

## A HAPPY THANKSGIVING RULE

"Neither will I offer . . . unto the Lord my God of that which cost me nothing" (II Samuel 24:24).

Do you want to know how to have a happy Thanksgiving Day? Follow the rule of David in your Thanksgiving offerings, and thank the Lord mostly for the costly trials and problems which He has asked you to face the past year.

Of course, we need to thank the Lord for all free gifts received, but let us go much further than this in our thanks. Let us thank the Lord for trials that humbled us until we took special time to pray and wait upon God, both for ourselves and for a needy world that is dying for want of the Christian's prayers.

Let us thank the Lord for humiliating experiences that have brought us nearer to the Lord, and Him nearer to us. If the Lord has made us more prayerful by allowing heavy clouds and extremely dark shadows to hang over us, and over our world horizon, let us thank Him and praise His holy Name.

**"In every thing give thanks."** Let us especially thank the Lord for that which has cost us most, and let us bring a costly offering and come into His courts.—Selected.

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

By F. Lincicome

Our thanksgiving should be in two directions, namely, vertically and horizontally. This was true with our Lord. He praised God and thanked men. Gratitude, to be genuine, should be expressed in both directions. Paul not only praised the Lord in his epistles, but also he took time out to praise the brethren for their fellowship and service. All our talk about praising the Lord Jesus is pious chicanery if we are ungrateful to one another. The sign of ingratitude is the most universal of vices and one that flourishes in every stage of society. Beware lest you commit it.

## THANKSGIVING

Let's be specific when we praise  
The One Who blesses all our days;  
The One Who from His gracious store  
Pours on us mercies more and more;  
The One Who gives us food and drink,  
Hands for our tasks, and minds to think;  
The One Who gives the bird its song,  
The child its laughter; He Who long  
Ages past formed earth and heaven;  
Who now upholds it all, and even  
Each moment gives the breath we breathe  
In loving kindness, though we grieve  
Him constantly by greed and strife,  
Evil and lust and self-filled life.

Let's be specific when we praise  
The One Who blesses all our days.  
Let's gladly own His holy Name  
And mouth no words that would lend fame  
To gods devised by wayward mind,  
Who hear not, know not, and are blind.  
Not "Power Supreme," or "God Unknown,"  
Or "Thou Who Dost the Skies Enthroned,"  
Or other buttery, unctuous phrases  
Intoned with sanctimonious faces;  
But let us heartily accord  
Our thanks to Jesus Christ the Lord.

—Selected

## A Thanksgiving Classic

Paul S. Rees

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

"Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

"Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

"For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." Psalm 100. Key verse: 4.

The Book of Psalms is the keyboard of the soul. As one has said, it "contains the whole music of the heart of man swept by the hand of his Master." Although gratitude and gladness form the theme of many portions of the Psalter, Psalm 100 stands out. Not a single doleful note does it sound. Still, it is no mere burst of undisciplined emotion. Its exultant spirit is an enlightened spirit.

The Psalm as a whole was composed, it would seem, either for use during the thank offering in the temple services or for chanting purposes on occasions when festive processions were moving toward the temple. What, we may ask, are its permanent insights and abiding values?

**The Universal Appropriateness of Thanksgiving:** "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands." Here is the blowing of the trumpets not for Israel alone but for all mankind. While Thanksgiving Day has historical roots and associations that are distinctly American, the song of thankfulness, broadly speaking, is no national solo but rather an international chorus. It should be a symphony of praise played by human instruments of many colors under many skies.

Our Psalmist here is not less prophetic than he is poetic. He sees, as we should, that at any given time, any land or race of men, if it will but pause and reflect, will find numerous reasons for rendering praise and adoration to the Great Creator of the world and the Father of spirits.

**The Practical Serviceableness of Thanksgiving:** "Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing."

From these words we may derive either the thought that thanksgiving itself is a form of service—and undoubtedly it is—or the larger idea that all our service to God is heightened in its quality by the cheerfulness with which it is rendered. As Thomas Carlyle once expressed it, "Give me a man who sings at his work."

James Stewart quotes the late Bishop of Liverpool, Francis Chavasse, as saying, "Praise and service are great healers." "In other words," comments Stewart, "when life grows sore and wounding, and it is difficult to be brave, praise God; and if it is hard to do it, make yourself do it, and in the very act of praise the wound will begin to heal. Sing something, and you will rally your own heart with the song! . . . Praise brings the wounded back to life's firing-line again." So you have it—the practicalness of thanksgiving.

**The Deep Reasonableness of Thanksgiving:** "Know ye that the Lord, he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture . . .

## SO THANKFUL

By Rose Shoemaker

So thankful, Lord, for all the little things in life;

These dear familiar things that we can freely share;

The sunny smile, the cheery word and hopeful little song,

All bring a sweetness into life that lifts dull care.

So thankful, Lord, for all these glorious autumn days,

That helped us gather in a bounteous, ripened store.

Now we can dream at eventide beside the hearthstone's glow

Of peace and plenty. Ne'er could we ask for more.

So thankful, Lord, for the little church where we can meet

With friends, and join with them in grateful praise

For all thy choicest blessings through the year, and for

The happy, helpful spirit of Thanksgiving days. —In Religious Telescope

For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."

Notice those verbs of exhortation: "Make," "serve," "enter." But back of them, and giving meaning to them, is another verb, "Know ye." A polite belief in God is not enough. It is too easily upset by the darker facts of life. What is needed is a living experience of God, through Christ, out of the heart of which will grow the conviction, not only that God is, but that he is always and forever a God of goodness and mercy.

One very practical way to simplify the religious problem is just to remember that disbelief in God turns life sour, whereas faith in God gives life a song. One ends in a dirge, the other in a doxology.

**The Peculiar Religiousness of Thanksgiving:** "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise."

Such terms as "gates" and "courts" point obviously to the temple, or, in broader view, to the appointed places of worship. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" is a strong New Testament appeal. You do not feel like going? Then go anyhow. The discipline will do you good. You do not feel the thrill of thanksgiving? Then praise God anyhow. This is not a plea for insincerity; it is a plea for intelligence and honesty and duty. Join with fellow worshippers in meditation, in the singing of the psalms and hymns, in the devotional use of the Bible. Your disciplined movements will foster the desired moods.

In the calendar of our United States there is one Thanksgiving Day, but in the calendar of the Christian's year all our days should be Thanks-living Days!

"Were thanks with every gift expressed,  
Each day would be Thanksgiving;  
Were gratitude its very best,  
Each life would be thanksgiving."

—Christian Witness