

November 23, 2004
Thanksgiving Service

Asked to write a composition entitled, "What I'm thankful for on Thanksgiving," a student wrote, "I am thankful that I'm not a turkey."

I'm Thankful:

For the teen-ager who is complaining about doing dishes because he is at home and not on the streets.

For the taxes that I pay, because it means that I am employed

For the mess to clean up after a party, because it means that I have been surrounded by friends.

For the clothes that fit a little too snug, because it means I have enough to eat.

For my shadow that watches me work, because it means I am out in the sunshine.

For a lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning and need fixing, because it means I have a home.

For all the complaining I hear about the government, because it means that I have freedom of speech.

For the parking spot at the far end of the parking lot, because it means I am capable of walking and that I have been blessed with transportation.

For my huge heating bill, because it means I am warm.

For the lady behind me in church that sings off key, because it means that I can hear.

For weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day, because it means I have been capable of working hard.

For the alarm that goes off in the early morning hours, because it means I am alive.

And finally:

For too much e-mail, because it means I have friends who are thinking of me.

We are thankful for a lot of things: Health, family, the necessities of life, good friends. Many people are thankful for these same things, even those who don't believe in God. That's the point. The question is Who are we thankful to on Thanksgiving Day?

In his book, "Assurances of the Heart," Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. writes:

"It must be an odd feeling to be thankful to nobody in particular. ... (We) often see this odd thing happening on Thanksgiving Day. Everyone ... seems to be thankful 'in general.' It is very strange."

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Maryland public school students are free to thank anyone they want while learning about the 17th century celebration of Thanksgiving— as long as it's not God.

And that is how it should be, administrators say.

Young students across the state read stories about the **Pilgrims** and Native Americans, simulate **Mayflower** voyages, hold mock feasts and learn about the famous meal that temporarily allied two very different groups.

But what teachers don't mention when they describe the feast is that the Pilgrims not only thanked the Native Americans for their peaceful three-day indulgence, but repeatedly thanked God.

And so I find that unbelievers are thankful to nobody in particular on Thanksgiving Day. It's very odd. People are thankful 'in general.' It *is* very strange. We give thanks to the Lord. Why give thanks to the Lord?

1. Because all the good things come from God.
(James 1:17 NLT) "Whatever is good and perfect [NIV - Every good and perfect gift] comes to us from God above ... he never changes ..."
2. Because God is good, kind, merciful and loving.
(1 Chron 16:34 NLT) Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever.
3. Giving thanks is an expression of our faith. It also increases /matures our faith and makes it stronger.
(Luke 17:15-16 NLT) One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, "Praise God, I'm healed!" He fell face down on the ground at Jesus' feet, thanking him for what he had done.
4. For Jesus
(2 Cor 9:15 NLT) Thank God for his Son--a gift too wonderful for words!
5. For victory that He gives us in Christ.
(1 Cor 15:57 NLT) How we thank God, who gives us victory over sin and death through Jesus Christ our Lord!
6. For answered prayer
Col 4:2 (NIV) Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.
7. For what He has done
(1 Chron 16:8 NLT) Give thanks to the LORD and proclaim his greatness. Let the whole world know what he has done.
8. To let others know how wonderful God is
(Ps 111:1-2 NLT) Praise the LORD! I will thank the LORD with all my heart as I meet with his godly people. How amazing are the deeds of the LORD! All who delight in him should ponder them.

9. Because Thanksgiving keeps our mind on Christ and our thoughts on others.
(Eph 5:20 NLT) And you will always give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
(Col 2:7b NLT) Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all he has done.

Thursday and everyday let's remember to Whom we give thanks. We give thanks to The Lord. All the blessing we have are from God and along with our material blessing we also give thanks for Jesus and our salvation and all the promises of God, including the promise of Eternal Life.

When should we give thanks to the Lord? Certainly on Thanksgiving Day, but not just on that day. Col 3:15b (NLT) says, "always be thankful."

Yes, let's remember to give thanks before we eat. Jesus would ask God's blessing on the food before eating. [Luke 9:16 NLT - Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and asked God's blessing on the food.] This is something we should do at every meal not just at Thanksgiving. Certainly let's remember to give thanks to God on Thanksgiving Day. But let us also maintain a spirit of constant gratitude. 1 Thess 5:18 NLT - No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

'Twas The Night Of Thanksgiving

'Twas the night of Thanksgiving, but I just couldn't sleep.
I tried counting backwards, I tried counting sheep.
The leftovers beckoned - the dark meat and white,
But I fought the temptation with all of my might.

Tossing and turning with anticipation,
The thought of a snack became infatuation.
So, I raced to the kitchen, flung open the door
And gazed at the fridge, full of goodies galore.

I gobbled up turkey and buttered potatoes,
Pickles and carrots, beans and tomatoes.
I felt myself swelling so plump and so round,
'Til all of a sudden, I rose off the ground.

I crashed through the ceiling, floating into the sky,
With a mouthful of pudding and a handful of pie.
But, I managed to yell as I soared past the trees....
Happy eating to all, pass the cranberries, please.

May your stuffing be tasty, your turkey be plump.
Your potatoes 'n gravy have nary a lump.
May your yams be delicious, your pies take the prize.
May your Thanksgiving dinner stay off of your thighs.