harm to the context of the Word of God, we could call the *firstfruit* offering found in **Deuteronomy 26** an offering of thanksgiving in action.

Keil identifies this chapter with **"thanksgiving and prayer at the presentation of the firstfruits."**

Rather than read the chapter, we will take it one section at a time. **Deuteronomy 26**

Moses gives us a detailed description of this offering of the *firstfruits*. There are several other passages that speak of this offering, but for time's sake, we will restrict ourselves to this passage in Deuteronomy. This law was given to the people of God under the **Old Covenant**. **As with all of the old covenant ordinances and ceremonies, the requirement here in Deuteronomy 26 was nailed to the cross with Christ, and are not required under the New Covenant.**

However, we will see that Deuteronomy 26 holds many applications for the Gospel Church under the New Covenant.

Vv. 1, 2, *And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; 2 That **thou shalt take** of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and **shalt** put it in a basket, and **shalt** go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there.*

The offering was **not optional** for the Covenant people of God. It was separate from and **over and above the tithe**. The tithe is mentioned in vv. 12-15.

Christ was the firstfruits of the dead and the First Born of all creation. However, we will see that this offering can be applied as a Thanksgiving offering without harming its Scriptural context.

V. 2. There were only **two** requirements placed on this offering of thanksgiving.

First requirement. This offering was required of God's covenant people, and it had to be the best, **Numbers 18:12**. The person could not pick up a piece of rotten fruit and say, "This is the first off of the tree; therefore, it is the first fruit even though it is rotten."

Second requirement. If the person owned an orchard, he had to bring in the first fruits of the harvest. He could bring in only one apple, but that one apple had to be the best. The size of the offering, which was separate from the tithe, was determined by the individual's **amount of thankfulness** to the Lord. He could bring a small or big amount and still be in obedience to God. The command was that he give the offering, and that the offering had to be the best he had.

The offering could be one piece of fruit per tree, or it could be one bushel of grain per field, but it had to be the first of the harvest. Its size depended upon the offerer's thanks to the Lord.

Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.*

Vv. 3-10. The **motive for this offering was thankfulness** to the Lord. This passage lists several reasons to be thankful. Each one is cause enough in itself to be thankful:

Psalms 105:1-6 *O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. 2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. 3 Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. 4 Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore. 5 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth; 6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.*

Thanksgiving starts in the memory. Remember the good things with which the Lord has blessed us.

Deuteronomy 26 speaks of at least seven things to be thankful for.

First: V. 1. Thanksgiving for fulfilling His promise.

Second: V. 5, *And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous:*

V. 5 speaks of remembering how close we were to perishing before He redeemed us.

Isaiah 51:5 we are to remember *the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.*

The Lord rescued us from the jaws of death. We were ready to perish. If He had not intervened, we would have perished, separated from His presence forever.

In the midst of God's judgment against Jerusalem, Jeremiah said

Lamentations 3:22-26 *[It is of] the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. [They are] new every morning: great [is] thy faithfulness. The LORD [is] my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD [is] good unto them that wait for him, to the soul [that] seeketh him. [It is] good that [a man] should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.*

The living should rejoice and be thankful daily, **for it is only by the Lord's mercies and compassions that we are not consumed.**

I can distinctly remember three times when the Lord snatched me out of the jaws of death. I am sure you can remember many close calls.

Third: V.6, *And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage:*

V. 6 speaks of thankfulness for our redemption out of the hands of our evil taskmaster, the devil.

The Lord delivered us from the bondage to our enemies, the world, flesh and the devil. We are more than conquerors through Christ that loved us. We have been delivered, and we are free to serve the Lord. We have not been freed in order to serve ourselves nor to serve Mammon.

Fourth: V. 7, *And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression:*

V. 7 speaks of the Lord hearing and answering prayer.

Remember back over the year, and the Lord's answered prayers.

Fifth: V. 8, *And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders:*

V. 8 speaks of the Lord showing Himself strong in behalf of His people.

The Lord has done great things for us. Maybe those things did not seem so great at the time, but today as we look back, it is obvious that they were great things.

But thankfulness is not restricted to just thankfulness for spiritual blessings, although they should be plenty of cause for us to be thankful. We are to be thankful for God's material blessings upon us.

Sixth: V. 9, *And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey.*

V. 9 speaks of the goodness of God toward His people.

It is His divine providence which guides us and supplies our daily needs. He gives us strength and health to gain wealth. All good things come from above.

