

The Light - Junior Series
Lesson 105

Giving Thanks to God



2017

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

If YOU have never personally believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior; you have the opportunity to do so right NOW. Simply tell God the Father that you believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, who loved us so much that He came down from heaven and became a man to take our place and pay for the penalty for all the sins of all mankind. Jesus, the Savior died on the Cross for your sins and the sins of the whole world. Then Jesus was buried but He rose again and He is alive today seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. When you make the decision to believe in Jesus in simple faith based on His work on the Cross, you are now a believer and will always be a child of God. When you die, you will spend eternity with Him in Heaven. (Acts 16:31) "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." (John 3:16) "God loved the world so much that He gave is One and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."



LESSON

Thanksgiving is just around the corner, and we'll soon be gathering together with family and friends to celebrate our abundant blessings as individuals and as a nation.



When you think of Thanksgiving, what comes to mind? Football, turkey, grandparents, family, no school...

Thanksgiving is about all of those things but the main purpose of Thanksgiving is to take a break from our busy lives to give thanks to God for who He is and what He has done for us. Really kids, we should be doing that every day, but do we? Not a lot!

Let's begin with just a bit of history regarding the first Thanksgiving, which happened long ago...

The Englishmen (we call them Pilgrims) that came to America in 1620 on the ship, Mayflower, were members of a Puritan sect known as the Separatists or Protestants. They believed that membership in the Church of England disobeyed the biblical teachings for true Christians, and they had to break away and form independent congregations that obeyed God's Word as taught in the Bible. So they journeyed to a new land...America to do that.

The Puritans strongly believed that the Church of England, and the Catholic Church, had strayed way beyond Christ's teachings, and established religious rituals and church rules made by men not God, that went against the teachings of the Bible. They were very brave.

These same Puritans while settling in American gave us our first Thanksgiving Day celebration.



In 1621, the Plymouth colonists (we'll call them Plymouth colonists for this lesson)) and the Wampanoag Indians shared an autumn harvest feast that is better known today as Thanksgiving. It was the first Thanksgiving celebration in the American

colonies and for more than two centuries now, Thanksgiving Day was and is celebrated by all of American colonies and now the states.

Although prayers and thanks were probably offered at the 1621 harvest gathering, the first recorded religious Thanksgiving Day in Plymouth happened two years later in 1623. On that occasion, the colonists gave thanks to God for rain after a two-month drought.

The first Thanksgiving feast lasted three days, and (as accounted by Edward Winslow who was there at the celebration) it was attended by 90 Wampanoag Native Americans and 53 English settlers.



Long before any settlers came to the East Coast of the United States the area was inhabited by these Native American Wampanoag and other tribes, such as the Pemaquid and Patuxet tribes. There were many of them.

The area surrounding the site of the first Thanksgiving, now known as southeastern Massachusetts and eastern

Rhode Island had been the home of the Wampanoag people for many, many years, and had been visited by other European settlers before the arrival of the Mayflower people. So the Native American tribes were used to seeing these foreigners come to their land.

Samoset, a leader of the Pemaquid tribe apparently greeted the English settlers soon after their landing at Plymouth.



On March 22, 1621, Samoset came back with Squanto, the last remaining Patuxet tribesman, who spoke much better English than he did himself. Squanto had been trading with the many other European settlers long before the Plymouth settlers arrived.

Samoset needed Squanto to arrange a meeting with Massasoit, who was the Wampanoag chief. This made for better relationships with the Plymouth colonists and as a result Massasoit became a good friend of the Plymouth colonists and throughout his life maintained peaceful relations with them unlike other tribes.

After settling in the Plymouth colonists gathered anything they could find for survival, including Wampanoag supplies, which were plentiful since the Wampanoag and other tribes knew the land well and had fished, hunted, and harvested there for generations.

After the colonists helped themselves to Wampanoag supplies, there were several meetings between the tribes and the colonists and on March 22, 1621, a formal agreement was made between them. They joined together to protect each other from other warring tribes.



Before that first Thanksgiving feast, the Wampanoag sent some of their own men to hunt deer for the feast and for three days, the colonists and native men, women, and children ate together.

The meal consisted of fish, deer, corn, shellfish, and roasted game meat, far from today's traditional Thanksgiving feast.

