

Thanksgiving With Christ

Tomorrow, October 10, marks Thanksgiving in Canada. In recognition of this national holiday, many schools and businesses are closed to the delight of millions of students and employees.

Thanksgiving, like the word suggests, should prompt us to reflect on what we are thankful for. Our salvation; our Church; our families; our jobs; our health. There are many things that we are thankful to the Lord for.

As I prayed regarding what message to preach this morning, a clear theme emerged. What was *Christ* thankful for in His life? What marked His thanksgiving?

The title of my message is simply, *Enjoying every Thanksgiving with Christ.* How can we celebrate and enjoy the day of Thanksgiving in a way that glorifies Christ? I would like to set before you three things that marked the Savior's thanksgiving and therefore should mark our thanksgiving.

1. Thanksgiving with Christ is marked by rejoicing.

We read in Luke 10:21, “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I **thank** thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: *even so*, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

The very same profound words were uttered by our Lord on a former similar occasion in Matthew 11:25, “At that time Jesus answered and said, I **thank** thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

In Matthew’s account (1) we are merely told that He “answered and said” thus; here, in Luke He “*rejoiced in spirit* and said,” &c. (2) In Matthew it was merely “at that time”(or season) that He spoke thus, meaning with a general reference to the rejection of His gospel by the self-sufficient; in Luke, “*In that hour* Jesus said,” with express reference probably to the humble class from which He had to draw the Seventy, and the similar class that had chiefly welcomed their message.

If you go back to verse 17 in Luke chapter 10, the seventy disciples had been sent out to announce that Jesus was coming to towns and villages where He would be visiting and to preach the gospel of the Kingdom, forgiveness of sin, and salvation.

And when they came back the disciples (36 teams of two) said, "With joy...verse 17...the demons are subject to us in Your name."

They came back rejoicing. They came back so joyful because they literally went out with a message that invaded the kingdom of darkness, broke the hold of demons and unclean spirits and set the captives free.

They rejoiced at that. They rejoiced that the power of the gospel was still operative and it could still invade the kingdom of darkness and set the prisoners free.

They were rejoicing.

John MacArthur writes, "And Jesus said to them in verse 20, "Do not rejoice in this." He doesn't mean don't rejoice in this at all.

He is saying don't rejoice in this only, there's something better, rejoice not that the spirits are subject to you but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven. Don't tie your joy to this earth. Don't even tie your joy to evangelistic success. Don't even tie your joy to the conversion of someone else because there's going to be times when that's not going to happen and people aren't going to respond. Tie your joy to the eternal realities.”

Some Bible Commentators think the word translated "rejoice" is too weak a word. It should be "exulted in spirit"--evidently giving visible expression to His unusual emotions; while, at the same time, the words "in spirit" are meant to convey to the reader the *depth* of them. This is one of those rare cases in which the veil is lifted from off the Redeemer's inner man and we can behold the pure joy in the Lord's heart.

You know what gave Christ joy? What was happening pleased the Father. It pleased the Father that He hid it from some and revealed it to others. Our Lord's favorite truth that He was most thankful for was the sovereignty of God.

Arthur W. Pink writes, “A consciousness of our powerlessness should cast us upon Him who has all power. Here then is where a vision and view of God's sovereignty helps, for it reveals His sufficiency and shows us our insufficiency.

Divine sovereignty is not the sovereignty of a tyrannical Despot, but the exercised pleasure of One who is infinitely wise and good! Because God is infinitely wise He cannot err, and because He is infinitely righteous He will not do wrong. Here then is the preciousness of this truth. The mere fact itself that God's will is irresistible and irreversible fills me with fear, but once I realize that God wills only that which is good, my heart is made to rejoice.”

In spite of all the rejection, in spite of all the pain and suffering and sadness and sorrow, in spite of the tears wept at the grave of Lazarus and tears wept over the city of Jerusalem and agonizing grief over the condition of humanity and the horrors of hell, Christ rejoiced gratefully because what was going on reflected the Father's intention, the Father's purpose, the Father's good pleasure.

