

THANKSGIVING 2023

NOVEMBER 19, 2023

INTRO: The celebration of Thanksgiving dates back to 1621, when the Pilgrims celebrated the harvest feast at Plymouth, Massachusetts. They gathered to express gratitude to God for His blessings: harvests, ship landings, military victories, and drought endings. In 1789, George Washington proclaimed Thanksgiving as a federal holiday. His reasons: to thank God for civil and religious liberty, for useful knowledge, and for God's kind care and providence. We live in a country that cries separation of church and state, but established a federal holiday to thank God for His bountiful blessings. My message today focuses on answering questions about Thanksgiving.

- 1.) To whom shall we give thanks? **PS. 106:1** To the Lord!
 - A.) A terrible moment in the life of an atheist is when he's overwhelmed with gratitude but has no one to thank.
 - B.) **ROM. 1:18-22** There's no excuse for being an atheist or for being unthankful to the God who created us and sustains our lives daily. He gave us life, bodies that function, air to breathe, etc. To disregard Him is rebellion, and those that do, produce their own gods (**ROM. 1:23-25**).
 - C.) **JAMES 1:17** God's our source. Gratitude acknowledges our dependence on God. Ingratitude acknowledges our independence. "I am working on myself, for myself, by myself" was on the front of a woman's shirt. **DAN. 4:29-37**.
- 2.) For What?
 - A.) **PS. 136:1-9** For His creative powers, goodness, mercy, and grace.
 - B.) **PS. 100:1-5** He made us. For eyes that see and for what they see—a beautiful sunrise, sunset, color, flowers, landscapes etc. For ears that hear and what they hear – music, laughter, birds chirping, rushing water, etc. For our abilities, and talents. For family, our home, our job, etc.
- 3.) When shall we give thanks?
 - A.) **PS. 34:1-4** Thankfulness to God is to be a constant in our lives. It's not based on our circumstances.
 - B.) **PS. 57:4-11** David's perspective changed, not his circumstances. He calls for his tongue and soul to wake up and praise God even though his circumstances were unfavorable.
 - C.) **1 THESS. 5:18** In every situation, we are to give God thanks.
- 4.) How do we give thanks?
 - A.) By grace through faith. **ROM. 5:1-2** Grace is God's operational power that enables us to stand even in the most difficult circumstances. By faith we access this grace that enables us to overcome.
 - B.) "It is well with my soul". Horatio Spafford: "When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll. Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul". This takes grace and faith working together to be true.

Conclusion:

To whom do we give thanks? God! What do we give thanks for? Every good and perfect gift! When do we give thanks? Always! How do we give thanks? By grace through faith!