

**TELECAST SERMON FOR
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2022 (THANKSGIVING)
"A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING"
HEAD PASTOR BILLY HAN, JR.**

Thank you, Melvin!

Life is so full of problems, that many people in the world today put their personal concerns ahead of Jesus. In spite of the message delivered in the song, "Put Jesus First in Your Life," most often we tend to put Jesus second, third, or even lower on our list of priorities.

For many it is a difficult decision to choose to be faithful to the Lord or to the world, even though we know what the correct choice should be. Perhaps if we learn a little more about the Lord through sermons like the one I have entitled, "**A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**," the decision to choose the Lord will be a whole lot easier.

This Thanksgiving will find most of us in warm fellowship with loved ones and friends, gathered around a table filled with delectable dishes of every kind. As a result of indulging ourselves with all that food, we will more than likely end up far more stuffed than the turkey ever was, vowing never to eat again.

We read Proverbs 23:2, "And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite."

In other words, one will ruin himself if he over eats, but then aren't we all guilty of that, when Thanksgiving or any other holiday rolls around? However, isn't it wonderful to have our families together on these wonderful occasions?

We read in Psalms 128:3, "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table."

The family that prays and does things together will always come out the winner. After all, that's what families all about, being in one mind, one heart, and in one accord. For in unity there is strength and victory!

Many today have forgotten what Thanksgiving really means--many are thankful in terms of material blessings only. But what value would material blessings be, without the love of God, the love of family and friends, or without the freedom to enjoy them.

And today many say to God, "Thank you Lord, but we no longer need you, as we have everything."

We read of a remark made by Moses in Deut. 8:17-18, "And thou say in thine heart, my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day."

To the true born again Christian, who believes and knows the truth, Thanksgiving is not only one day out of a year, but everyday. Many think and believe that Thanksgiving originated in 1621 with the Pilgrims of New England, who gave thanks to God for their survival and for all the blessings received, materially and spiritually.

However, the first National Thanksgiving, to be celebrated annually by a nation, was in all probability that, which was instituted by Moses for the "Children of Israel" about the year 1491 B.C. and observed by them 40 years later.

Israel's National Thanksgiving Day was much like ours, in that it was held at the close of harvest, its main objective being to give thanks to God for the harvest. It was a time of feasting, offering gifts to God, and giving alms to the poor.

It was called the "Day of Pentecost" because it came just 50 days after the beginning of harvesting, and the word, Pentecost, means fifty.

We read in Lev. 23:15-16, "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete; Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord."

This feast of Pentecost took place exactly 50 days following the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, this feast spoke especially of the coming of the Holy Spirit, as described in Acts 2:1-4, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled (i.e. 120) with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Speaking in tongues is the only evidence cited in the Bible, which verifies one has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The first Church was formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

We read in I Cor. 12:12-14, that the Spiritual Church is One, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."

Thus, we have a Biblical account of Thanksgiving, the kind that is pleasing in the sight of God.

According to "God's Word," we find that Thanksgiving signifies both, the expressing of gratitude by acknowledging and confessing with gladness and praise, the benefits and

mercies, which God has bestowed either upon us or others, and also the giving of alms and offerings, as a thanks-offering for blessings received. We read Psalms 68:19, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah."

In Palestine during the time of Christ, the day of Pentecost or Israel's National Thanksgiving Day came just 50 days after the gathering of the firstfruits, (the first sheaf of the resurrection harvest, symbolizes Christ being the firstfruit).

Paul tells us in I Cor. 15:23, "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward "they" that are Christ's at his coming." "They" refers to those who have been truly born again of water and of the Spirit. We believe and practice water baptism by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ.

Viewers, if you were to ask your friends, "How do I get to heaven?" You would probably receive as many answers as the number of friends you questioned.

Someone might suggest that you follow traditions and rituals and even keep the Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments, in order to get there. Someone else might say that you need to live a good life; others might advise you to pray, give to the church and poor or "do the best you can."

But when you are dealing with something as important as eternal life, you need more than just the opinions of friends and loved ones. You need the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth! Jesus is the only way, as He tells us in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the father but by me."

Yes, narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Of course, there is a way that many think is the right way. False religions, cults, etc., not in accordance with the Word of God, are ways, for example, which may seem right, but which lead to death.

