

## My Thoughts for Sunday, 23 November 2014

### Thanksgiving, for what?

Let's begin by looking at the origins of Thanksgiving in our country.

*Thanksgiving, or Thanksgiving Day, is a holiday celebrated in the United States on the fourth Thursday in November. It became an official Federal holiday in 1863, when, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national day of "Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens", to be celebrated on the last Thursday in November. Also, there are reports that the original Thanksgiving proclamation was signed by George Washington. As a federal and public holiday in the U.S., Thanksgiving is one of the major holidays of the year. Together with Christmas and New Year, Thanksgiving is a part of the broader holiday season.*

*The event that Americans commonly call the "First Thanksgiving" was celebrated by the Pilgrims after their first harvest in the New World in 1621. This feast lasted three days, and it was attended by 90 Native Americans (as accounted by attendee Edward Winslow) and 53 Pilgrims. The New England colonists were accustomed to regularly celebrating "thanksgivings"—days of prayer thanking God for blessings such as military victory or the end of a drought.*

Now we have insight as to the when, and why this holiday was established; very commendable reasoning and purpose. Now let's speculate a bit on what this day of Thanksgiving has been molded into in our so called enlightened society.

Today for many Americans it seems that Thanksgiving Day has become, in large part, another paid day off from our secular jobs. It, for many, has become a day when family and friends gather to feast beyond physical needs, become tired and lethargic and spend the afternoon watching or sleeping through the major football game of the day. Some of these families may even indulge in a prayer of thanks before the meal. Many even strive to get all to participate in this prayer time to share things they might be thankful for.

This prayer practice is very commendable and should be a regular practice at each and every meal (not just Thanksgiving Day) whether with family and friends or merely close family members or individual mealtime. The Psalmist gives us direction in these prayers of thanksgiving at [Psalms 95:2 \(NLT\)](#) "Let us come to him with thanksgiving. Let us sing psalms of praise to him."

Again in [Psalms 100:4-5 \(NLT\)](#) "Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name.

*For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation."*

Many people only find the physical benefits of Thanksgiving and feel that they have earned and provided these many benefits with their own hands and with no help from anyone. They do not see the generous hands of their Creator working in their lives to give them the ability to earn and provide for their needs. If this is your outlook on this day of Thanksgiving, I urge you to look a little deeper to find the innumerable things we need to thank our God for; things that without His divine direction and grace, we could never realize.

#### Questions to ponder:

Where would you be if God did not bless you with the ability and intelligence to perform your secular job?

What would you do for self provisioning if suddenly you lost either that ability or intellect?

Where would you find the necessary foods for your sustenance if God did not keep the weather patterns acceptable for food growth?

Could you clothe yourself or protect yourself from the elements if you lost the ability to perform your menial tasks?

Could you even begin to sustain your existence if you were suddenly without good health: physical or mental?

I could go on and on looking at the many blessings we take for granted: the air we breathe; the benefit of the sun for our continued existence; the training received by healthcare workers provided by God for your continued wellbeing; the transportation you enjoy to get to and from your job and secular activities.

These and numerous other blessings have been made possible through science by the grace of God working in men's hearts and minds to be able to perform their jobs.

We need to look to the Word of our Creator to understand that all these gifts are not something we can make happen. We can't even begin to acquire the many needs we have and enjoy for our life here on this sin-filled world. See what James, under inspiration by God, was commanded to write in [\*\*James 1:16-18\*\*](#) (NLT) *"So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters.*

*Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.*

*He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession."* If we are His prized possession, don't you think He is also responsible for sustaining our lives and giving us our abilities to enjoy His blessings on a daily basis?

Before I close this Thanksgiving message let me share with you what we deserve according to our inherited and personal sin, and the gift that our very gracious God is offering to us freely with no obligation on our part, recorded for us in [\*\*Romans 6:23\*\*](#) (NLT) *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Think again about the things you are given to be thankful for and ask for God's direction and give Him thanks for all the wonderful things He has promised and daily gives us.