During the three day feast together they played ball games, sang, and danced. It was a very friendly gathering.

This peaceful existence between the Native American tribes and the Plymouth colonists lasted for only a generation because after a while the Wampanoag people did not share in the popular respect for the traditional New England Thanksgiving that happened at first celebration. For them, the holiday is a reminder of betrayal and bloodshed that happened to them during the time the colonists settled in that area. It wasn't always friendly and eventually the warring started among them.

Since 1970, instead of joining in the Thanksgiving celebration, many Native American people have gathered at the statue of Massasoit in Plymouth, Massachusetts each Thanksgiving Day to remember their leader and tribesmen.

Just one more note: believe it or not, the Plymouth colonists didn't have silver buckles on their shoes nor did they wear black clothing. Their clothing was actually bright and cheerful. Many pictures of this harvest celebration also show the Native Americans wearing woven blankets on their shoulders and large, feathered headdresses, which is also not true. Also the colonists didn't even call themselves Pilgrims!

There probably was a lot more thankfulness at the original Thanksgiving, seeing that the Wampanoag natives helped the settlers and taught them many ways to survive. **God certainly had a hand in all of that.** I'm sure many of the settlers were extremely thankful to God and in prayer and praise surely told Him that. After all, many of them were Bible students devoted to Jesus Christ.



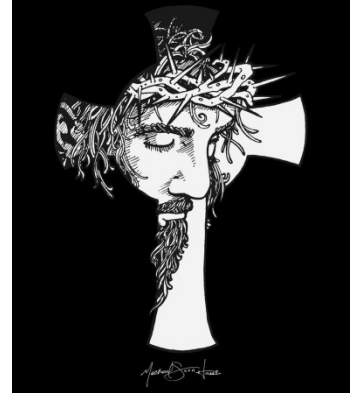
We all need to have gratitude, which means thankfulness. It also means expressing thanks for someone or something.

We show our thanks every Thanksgiving but does it have to be for one day a year only? Absolutely not! We should have an attitude of gratitude or thanksgiving all the time.

Living with an attitude of gratitude means that you live in a way that shows thankfulness to God for everything...both in good and bad circumstances that we face in life.

If we would all take the time to think about it, we have lots of things for which we should be thankful to God like our so great salvation through Jesus Christ for one thing. It should be at the top of our list, right?

The problem is that we take these blessings for granted. We expect a lot of the blessings we have. Imagine if they all disappeared! Oh my! You certainly would be feeling pain in that case. Instead of living with an attitude of gratitude, we forget to give thanks for these blessings.



This is what happens in the Bible story we will read in today's lesson. Let's look at what our Bible teaches us about gratitude or thankfulness in [Luke 17:11-19](#). "While Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing between Samaria and Galilee. (12) As He entered a village, ten men with leprosy who stood at a distance met Him; (13) and they raised their voices, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' (14) When He saw them, He said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they were going, they were cleansed. (15) Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, (16) and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan (people hated by the Jews!). (17) Then Jesus answered and said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine...where are they? (18) Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner? (19) And He said to him, 'Stand up and go; your faith has made you well.'"

Jesus was traveling on his way to Jerusalem when he came across a group of lepers.

Now, leprosy is tough stuff. It is a skin disease that causes the person to have sores all over their body and then as the disease continues the skin peels off and is grossly discolored! The disease would spread all over the body and worsen until eventually the person would be crippled by the pain and irritation. It was a nasty and dreaded disease. Those who had leprosy were outcasts. They were pushed out of their homes, their cities, and they were forced to live with other lepers in colonies away from normal life. Needless to say, being a leper meant a miserable life.

When Jesus came passing by, these lepers knew that He could possibly heal them. Notice they pleaded with Him from a distance because they weren't allowed to go near healthy people.

What did the lepers want Jesus to do? They wanted His mercy.

What do you think they meant by "mercy?" It meant that these ten lepers wanted Jesus to heal them from this disease. They were desperate and probably heard all about Jesus' healings. They wanted to be healed too.

