

Sunday, October 8, 2017

Deuteronomy 8:7-18

Luke 17:11-19

### Giving Thanks to God- an Everyday Practise?

Happy Thanksgiving. Just what is this autumn observance of feasting all about? Many people will say it is about family and friends getting together to enjoy a good meal as cooler temperatures come and the fall rains begin. Others will say it is the time to close up trailers, cottages and prepare for the long winter. Yet there are others who will say it is time to take a break after the busy- start-up of fall season when programs, school and activities begin again. And it is all of these and more. For this celebration time is a time to sit and reflect and look at the blessings God has given through this growing and harvest season. And yet we know for many there will be those statements about loss, uncertainty and even if there are any blessings at all in this world!

We are blessed here in Canada—we have good land, great farmers and greenhouse growers, we have abundant orchards and good food. And to make good food you have to have good food. But not only are we blessed with food, we are blessed because we live in a country where we can sit down with our family members and not worry about our freedom. We have been blessed because our country was built upon faithful people who desired peace and through the ages were willing to go to war for this peace- that is for the sake of others. And for this we need to say Thank you. But who are we thanking?

We are also blessed as individuals. Think about the gifts that God has given to you: health, home, family, friends and food. Yes we miss those who will not be at the table with us this year because God has called them home. And yes, we will share both tears and laughter with those who are present and enjoy every moment because we are with family. And also yes, we will be making memories of what this Thanksgiving means in light of the challenges and changes many people have experienced in this last year. Everyone has aged a year and with this have grown physical problems. Rains have caused much damage to homes in this area and for some farmers too much rain has hindered the yield of crops overall. But there have also been positive experiences this past year—babies were born, adopted, and new life began. People were given opportunities and challenges were offered and accepted. Much learning has occurred and there has also been times of discovery and wonder and love. There was a time for taking down the old and building something new. And in the midst of all of this, we have thanksgiving.

Throughout the season of Creation in September and October we have heard the story of the Hebrew people as they began their journey towards the Promised Land. They crossed the Red Sea on dry land only to watch the Egyptians perish when the walls of water resumed their natural state. They began wandering in the desert and soon realized that they had no food. They complained to Moses who with God's guidance told them how they would have food every day in the form of manna and quail. They complained again when there was no water as they journeyed together. God again heard this and provided water from a rock. And God told Moses as they continued this journey to ask them to do something in return. After all, God provided them freedom from slavery, the promise of the land of milk and honey, food everyday and night, water that was fresh and good. All God asked was for them to be patient and wait to see what He was going to do. God had a plan and he wanted to put it into place His way.

In Deuteronomy, God gave Moses the commandments by which the people were to live. We know of the Main Ten commandments found in Exodus 20 as well as in Deuteronomy 5. But God continued his commandments so that the people would know how to live in His way. God told them that if they followed his commands, they would live and increase and they would also enter and possess the land first promised to their forefathers. We read, "Observe the commands of the Lord your God walking in his ways and revering him. God is bringing you into a good land and you will lack nothing." Then it states, "When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you and be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God. For failing to observe his commands, laws and decrees means that you will become proud and that it was by your hands and strength that you have gained wealth. It is only God who gives you this ability.—don't forget God!"

How often do we really give thanks to God? It should not only happen when the calendar tells us it is Thanksgiving weekend here in Canada but every day. How often do you give thanks to God? Maybe you are wondering why we should give thanks? Why should we thank God? There are several reasons- 1) Feeling and expressing appreciation is good for us. 2) It is in our best interest to be reminded that everything we have is a gift from Him. Without gratefulness, we become arrogant and self-centered. And like the people waiting to get to the Promised Land they were beginning to believe that they have achieved everything on their own and so do we. Thankfulness keeps our hearts in right relationship to the Giver of all good gifts. 3) Giving thanks also reminds us of how much we do have. Human beings are prone to covetousness that is wanting what we don't have. By giving thanks we are reminded of how much we do have that is on our blessings rather than wants, we tend to be happier. When we start thanking God

for the things we usually take for granted, our perspective changes. We realize that we could not even exist without the merciful blessings of God. This poem's Author is Unknown:

*Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire. If you did, what would there be to look forward to?*

*Be thankful when you don't know something, for it gives you the opportunity to learn.*

*Be thankful for the difficult times. During those times, you grow.*

*Be thankful for your limitations, because they give you opportunities for improvement.*

*Be thankful for each new challenge, because it will build your strength and character.*

*Be thankful for your mistakes. They will teach you valuable lessons.*

*Be thankful when you're tired and weary, because it means you've made a difference.*

*It's easy to be thankful for the good things.*

*A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who are also thankful for the setbacks.*

*Gratitude can turn a negative into a positive.*

*Find a way to be thankful for your troubles, and they can become your blessings.*

But most of all Give thanks to God every day. For when we give thanks—we will grow as a person, and God will enable us to be challenged anew as we draw closer in relationship with Him. Be the 10%== Give thanks to God every day. Amen.

Let us pray. Please pray with me inserting your thoughts of thankfulness to God:

Thank you. God for.... And for all that you are and will be now and forever more. Amen.

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