



# What the Bible says about Thanksgiving

In a few days, most of America will gather around dinner tables with friends and family and indulge in a Thanksgiving Day meal. Many of us will overstuff ourselves with turkey, ham, cornbread dressing, cranberry sauce, desserts, and special drinks. A lot of Americans will top off this great meal by sitting down to watch football or just let the television watch us nap. Most will be thankful they do not have to work for the next four days. Others will be thankful for the free meal and good company.

The celebration of Thanksgiving is a wonderful time of year. Any excuse to get together with loved ones is good. At the same time, I want you to know thanksgiving is more than a day off. It is more than eating, watching football, and taking a wonderful turkey-induced nap.

Thanksgiving is a biblical concept. Although it is good to set aside one Thursday each year in November to help bring about a heart of thanksgiving, the Scriptures have more to say about giving thanks than one day a year.

Here are a few things the bible thinks about thanksgiving:

## 1. Thanksgiving is about the Gospel

True thanksgiving must be in proportion to the value of the object for which we give thanks. Therefore, we should be most grateful for God's work for us in Christ Jesus because it unites us to our highest joy, God Himself. Paul writes, "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:4).

Paul never got tired of giving thanks for the grace of God in Jesus's person and work and neither should we. Why? Because God has shown His love for us even when we were enemies of God (Romans 5:8); He called us out of darkness and made us heirs of God (Romans 8:17); Jesus bore the punishment we deserved, and we receive His perfect righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21).

## 2. We show Thanksgiving in All Circumstances

True thanksgiving is shown in all circumstances; not in one big meal once a year. Paul writes, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Giving thanks in all circumstances is especially difficult while undergoing suffering. How can we be thankful when there's something that hurts so much? We can give thanks during suffering because it is meant to enlarge our faith, not as a punishment (2 Corinthians 4:17-18), and because it is redeeming, not accidental.

Our suffering is not a punishment for our sins because Christ has borne our punishment in our place (Romans 3:25). The demands of justice have been met. Our suffering is not accidental because God is sovereign over it, and through it, God is conforming us in the image of His Son (Romans 8:28-29).