Those who take part in such religions may even seem joyful, but in reality their hearts are heavy and full of grief. Proverbs tells us in Chapter 14, verse 12, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Let us read John 3:3, which reveals the new birth, made known to Nicodemus, and now to you in my TV audience, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Jesus made it clear and plain that even those, who lived most uprightly, like Nicodemus, who was a very religious Jew, were required to be born again. With the naked eye, one can see anything, but to see or even enter the Kingdom of God, one must be born again. "Born again?" That may sound strange to you. What does it mean?

We read in John 3:5, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

And when God says you cannot, that's what he means. To be born of water means to be baptized in water and in the name of Jesus Christ, according to Acts 2:38, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Peter made no mistake, for God blessed his ministry with about 3000 souls who gladly received his words and were baptized. A few days' later 5000 souls were added to the body of Christ.

Just imagine, the Lord removes one's sins, as far as the east is from the west and remembers them no more; when God forgives, He forgets, plus He gives you the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit, which is one's passport to heaven.

Naturally, there is a question in the minds of many, regarding the Scripture in Matt. 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost are merely titles, not names.

This mode of baptism was not known or practiced until the second and third centuries. At the beginning it was not so; souls were all baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, after all, Acts 4:12 confirms, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

When we use the only formula for baptism, Acts 2:38, we are fulfilling Matt. 28:19, by using the name, not names or titles.

Titles cannot save anyone, but the name Jesus can and will! In the past, God had many names and titles, but in this present grace dispensation, the only redemptive name is Jesus! Jesus is the only Saviour for this lost and dying world. It is a fact that the Holy Ghost was given on Thanksgiving Day. What a wonderful and great Thanksgiving Day gift! We read of Paul's remark in II Cor. 9:15, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." Because Thanksgiving Day is associated with harvest, it is a reminder of one of God's great and blessed promises.

We read in Gen. 8:22, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

Thus, the first Thanksgiving Day after the resurrection of our Lord on the Day of Pentecost, which was the first Thanksgiving Day of the New Testament Church, was the fulfillment of God's great promise, which He had pledged to Abraham.

We read in Gen. 15:1, "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

Here, God promised Himself to Abraham; this promise was to be fulfilled in Abraham's children, both according to flesh and according to faith. We read Gal. 3:7, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."

And those who believe are also of Abraham's Spiritual seed and therefore, are "Spiritual Israelites." And regarding God's promise of giving Himself to Abraham, Paul tells us that it was the promise of the Holy Ghost. We read Gal. 3:14, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

We read in John 4:23-24 when Jesus said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

There is only one Divine Spirit, which is the Holy Ghost. Paul confirms this in I Cor. 12:3, "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

Therefore, the Holy Ghost is God the Father, Himself, and the promise of the Father is the promise of the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Ghost was the Father of Jesus, according to Matt. 1:18 & 20, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."

But while He thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

And the Holy Ghost was also the Spirit of Jesus. That is why Jesus could say in John 10:30, "I and my father are one."

We read in II Cor. 3:17, "Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Thus, we see in Acts 2:1-4, as we have read, the fulfillment of God's greatest gift on Thanksgiving Day. Yes, we have to thank God for the bountiful blessings and harvest.

King David delivered his psalm of thanksgiving as found in I Chron. 16:8 & 29, "Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon His name, make known His deeds among the people. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering and come before Him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

In Psalm 103:2, we are reminded daily to remember God's benefits, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

We should enumerate the significant benefits we receive from the Lord, such as salvation, the promise of eternal life, the gift of the Holy Ghost, physical healing for the body and soul, and all manner or form of material and spiritual blessings.

Yes, it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord and sing praises unto His name for the benefits received. We make a joyful noise unto the Lord by clapping our hands and shouting unto God with the voice of triumph!

We read Psalm 100:1-5, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands (making a joyful noise is one of the great doxologies or praises to God of the Bible.) Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing, (Serving the Lord willingly and with all one's heart and soul is what God requires, there is no place in the Lord's work for gloomy Christians to abide.)

Know ye that the Lord, He is God, it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving (God tells us blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors,) and into His courts with praise; be thankful unto Him and bless His name. For the Lord is good: His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations."

Therefore, let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!

The Lord wants to breathe upon every soul today, the breath being the very same Holy Ghost, given on the Day of Pentecost, which was Thanksgiving Day and first day of the week, which brings us to the word: "sabbath."

