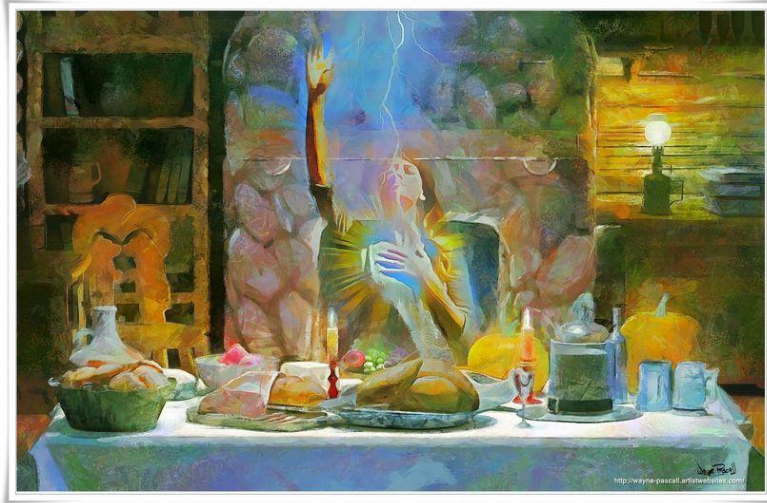


CONTINUOUS THANKSGIVING



On Thanksgiving we come together across the country with our family and friends to give thanks.

- Thanks for the abundance that surrounds our lives.
- Thanks for the peace that covers this land.

And to express our thanks to God, not only with words...but by doing something, offering something to demonstrate how grateful we are for how good we have it.

There are a thousand different ways we can demonstrate our thanks to God.

We can open up our hearts and share our abundance with those who have less.

We can reach out to somebody who needs a friend.

We can pick up the phone and touch base with that lonely cousin.

The idea of setting aside a special day to give thanks to God is certainly worthy.

Why shouldn't we observe a certain day when we all do this together?

But there are people for whom celebrating thanksgiving is the easiest thing in the world.

They do it all the time.

They get up in the morning,

"Thank you, Father, for the new day."

They sit down to breakfast,

“Thank you, Father, for this food.”

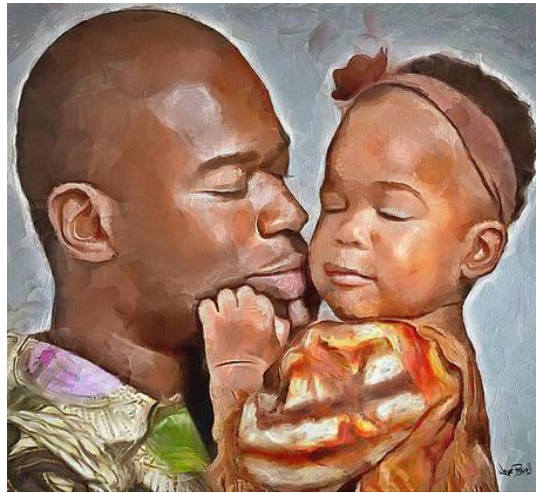
They drive to work singing.

They seem to appreciate everything that anybody does for them.

They appreciate the waitress who serves them lunch and they give her a good tip.

They appreciate the mailman, the cashier at the store, the cleaning staff at work.

Above all, they appreciate their wife, their husband, their child, their friend.



And behind all this appreciation, and the generosity that always comes with it,

....is a heart that's just grateful to God.

We see this in the man, Jesus.

As a man...as a human being, the Son of God never stopped giving thanks.

Before he fed the multitude,

Jesus lifted up the bread *and gave thanks*. lifted up the fish *and gave thanks*.

When the disciples returned with joy reporting, *“Lord, even demons are subject to us in your name!”*

He said,

“Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and have revealed them to babes.”

Even on the night when he knew he was going to be betrayed, he was still giving thanks...

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Matthew 26:26-28



But how do you get like that?

How do you get to the place where you're able to give thanks all the time?

.... able to trust that God is there even when things look bad...still giving thanks?

Who can deny that living like that is far better than to be walking around under a cloud of gloom with our souls weighed down with a thousand complaints?

Most of us are so pressed and burdened in our daily lives that even when we do thank God for our food, our mind is busy racing somewhere else... *"Where am I going to get the money?" "How am I going to fix that leak?" "What if I lose my job?"*

Listen to the advice of a man who knew tough times.

He'd been beaten by angry mobs, stoned, imprisoned, shipwrecked, half starved, despised and threatened everywhere he went.

Yet, he can say,

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Colossians 3:15,17

Almost every letter Paul wrote begins with thanksgiving.

You can't help but pick up a spirit of gratefulness to God ruling this man's life even in the face of suffering.

We can be like that.

Every one of us can be like that.

Here's the recipe given to us by Paul himself,

“Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”.

Philippians 4:6-7

Two steps:

- 1) Turn every anxiety into prayer.
- 2) Turn every prayer into thanksgiving.

You're worried about something. How can you be thankful when you're worried about something?

Step #1: Turn that anxiety into prayer.

Instead of stewing about your health, your child, your finances, social discord...

start praying, *“Lord, I need help.” “Lord, I'm looking for you 'cause I need you.”*

And if the worry comes back every 3 minutes... turn it into prayer every 3 minutes.

“Lord, I'm worried about what the doctor told me.”

“Lord, I'm worried about my kid.”

“I'm worried about the future.”



“In everything by prayer and supplication...”

In everything, keep praying, keep asking.

Every time it hits you, you turn it into prayer.

Step #2: Keep turning that prayer into thanksgiving.

So, it's not just, "Give me this." "Give me that." "Help me with this." "Help me with that."

But with every request, it's also,

"Thank you, Father, for who you are."

"Thank you, Father, for hearing me."

"Thank you, Father, for the help you always give me."

"Thank you, Father, for bringing me this far."

"May your name be praised!"

***"In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God."***

Turn every anxiety into prayer and every prayer into thanksgiving.

Do this until it becomes a habit, until it's your second nature.

And you'll find yourself appreciating God the Father like you never have before.

Jesus will become real to you.

You'll begin to appreciate these brothers and sisters here in the Body.

You'll appreciate people you never noticed before.

The whole tone of your life will change.

Your outlook will be positive even when things look gloomy.



You'll be the person who gets up in the morning and says,

"Thank you, Father, for this new day."

You'll sit down to breakfast,

"Thank you, Father, for this food."

You'll drive to work singing.

You'll appreciate everything that anybody does for you... the waitress, the cashier, the mailman, the cleaning staff, and above all the person you share your life with.

And behind all this appreciation and the generosity that always comes with it

...will be a heart that's just grateful to God.



"Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus".

Message: Richard E. Bieber - Canadian Thanksgiving 2004

Featured Art: Courtesy and kindness of Wayne Pascall at wayne-pascall.pixels.com

Prayer- Lord you are worthy, so worthy, of continuous thanksgiving from us. Help us to live lives full of appreciation for who you are, what we have, and for all those around us. May we thank you at all times, even when things aren't going our way. May we choose to let your peace rule in our hearts because we trust you. Lord, we take every anxiety, every concern, every fear, every hurt....and lay them before you and thank you for your divine wisdom, guidance, strength, and mercy. As we do so, may we find the peace that passes all understanding and may we truly live lives of continuous thanksgiving. Amen.

Maranatha Mirror

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