

Happy Thanksgiving

Thankful to whom?

11/21/10

Thanksgiving week is finally here. You can tell it by the Christmas decorations at the malls and I have a question for you: Will you really celebrate thanksgiving?

In my "old age" I seem to be becoming more skeptical of "holidays" that the majority of Americans celebrate. The reason, God has been removed from the celebration. What has happened to Christmas? On the school calendar it is designated as: Winter Break. What has happened to the Resurrection? On the school calendar it is designated as: Spring Break. Thanksgiving seems to be the lone survivor of this little social engineering experiment that we are living through.

But it would seem that our giving of "Thanks" has morphed into something other than our giving of thanks to God. People all over this country will stop this week for Thanksgiving but who are we as a nation giving thanks to? From a strictly secular point of view, I wonder if thanksgiving is an opportunity to show thanks to each other, our government or maybe to ourselves.

Thanksgiving is an unusual holiday because it combines God & government & society. And it is considered perfectly acceptable for everyone, regardless of religion, to be thankful on Thanksgiving Day.

Now I don't know about you, but that concerns me, because when something becomes universally acceptable it has usually been drastically watered down or changed from its original purpose.

To prove how very thankful we are we will sit down and stuff ourselves silly on Turkey and even imaginable dishes we can enjoy.

What is 'Thanksgiving'?

1. The act of giving thanks
2. A prayer expressing gratitude
3. A public acknowledgment or celebration of divine goodness

None of these definitions say a word about eating. It seems that Mr. Webster has taken his definition right out of the Bible.

"Be joyful always. Pray continually. Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Now you need to realize that it doesn't say, "give thanks FOR all circumstances," but rather, "IN all circumstances." No matter how terrible may be some of the circumstances of life, with God's help there will always be that for which we can be thankful.

I. Let's be thankful to the right somebody

Most of us didn't say thank you to our cars when we got out of them. Neither did I say thank you to the road, for letting me drive on it. Giving thanks is relational and personal. We do not have a relational or personal relationship with our cars or the road. Why? Because they are not people, they are things.

If we're going to say "thank you" we must say "thank you" to somebody and we need to make sure that it is the right somebody.

Everyone likes to hear the words...Thank you.

The first definition defines thanksgiving as the act of giving thanks... Therefore, thanksgiving is an action. It is a verb. It is something you say or sacrifice, which communicates your gratitude to other.

II. Let's be thankful for the right reasons

The second definition is that of "a prayer expressing gratitude."

Psalm 103 provides us with a beautiful outline of the right reasons to give thanks to God. Lord we want to thank you for...

1. All of your benefits

"Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits..." V2

The scripture then goes on to mentioned just a few of the benefits that we have in the Lord.

2. Forgiving my sins

"...who forgives all your sins" V3a

There is no more guilt. Why?

"as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:2

3. Keeping me healthy

"...and heals all your diseases" V3b

4. Lifting me out of a pit

"...who redeems your life from the pit" V4a

"He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand." Psalm 40:2

5. Bestowing on me my true hearts desire

"... and crowns you with love and compassion" V4b

There is an old country song that seems to describe so many people that we know...

"looking for love in all the wrong places."

6. Satisfying my longing

"...who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." V5

I like that. Almost everybody is searching for a fountain of youth. But I'm a realist, & when I stand in front of the mirror I realize I wasn't born with graying hair or poor eyesight or the wrinkles I have now.

Maybe Paul explained it best when he said that we are "wasting away on the outside, but inside we are being renewed day by day."

This Thanksgiving most of us will have the opportunity to publicly give thanks to God and I hope that we all will take advantage of it by giving our heartfelt gratitude to our Savior and God.

"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name."

Hebrews 13:15

Thankful to whom?

"...to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen." Jude 1:25