

Thanksgiving 2020
Title: JESUS GIVES THANKS
Text: Multiple
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Happy Thanksgiving!

First Thanksgiving

Popular American folklore holds the Pilgrims of Massachusetts held the first Thanksgiving in English North America.

But in Virginia, a group of English colonists held their own Thanksgiving a couple years earlier, in 1619. On Dec. 4th a year before the first toe set food on Plymouth

Jamestown Settlement to hold commemoration of 1619 Thanksgiving held by Virginia colonists.

In the previous 10 years only 60 of the original 500 had survived. One out of six survived.

Jamestown – Hugh Crowder arrived on the Bona Nova one year earlier.

Thanksgiving is a time to commemorate survival and community.

A time for coming together

To thank for the harvest

To gather family and friends

Usually lots of food

Though we are in strange and difficult days....we have much to be thankful for and are called to offer thanks to God.

As I thought about this Thanksgiving message, the question came to me,

“For what did Jesus give thanks?”

JESUS GIVES THANKS

I had never thought about this question before and as I searched out the answer.

What I found was surprising.

FOR WHAT DID JESUS GIVE THANKS?

My expectation

I expected to find many examples of Jesus giving thanks in the Gospels.

What I found – 4 occasions

Instead there are only four key places where it is specifically mentioned that He gave thanks.

- Christ is God on Earth.
- He left the very nature of being God to become man.
- He is God yet offers prayers and thanks to the Father- God

I want to talk about those four occasions today

Thanks for Revelation

After the disciples return from proclaiming the Gospel and doing the powerful works of the Kingdom, Jesus responds to their good report with:

At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." (Matthew 11:25–27)

- Father-God does not do things the way we humans do.
- In His "upside-down" Kingdom the first are last and the last are first.
- The proud are humbled and the lowly are exalted.
- So here, Jesus gives thanks to the Father for hiding the things of the Kingdom from the "wise" and revealing them to simple (foolish) children.

Immediately after this, Jesus gives His great invitation:

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

- We can follow Jesus’ example in giving thanks to Father-God for revealing Christ to us and calling us to Himself in His great grace:

*For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, **so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus**, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”* (1 Corinthians 1:26–31)

- God has revealed himself in His creation
- God has revealed himself in His written word
- God has revealed himself in His prophets
- God has revealed himself in His manifestation of Christ
- God has revealed himself in His love
- God has revealed himself in His Spirit

We have revelation. Give thanks for it.

He offered thanks for revealing himself

Secondly, He offered thanks for provision

Thanks for Provision

For three days a great crowd of people (4,000 men not including women and children) had been with Jesus as He taught and healed. At the end, Jesus wanted to feed the people before He sent them back to their homes. All the disciples had were seven loaves of bread and a few small fish. But then Jesus gave *thanks*:

*[Jesus] took the seven loaves and the fish, and **He gave thanks**, broke them, and kept on giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.* (Matthew 15:36)

- Now think about it: there is no way that such meager provisions would be enough to feed such a large crowd.
- BUT Jesus gives thanks for what was provided and it multiplies into way more than was needed.
- Everyone ate their fill and there were even leftovers for those who came later.
- There is a law of multiplying here.
- You cannot out give God

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Luke 6:38

Following Jesus' example, we too can give thanks to Father-God for what He has provided, no matter how meager. *I am still learning this lesson: as we give thanks for what we have, Father-God often blesses us with more than we need.* **So when we have little but need much, we give thanks.**

He offered thanks for revelation and provision

Third, he offered thanks for listening.

Thanks for Listening

One of the great cries of humanity is that they could be heard. That someone could truly listen to their heart and gain understanding.

- Every disagreement is escalated because there is an inability or unwillingness to listen and have understanding of the other person.

Jesus' good friend Lazarus was deathly ill. Instead of going immediately when He heard the news, Jesus waits.

By the time he reaches Lazarus' family, Lazarus had been dead for four days. There was great mourning and even Jesus wept.

But He had something greater in mind than simply healing Lazarus.

Jesus instructed the people to take away the stone that covered Lazarus' tomb:

*So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “**Father, I thank you that you have heard me.** I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” (John 11:41–43)*

- It is interesting to note that Jesus give thanks for already being heard by the Father.
- Perhaps as He has been praying, in communion with His Father, Jesus is told that He will raise Lazarus.
- As Jesus prays before the tomb, He already knows that He has been heard by the Father.

Following Jesus, we can give thanks to Father-God knowing that He hears our prayers –

He even knows what we need before we ask:

*“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, **for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.**” (Matthew 6:7–8)*

You can go to the Lord – He hears you. He listens. He knows. He will deliver you.

I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Psalm 34:4

Not only can we be sure that Father-God hears our prayers, even more we know that Jesus and the Holy Spirit continue to intercede for us!!!

“... the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” (Romans 8:26)

Christ is interceding on our behalf – ever listening and standing for you.

But because [Jesus] remains forever, He holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore, He is always able to save those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them. (Hebrews 7:24–25)

We can be thankful that Father-God continues to hear Jesus!

He offered thanks for revelation, for provision, and for listening.

Finally, Jesus offered thanks in the midst of suffering

Thanks in Suffering

Whatever God's will is: including suffering I will thank the Lord

Cup and the Bread

In the last days of his earthly ministry, Jesus gathers His disciples for a final Passover celebration. In just a short time,

He would be nailed to the Cross and being forsaken by the Father,

He would carry the sins of all the world.

Knowing His suffering was at hand,

He stood before those whom He loved and served, and GAVE THANKS:

And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. (Luke 22:14–20)

How thankful are we for the body of the Lord given for us to bear what we could not?

How thankful are we for the blood of the Lord poured out for us to make us acceptable to Father-God?

In the face of imminent suffering, Christ gave thanks.

It was a submission to the will of God.

It was surrender to the purpose of God

It was satisfaction with the plan of God

- The Cross was before Him and our Savior Jesus gave thanks.

- Father-God heard Jesus' – The Prince of Life's – prayer and He gave thanks.
- The people were hungry and our King Jesus gave thanks. Father-God was revealing Himself to the foolish and hiding Himself from the "wise" and Jesus gave thanks.
- When Jesus gave thanks – great works of salvation, healing and blessing followed.

We follow Jesus in giving thanks, not just one time out of the year, ***but as our way of life, as Father-God's will for us:***

Rejoice always! Pray constantly. Give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, (James 1:2 ESV)

CHALLENGE

Give thanks for revealing Himself to you

Give thanks for providing for you

Give thanks for listening to you

Give thanks for His purpose for you