

SUNDAY October 12, 2025 “Give Thanks”

PSALM 100 Philippians 4:4-9 John 6:25-35

Today is Thanksgiving Sunday in Canada which is a time for reflection, sharing with others and an opportunity to say Thank You. But who are you thanking and why?

We could say thanks to the farmers/ food producers for what we might enjoy at the tables later today or tomorrow. Or we could say thanks for family members for cooking, baking and preparing the table set to welcome everyone for a big meal. But who are we thanking for what is considered a fall feast?

Some of you might respond, we are thanking God for the blessings we receive in this fall season. But if we are thanking God how are we doing this? And are we doing it well or only out of obligation?

Maybe we need to take a look at what it means to offer thanks. Just how do you feel when you offer thanks to someone? What is it that is within us that leads us to say ‘thank you’? When we say these words how does one feel? Sometimes we wonder about feelings and actions working together so yes we may offer our thanks but when we do so just what are our feeling and/ or thinking?

Giving thanks is not always easy because sometimes we are just not sure what we are grateful for nor how we might share with others our thoughts and feelings.

In Philippians 4 Paul writes to this young church *to “Rejoice and to let your gentleness be known to everyone. Do not worry about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God!”* Why? So that the peace of God will be in your hearts and minds as it is in Jesus. This is almost beyond our full understanding, but it is needed so that we might know God and truly honour him in our lives.

Let your requests be made known to God with thanksgiving and don’t worry! But how many of us truly do this? We are sometimes shy about what we are grateful for let alone- sing and shout Rejoice! For what are we grateful today?

But isn’t this what we are called to do? There is a story about a man whose wife had left him and he was completely down. He had lost faith in himself, in other people, in God and he found no joy in living. One rainy morning this man decided to go to a small neighborhood restaurant for breakfast. There were several people were at the diner, but no one was speaking to anyone else. Our miserable friend hunched over the counter, stirring his coffee with a spoon.

In one of the small booths along the window was a young mother with a little girl. They had just been served their food when the little girl broke the sad silence by almost shouting, "Momma, why don't we say our prayers here?" The waitress who had just served their breakfast turned around and said, "Sure, honey, we pray here. Will you say the prayer for us?" And she turned and looked at the rest of the people in the restaurant and said, "Bow your heads." Surprisingly, one by one, the heads went down. The little girl then bowed her head, folded her hands, and said, "God is great, God is good, and we thank Him for our food. Amen."

At once the prayer changed the entire atmosphere. People began to talk with one another. The waitress said, "We should do that every morning." "All of a sudden," said our friend, "my whole frame of mind started to improve. From that little girl's example, I started to thank God for all that I did have and stop majoring in all that I didn't have. I started to be grateful." Then the man wandered over to the little girl and thanked her for praying.

He thanked her-- acknowledged with gratitude for what she had said and done.

How might we thank God on this Thanksgiving Sunday? We may worship with reverence and awe. We pray and offer to God our gratitude. We also encourage one another and share a song of hope and praise. We live with gratitude because of what God has done for us-- not just in creation but through the gift promise and hope of Jesus Christ who rose from death and promised us a place in heaven- if we believe.

Jesus is the one whom God sent into the world to bring about change, to offer hope and to teach the people about who He was as the promised Son of God and Saviour. While he was teaching others he often performed miracles to show that he was and is the Son of God. Yet people often wanted him to do more.

Our reading from John 6 takes place after Jesus has fed 5000 people with bread and fish until all were satisfied. The next day the crowd still wanted to learn more about him and listen to him. They found Jesus on the other side of the lake. He told them that their only reason they wanted to see him was because he had fed them the previous day but they said no to this. Jesus then teaches them about food, working and searching for the food that endures for eternal life. They ask him what He means and what they must do to perform the works of God. His answer, to believe in the One whom God sent.

So they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.” Jesus then states, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

What is Jesus meaning by saying this? Don’t worry I’ll look after you. Don’t worry about what you need I’ll make sure you are ok. But is this realistic on this Thanksgiving Sunday when there are many people in need of support? Are we not physically hungry and thirsty more than once per day? How might we understand this in light of the cries for hunger today?

Jesus brings us hope that extends beyond our physical needs. And this hope is what is needed today- but our attitude to hope must be changed if we are to truly give thanks this day. Jesus brings hope and this hope is connected to gratitude. Gratitude is the opposite of worry, so how might we connect them all? By having faith that God will provide through His Son Jesus, if we believe in him. But we must profess our faith in who he is and might be to each of us.

Paul wrote that we are not to worry-- trust God and pray. And when prayers seem to be unanswered or when it seems difficult to give thanks-- look at and reassess your life-- there is something good about it. Look to see what you might be grateful for as there are others with less. See what might be possible- and then offer your praise.

On this Thanksgiving Sunday just how are you offering thanks to God? And are you thankful to others who share your life? DO you say so? How? Do you mean it? Or is it situation dependent?. When one says Thank you -it should come from within one’s heart and mind. Whether it is through words of appreciation or gratefulness, saying thank you makes a difference. Give thanks with gratitude in your heart. Know that you may rejoice with hope because you believe in Christ Jesus who will guide your life now and always.

PRAYER

God of grace and love, we thank you. For all your blessings to us. We praise you for your Son Jesus who came to show us how to live. He is the bread of life which will sustain us always. Hear now the prayers of our hearts as we offer our thanks to you in this time of silence. Amen.