Seventh: V. 10, *And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God:*

V. 10 speaks of the worshiping the Lord God as the only true God Who alone can supply all the needs of His people.

Are we thankful to Him? Do our actions show this thankfulness?

Luke 17:11 *And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: 13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. 14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when*

*he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. 17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? 18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. 19 And he said unto him, **Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.***

Quoting Albert Barnes,

“Renewed sinners, while their hearts overflow with gratitude to Jesus, express that gratitude by obeying God, and by engaging in the appropriate duties of their calling and of religion.”

From the sound of Luke’s text, the nine had physical healing, while the one thankful man had both physical and spiritual healing. **Spiritual healing, which is more important than physical healing will result in not only thankfulness but in obedience to the law-word of God.**

And you might say, "If it were a required offering, how could it express thankfulness to God?" The answer would be in the size of the offering. Love is summed up in obedience to God and treating our neighbor as ourselves.

Thankfulness to God is not merely an emotion and prayer of thanksgiving, but it is action. Paul sums up the many New Testament commands to be thankful:

1 Thessalonians 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

Hebrews 11:3 tells us that it is *through faith we understand* that all creation moves in obedience to the predetermined council of our Creator God. *Through faith we understand* that everything that takes place, even the election of an self-declared Communist as vice president, is for the glory of God and for the advancement of his kingdom on earth. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 that everything is working together to subdue all things under the authority of King Jesus.

Therefore, no matter what situation we find ourselves in, we are required to **show** thankfulness.

Illustration: Let's suppose that we go greatly out of our way to do something special for someone. Then, in return, they completely ignore us without a word or action of gratitude. The first thing that comes to our mind is that they were not thankful. On the other hand, if they act and speak like they are thankful, we take for granted that they are thankful. Our thankfulness and love is shown by our actions, attitudes and words toward God and man.

V. 11, *And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.*

V. 11 tells us that God's people are required to rejoice in the goodness of the blessings of their God.

Ephesians 4:28 *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

V. 11. The New Covenant tells us that we are to share God's goodness with others, particularly with those who are fellow errors in the kingdom of God.

This chapter breaks after verse 11 and deals with the various tithes that were required under the old covenant.

Some Applications:

First: V. 9. This chapter is a call for God's Covenant People to remember the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. **Our founding fathers in the 1620 Covenant with God** were confident that the Lord God had brought them into a land that flowed with milk and honey. North America certainly was that land as long as the nation was faithful to the God of that Covenant.

The God of this nation or of any nation is recognizable through the laws of that nation. The laws of this nation were founded on the law-word of God. The Biblically based laws proved that the Lord was the God of this nation.

Second: The original Thanksgiving was thankfulness over the blessings of God. We must never forget that the prosperity which this nation has enjoyed is the direct result of the blessings of God. **Our thankfulness is not to the state,** nor to any person, nor to any institution. Sadly, people now have the idea that the prosperity is the result of their own effort, or of the state's efforts, and we are going downhill fast.

Third: We see that God's Covenant people, either on Thanksgiving Day itself or at another time, should set aside a time of rejoicing and feasting, maybe at a family reunion. It is a requirement which reminds us of the goodness of God upon His covenant people.

Fourth: We are to share the good things the Lord has provided with those who are in need, particularly those of the common faith.

We must be thankful to other people, but we must see them as a channel of God's blessings unto us.

Some time ago on Thanksgiving Day, *The Washington Post* had an article about cranberries. The article told how Europe has fallen in love with the berry, and how some communities are now celebrating Thanksgiving. The whole world should set aside a day of Thanksgiving to God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving! Let us not forget the founding of this nation upon godly precepts. Let us pray that God, in his mercy, will call this people back to himself.

God's people today are commanded to be thankful just as they were commanded to be thankful to the Lord when Moses spoke these words in chapter 26.

Romans 1 is clear: Failure to be thankful leads to the destruction of individuals and of nations. Failure to be thankful to the God of our salvation is the first step down to open and gross sin.

Thankfulness should be more than emotions and words. Thankfulness to the Lord should result in a servant's heart toward the Lord and toward others according to the law-word of Lord God.

When it comes to our actions toward the Lord, is it obvious that we are thankful?

To **whom** are we thankful? For what are we thankful?

Psalms 107:1 *O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;*

Psalms 118:1 *A Song or Psalm of David. O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.*

Thankfulness will result in godly action, even action above and beyond our Christian duty.