

Thanksgiving

by Wayne Goff

The national holiday comes late this year, and winter's death is even closer to us. Yet as we reflect over the past year's blessings, we have much for which to be thankful. God is always good to man.

The Divine Witness

Paul and Barnabas were traveling through the region of Lystra as they preached Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Coming to a crippled man, God healed him through their hands to verify their claim as Divine messengers (Acts 14:6-10). This caused the people to view Paul and Barnabas as "*gods*"! Paul objected to this and by inspiration said this of God's world:

"Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:15-17).

I write these things to show you the greatness of God's blessings upon us today. God has given man free will to live his life under the sun as he chooses. Meanwhile, God continues to give us rain and harvest so that man can enjoy the bounty of life.

We are even taught to love our fellow man *in the way* that God loves the inhabitants of earth. We are to love our enemies, bless those who curse us, do good to those who hate us, and pray for them (Matt. 5:44). **WHY?** *"That you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45).* God sends His natural blessings on all men because He made them, He loves them, and He cares for them *regardless* of their thoughts toward Him! This God is as unfathomable as He is wonderful. We should take the time to *give thanks **daily*** for food, drink, clothing, and health — not to mention our minds, knowledge, understanding, foresight and inventions. God is behind it all.

Man's Worries

Unbelievers in the world worry themselves to death about the provisions of life, not knowing that our heavenly Father supplies them. Sometimes you and I — **as ardent believers** — get caught up in the maelstrom too.

Jesus carefully reminded His disciples, saying: *"...do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Matt. 6:25-26).* You'll never see a sparrow die from an ulcer! Our priorities will improve when we recall that God the Creator is alive and well, and still in charge! Our worry accomplishes nothing (Matt. 6:27-28), and yet God clothes us with life and vitality year after year. Can you not take a moment to **give thanks**?

Philippians 4:4-7

*"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, **with thanksgiving**, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

Read also 2 Corinthians 2:14; 4:15; 9:11-12, 15; Eph. 5:4, 20; Col. 1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15, 17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 5:18; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:1.

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