



A Day For Giving Thanks!

By

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Greetings and welcome to Thanksgiving Day!

As I consider the meaning of this special day, my thoughts turn to the Amazing Grace of our loving God. What He has done for me, for all of us, is beyond words of gratitude. He has given so much of Himself and His creation to us. He gave us air to breathe, water to drink and food to eat. He also gave us family, friends, and brothers and sisters in the Faith.

Yes, one of the great things He has done for all of us ... is you! You are a blessing to me and every member of the Body of Christ.

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.” Romans 1:8 (NKJV)

“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus.” 1 Corinthians 1:4

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” Philippians 1:3

“We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” Colossians 1:3

“... remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father.” 1 Thessalonians 1:3

“For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God?” 1 Thessalonians 3:9

“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other.” 2 Thessalonians 1:3

“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.” 2 Thessalonians 2:13

“I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day.” 2 Timothy 1:33

“I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers.” Philemon 1:4

The Apostle Paul thanked God for the Christian brothers and sisters in his life. He began many of his letters with that spirit of thankfulness. Paul's words were rich and encouraging to those who received his letters. Paul felt thankful deep in his soul and understood the importance of sharing his thanks with those who were special in his life.

We need more of that in the Body of Christ: being thankful for our brothers and sisters and telling them, often. Life's rough enough as it is. Most people don't feel appreciated for who they are and what they do in families and communities. Unfortunately, most Christians don't feel appreciated in their local churches. Why is that? Is it because Christians really aren't thankful for other believers? Maybe with some, but many Christians are thankful. So why don't they share their thankfulness? Is it because we get very busy with our own concerns and take others for granted or just forget to say thanks? I think that's a big part of it.

A friend of mine calls it being "other-centered," rather than "self-centered." Being "other-centered" works in marriages, parenting and with fellow believers. It's understanding the work and efforts of others and regularly sharing your thankfulness to them. It also helps the entire Body of Christ to share your thankfulness to individuals openly to the whole church. Look at what Paul did.

“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. Greet Mary, who labored much for us. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.” Romans 16:1-13

Paul understood the Lord's Work and how to get it done. Paul passed the philosophy along to us through his writings. Here are three basics of doing God's Work that we should publish in bold letters in every place where Christians meet throughout the world.

1. The Lord's Work belongs to God. He's the Manager. We're His staff. The Lord's Work gets done when God's the Boss and we do what He says.
2. The Lord uses a lot of people in His work. The Work gets done when everyone does their job well. Nobody's a star. Everyone has a job to do and every job is important.
3. The Lord's Work gets done best in an environment of love and encouragement. A big part of the encouragement comes in the form of being thankful and sharing our thanks with others.

I thank my God for every one of you reading this. I encourage you to sit down this week and make a "Thanks" list for other Christians in your life. Write their names on a piece of paper and what they've done that causes you to be thankful for them (just like Paul did in Romans 16). Do one of a couple of things the next time you're at church. Read your list aloud during a sharing time or (if public speaking makes you nervous) make copies of your list and hand out to the people you want to thank. Give your pastor a copy, too (since his name should be on any Christian's list).

Think about what would happen this Sunday if thousands of Christians stood up in churches around the world and shared their thanks for others in the Body of Christ! That one action could begin a revival of heart and soul across the land. But don't stop there. Remember Paul. He shared his thanks for other believers over and over again; year after year. Being thankful is not something you do one time. Keep sharing your thankfulness with your husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandson, granddaughter, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, cousin, pastor, elders, deacons, praise team members, Bible teachers, class members, nursery workers, children's workers, youth workers, friends ... everybody! People work for the Lord and they know the Lord is thankful for what they do, but they also want to know that you are thankful, too. Share the joy!

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” Colossians 2:6-7

Happy Thanksgiving!

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