

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints.

16 O LORD, truly I *am* thy servant; I *am* thy servant, *and* the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,

Why not let this Thanksgiving week be the beginning of a life of gratitude expressed:

“Lord, because of what you have done for me, I will serve tirelessly, I will worship faithfully, I will give generously, I will die trusting in you!”

Let us this week go and celebrate the real thing.

You can start by practicing verse 13.

The Value of Gratitude **Sunday, November 22, 2015** by C Benjamin Dill

Good morning, Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

This week we get to celebrate what I consider to be one of the greatest moral and political achievements of our Nation.

That we, as a Nation, would set aside a day; a National Holiday, specifically dedicated to giving to God, (yes God; the One whom our coins and currency say that we trust)... thanks for our freedom and for our benefits of every kind; to me is one of the greatest victories ever won in our Nation.

That those who came before us had the wisdom to know from whom all our blessings flow along with the courage to say so is a great gift to all of us.

Although many leaders in our nation, beginning with George Washington, declared from time to time an observance of such a day, it was not until 1863 that President Lincoln actually set aside the last Thursday in November as our National Day of Thanksgiving.

By no coincidence, it was also earlier that same year in July that, by Lincoln’s own testimony, he consecrated his life to Christ.

Don't you wish that would happen to the one we have now!

Just so you will know, especially you ladies, *that one person can make a difference* - as a side note within our message today - I want to recognize one individual. Her name was **Mrs. Sarah Joseph Hale**, the editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, a magazine for women published between 1830 and 1898.

For thirty years, she promoted the idea of a National Thanksgiving Day, contacting President after President until finally, President Abraham Lincoln responded in 1863.

Like the widow of Luke 18, Mrs. Hale understood that there are some things you just don't give up on!

Luke 18:2-5

2 **Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:**

3 **And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.**

4 **And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;**

5 **Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.**

For Christians, the value of thanksgiving is obvious; we have more to be thankful for than anyone on the planet! Jesus has changed everything for us!

c. He is abusive when others are not around, but he says I love you".

6. Let me ask you again; is it enough that love exists or need it also be expressed?

7. This might be where Verse 11 came from; **Vs.11 I said in my haste, All men are liars.**

C. Now let's get really serious about this.

1. Does love really exist if it is not expressed?

2. If love is not expressed, how else could you or anyone else know if it really exists or not?

3. Does then gratitude really exist if it is not also expressed?

4. You say you are thankful; but what are you giving back?

Conclusion:

Those who are truly thankful will always ask, "What can I give back"?

Psalm 116:12-18

12 **What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?**

13 **I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.**

14 **I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.**

3. Thanksgiving. Gratitude is expressed.

4. Let's compare this to something I know you will understand; especially you ladies.

B. Let's compare gratitude to love.

1. Verse 1 of our text starts with love.

Psalm 116:1 I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and* my supplications.

2. This response evolves into verses 17 & 18.

Psalm 116:17-18

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,

3. Ok ladies, your husband claims he loves you; so we assume **love exists**.

4. He tells you "I love you"; now **Love is stated**.

5. Is that enough?

a. He spends his paycheck at the bar, but he says "I love you".

b. He doesn't help with anything around the house, but he says "I love you".

Ephesians 2:12-13

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

The message today could be preached from a hundred different texts of scripture; the one the Lord has led us to today is **Psalm 116**.

Psalm 116:1-19

1 I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and* my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live.

3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

5 Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God *is* merciful.

6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, *and* my feet from falling.

9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.

10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:
 11 I said in my haste, All men *are* liars.
 12 What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me?
 13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.
 14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.
 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints.
 16 O LORD, truly I *am* thy servant; I *am* thy servant, *and* the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.
 17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.
 18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,
 19 In the courts of the LORD'S house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

This coming Thursday is Thanksgiving Day. It is not “turkey day”, it is Thanksgiving Day.

Its purpose is to remind us to give thanks to God. Not “our lucky stars”, not the cosmos, not karma, not Mother Nature; certainly not ourselves...but to God!

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

2. We are unthankful and we seek Him not.

C. What do you suppose created the entitlement mentality that is so prevalent in our country today?

1. Gratitude says “I owe someone else for what I receive”.
2. Ingratitude says “You, the world, the government...you all owe me; it’s mine and you are keeping it from me”!
3. Lives change when men begin to respond in gratitude.
4. You owe someone; ultimately the Lord, for every good thing in your life.
5. **1 Corinthians 4:7** For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it?*

Thanksgiving is important because:

III. Gratitude calls us to give back.

A. Let’s look at how gratitude works; there are three elements:

1. Being thankful. Gratitude exists.
2. Giving thanks. Gratitude is stated.

3. America needs to wake up!

- a. Ladies, if you are following what your preacher preaches and what your Bible tells you to do; you are teaching your Children to be thankful, to love people, to harm no one and to live right before God.
- b. You know that lady you see at the grocery store with her head all covered up?
- c. If she is following what her preacher preaches and what her bible tells her to do; she is teaching her children to kill your children in the name of her demon god Allah!
- d. And that is exactly what they are going to do!

II. Gratitude is what ultimately brings change to our lives.

A. All of us are blessed of the Lord.

1. The rain falls on the just and the unjust.
2. God has revealed Himself and His goodness to all of us.

B. Our response to God's goodness is always one of two things.

1. We are thankful and thus we seek Him – or

So just how important is gratitude?
For one thing:

I. Without gratitude evil flourishes.

A. When by his choice, man chooses to reject God, a lack of gratitude is a major step in his downward spiral into depravity.

1. **Romans 1:21-22**

21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, **neither were thankful**; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

2. It is a sign of our times.

2Timothy 3:1-5

1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, **unthankful**, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

B. Thanksgiving Day is all about gratitude; it plays an important role in our lives and in our National culture.

1. Thanksgiving Day is one of the few areas we have not yet officially asked God to leave.
2. In **Luke 8** Jesus visited the country of Gadara on the southern shore of Galilee. There He healed a wild man possessed of many devils who afore time had caused the citizenry of that country great trouble.
3. **Luke 8:35-37**
 35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.
 36 They also which saw *it* told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.
 37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about **besought him to depart from them**; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

4. Instead of being thankful, they asked Jesus to leave.

5. We have asked God to leave our schools.
 - a. Evil now flourishes in our schools.

b. When I went to school we carried our shotguns and .22s in gun racks in the back window of our pick-up trucks.

c. I and everybody I knew carried a pocketknife every day.

d. And nobody ever got shot or cut!

e. Oh, yeah, when I went to school we had the Ten Commandments hanging on the wall and our teachers had Bibles on their desks and were allowed to freely talk about what was right and wrong.

6. We have asked God to leave our courtrooms.

- a. Evil now flourishes in our legal system.
- b. A million babies are being murdered in their mothers' womb every year!
- c. The God-ordained institution of marriage has now been corrupted with abomination.

C. The remaining thankful are being replaced with the unthankful.

1. We are now being told to open our borders and allow hundreds of thousands of Islamic refugees to flood our country.
2. Have you ever heard a Muslim express thanks for anything; other than perhaps the death of a Christian or a Jew?