We read in Matt. 11:28-30, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (this gracious invitation of our Lord Jesus was intended to reach out beyond Israel to all those sin-sick and burdened, irregardless of their creed, color or nationality, for God is no respecter of persons; He looks at the heart.) Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Thus, we find the seventh day was the day on which God rested after the creation, and which He made known to the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai.

The Sabbath was for a sign upon Israel, as was circumcision, to distinguish them as God's peculiar people--the first was a spiritual sign and the second a physical sign.

At this special time of year, let us be generous. Many people think only of money when one preaches on generosity. But generosity includes more than just monetary gifts.

What is generosity? It is the act of doing more than is expected of you. When you do only that which is expected, you have done nothing.

When you do more, you have been generous. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." However, this works both ways; in order to receive you must give.

We read Luke 6:38, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

Take the apostle Paul, as an example. Initially, he had been a Pharisee, caring for no one, but himself and his own beliefs. One day Jesus met him on a dusty road in Damascus. Following the encounter, Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ was baptized by immersion in water. I'm sure, that he would not have baptized the disciples of John the Baptist in any other way, than that, cited in Acts 2:38.

Paul preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to all classes of people. On one occasion he was stoned and left for dead. However, he was able to return to minister to the very ones, who rejected him. Thus, this was, indeed, an act of generosity. He was abundantly generous and big hearted, so that he would do anything necessary to win souls to Christ.

Like Jesus, Paul generously gave of himself to others. He had the spirit of concernment for the poor, the broken hearted, and the captives, and the desire to set at liberty them, who were bruised.

A certain man went down to Jericho. Unfortunately, he fell among thieves and was wounded and robbed.

A Levite and a Priest passed him by, but a good "Samaritan" saved the man's life, took care of him, and had compassion upon him. Isn't this just like Jesus?

The Samaritan was supposed to be a man, who had no dealings with Jews. However, he showed his generosity by his loving attitude toward the wounded man. The Samaritan put aside all hatred and generously gave himself to a man, considered his natural enemy. He had the right spirit of generosity and involvement. Many today do not like to get involved in anything.

A person can be in the midst of being murdered, robbed, mugged, or raped; yet many will pass by and fail to call the emergency number 911 for help, just as the Levite and Priest, preferring not to get involved.

We look at Jesus by contrast. He looked with love upon the Jew and Gentile, the rich and the poor, and the bond and free.

If you and I wish to follow Jesus, we must bear the mark of generosity. To whom are we to be generous? Sometimes we are most ungenerous to the ones we love the dearest. Thus, charity begins at home.

Thus, on this Thanksgiving Day we should thank God for the brilliant sun that shines. Thanksgiving is an empty word, unless related and directed to God, the most generous giver in the universe.

Are any of the following our own doing? Life, food, clothing, housing, salvation through the name of Jesus, and a host of other wonderful things. It is delightful and right as we read in Psalms 147:1, "Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely."

Remember, viewers, that life must be sustained, it does not just happen. Our deepest reason for thanks comes when we accepted Jesus as Saviour and took on His precious name in water baptism. Therefore, we should be willing to forgive others, as Jesus forgave us.

Jesus pronounced judgment upon the debtor who was forgiven so much but was unwilling to forgive the one who owed so little. This person lacked gratitude.

Jesus also found a low percentage of gratitude when He cured ten lepers, only one returned with genuine gratitude.

How can we understand the abundance that we enjoy? Is there a way to measure the blessings that God has given us? Some way to understand why we have been so blessed?

The things that first come to mind are usually those we can taste, and touch, the house we own, the food on the table, the clothes we wear, all the material goods that we enjoy.

These are easy to measure because we can assign a dollar value to each of them. But if our thanks stops here, it is shallow indeed. For what value would material blessings be without the love of family and friends, or without freedom to enjoy them. These are more difficult to measure because they are intangible.

Therefore, it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord on this Thanksgiving Day and every day of the year.

If you would like to know more about God's Word, the Church, and review these telecast presentations in its entirety, please visit our website at Jesuscomingsoon.org

Until our next telecast, this is your host, Pastor Billy Han, Jr., expressing my sincerest appreciation to each of you, who have allowed us to come into your homes. May the good Lord bless and keep you all in the hollow of His hands.

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