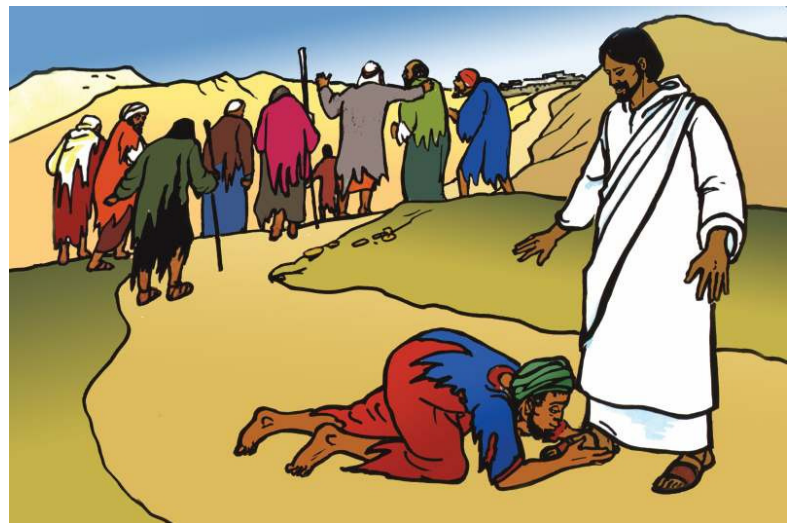
Can you imagine the sight of them after Jesus healed them? They probably were running into town with no more leprosy and being reunited with their friends and family that they haven't seen in years?

Jesus had just spoken the words and they were healed, but let's take a look at how they responded to what Jesus had done for them.

Only one out of ten came back to thank Jesus!!!!!!!

It is very interesting to see from this passage in Luke how many of them and us today are so self-centered that we don't always have thanksgiving in our hearts.

The nine men who Jesus cleansed from the horrible and dreaded disease of Leprosy were not thankful at all. They were so occupied with being relieved and cleansed from that horrible disease that they totally forgot to think of the ONE who cleansed them...JESUS!



How do you think Jesus felt when He saw that only one had returned?

Jesus had healed them and He made a way for them to return to their homes and live a normal life, and yet only one of the ten took the time to say "thank you."

By asking where the other nine were, Jesus shows that He is disappointed by their reaction. However, He was not shocked by it. He knows all things and

knew they would not be thankful yet HE CLEANSED THEM ANYWAY!!! He is our ALL MERCIFUL and GRACIOUS SAVIOR. He LOVES all of us no matter how much we fail.

Our bottom line for today is this: because of all that God has done for us, we should respond with an attitude of gratitude for EVERYTHING good or bad that happens to us EVERY SINGLE DAY!

The one healed man that returned is a great example of living with an "attitude of gratitude."

He realized IMMEDIATELY what Jesus had done for him, he stopped everything that he was doing and he returned to give thanks to Jesus. He fell at Jesus' feet, kissed them and 'with a loud voice,' began to express his thankfulness through praise. He was thankful because the God-man Jesus had changed his life.

God has done so much for us, too. He loves us, provides for us, protects us, guides us, and gets us through our troubles. And most importantly, He sent His Son to die on the cross for us, take our place and pay the penalty of our sins so we can live with Him forever! WOW!



We know that God has done these things, but we often forget to express our thanks. We need to remember that God deserves ALL of our gratitude.

Because of all that our heavenly Father has done for us, we should respond with an attitude of gratitude every day. Start the day with thanksgiving and then take the time throughout the day to thank Him for your food, when he protects you, guides you, or simply reminds you of His love.

Also thank God for giving us wisdom from His Word, the mind of Jesus Christ.

Here are some wonderful passages in the Word that teach us about being thankful:

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

Psalms 100:1-5 "Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. (2) Serve the LORD with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing. (3) Know that the LORD himself is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; (we are) His people and the sheep of His pasture. (4) Enter His gates **with thanksgiving**, (and into) His courts with praise. **Give thanks to Him**; bless His name. (5) For the LORD is good; His grace is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations."

1 Thess 5:18 "...**in everything give thanks**; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

2 Thess 1:3 "We ought always to **give thanks to God** for you, brethren, as is (only) fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows (ever) greater..."

Heb 13:15-16 "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that **give thanks to His name**. (16) And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased."



Give thanks, kids for in 1 John 4:4, "Greater is He that is in you than he (the devil) that is in the world."

Close in prayer

