



November 22, 2009

Giving Of Thanks

I was looking through articles for the bulletin that I have written and found that I had not specifically written anything about the forthcoming holiday. Usually I don't focus on worldly holidays in the sense that some in the religious world do. Most churches will have special services and activities geared up for the holiday. While there are good intentions behind these things there is no authority for making them a work of the church. The idea of giving thanks, however, is central to everything that we read in the Bible. We owe our existence and lives to God and the provisions that he has made for us. We owe him the greatest reverence and respect for the sacrifice that He was willing to make in sending his son to this world to offer himself on our behalf. The faithful, whose lives are recorded in the pages of scripture, made thankfulness a part of their lives. Christians strive to remember God each and every day. We realize that there are many things that the Lord does for us that we don't take into account or acknowledge. The act of remembering God each and every day is a characteristic of those who have loved and served God and is an active part of our thinking. David was known for his acknowledgement of God and the things that the Lord had done for Israel. In a Psalm delivered to Asaph, David states, ***"Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people."*** (1 Chron 16.8). The act of giving thanks here was an acknowledgement of the things that God had done for them and were to be remembered. There is the added note by David that such giving of thanks was also a way of calling to mind the deeds of the Lord in his preservation of the people. David later alludes to the greatest reason to give thanks to God, and that is for the salvation that is offered. ***"O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever."*** (1 Chron 16.34). The mercy and deliverance from destruction by God is the real reason for giving thanks. In our day and time there are many who will give thanks, acknowledging God in some fashion, but is it really the type of thanks that God wants to see in us?

Tracing the origins of the secular holiday we see that it is rooted in the appreciation that newcomers to the continent had for the fact that they had survived and been given blessings to raise food and prepare for another Winter. In more recent times we see that there are many who try to express gratitude for good things they have. True thankfulness to God involves understanding what he has done for us. We must turn to his word to find that he has cared for us and provided us with the means to be pleasing in his sight. This is expressed in the Psalms as we see a reverence for the word and work of the Lord. ***"Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."*** (Psm 30.4). Remembering the holiness of the Lord causes us to think of what it means to be Holy. The best summary that I have found that expresses this is the statement of Christ to his disciples. ***"If ye love me, keep my commandments."*** (John 14.15). In his later writings, John states, ***"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*** (1 John 1.7). Christ came to do the will of the Father, to speak the things that God had given him and to provide the sacrifice for sins. For all these things we need to give thanks each and every day realizing that we would have no hope in the world without God's provisions. Christ showed us an example of walking in the righteousness of God and seeking to do the will of the Father. He demonstrated that we can overcome the world and it's pitfalls and temptations if we keep our minds attuned to the important things. Thankfulness and reverent praise are things that will keep us focused and will help us accomplish what God wants us to be doing. Every day is a reminder that God is blessing and holding open the door of opportunity for those who have not yet obeyed him. For that we are thankful.

TLC