Here He's praising His Father, "O Father," there's joy in the "O" there's joy in the "Yes, Father....Yes, Father, it is well pleasing in Your sight, I affirm it, I praise You. This is the way You intended it."

Now He identifies His Father so nobody would mistake it as "Lord of heaven and earth." A Bible commentator writes, "That simple little phrase was completely Jewish, a traditional Jewish expression, the single supreme and only God of the universe is the true and living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Creator God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is no other God.

And He joyfully praises His Father who is the sovereign of the universe, Lord means sovereign, who is in charge of everything in the heaven and the earth. That is to say He's in charge of all of it and He is doing whatever is well-pleasing in His sight.

The Bible talks a lot about God's joy. Psalm 4:7 says that God has put gladness in my heart.

The joy that I experience is a reflection of the joy of God. Psalm 16:11 says, "In Your presence is fullness of joy." Wherever God is, in His presence joy is complete.

The same Psalm says that the right hand of God are pleasures forever more. If you were to go right now into the very throne room of heaven, you would find the place is dominated by joy. It is a celebration beyond comprehension. It is pleasure and delight and fullness of joy.

Listen to the benediction of Jude, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless and with great joy."

Jesus when He prayed for us, John 17, His high priestly prayer, prayed that we would have His joy made complete in us.

God seeks your joy because your eternal joy contributes to His eternal joy.

A theologian writes, "His joy is consummate when He has brought to fruition and to glory all the redeemed humanity whom He determined to save before time began.

When the plan of redemption is finished and all His attributes have been put on display, mercy, grace as well as justice and judgment, blessing as well as wrath, when everything has been displayed and He has gathered around Him all who belong in His presence, holy angels and redeemed humanity, His joy is complete and we enter in to that joy.

He has fully displayed the spectrum of His attributes which He never could have done without fall and without sin and without redemption and without judgment, it's been all disclosed and we will forever rejoice in Him, sharing His joy.”

The Father is eternally joyful, the Son is eternally joyful, the Spirit is eternally joyful and we'll enter their joy. Heaven is just the place of pure joy, pure delight where nothing, nothing disappoints, nothing diminishes joy. It is unspeakable joy because this is God, this often overlooked reality, the joy of God, is revealed in the beauty of this text. I'm so glad for this text. We see it here in the God/Man, He rejoiced greatly.

Let us be thankful for the joy of the Lord, and the sovereign work of God in our salvation.

Thanksgiving with Christ is marked by rejoicing.

2. Thanksgiving with Christ is marked by giving.

Matthew 15:36

And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave **thanks**, and brake them, and *gave* to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

John 6:11

And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given **thanks**, he *distributed* to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

Sharing is loving.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son....”

The boy stepped up to one of the disciples, Andrew and said, “Excuse me sir, I know that Jesus must be hungry, and I’d like to give Him my lunch. It is only a little lunch, but I want Jesus to have it. May I give it to Him?”

Andrew smiled and led the boy to Jesus. “Master, here is a boy who has five small pieces of bread and two small fishes. He wanted You to have this lunch, but what good is that with all this crowd of people?”

Jesus looked at this young boy and asked, “Son, are you willing to give Me your lunch?”

“Oh yes, it is yours,” replied the kind boy. “It’s not much, but I want you to have it all,” he said as he gave it to Jesus.

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)

“God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)

“Make the people sit down on the grass in groups of fifty and hundred,” instructed Jesus to his disciples.

Jesus wanted to easily distribute the food to the people.

“Sit down! Sit down, everybody! Sit down in groups of fifty or one hundred,” the disciples shouted, moving out among the crowd.

“Why? What’s the matter?” the people asked.

“You’ll see. Let’s just do what Jesus says!”

Then Jesus took the boy’s lunch; He prayed and thanked His Father for the five pieces of bread and the two fishes.

We read in Ephesians 5:20, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Jesus set a wonderful example for us-showing us that we should always thank God for our food, (all temporal blessings) no matter where we are or how much we have.

Jesus then began to break the bread and the fishes into pieces and to give them to His disciples to distribute among the people. The mysterious thing was that no matter how much food He broke off, there was always more food left!

The boy was seeing a miracle take place right before his own eyes! He'd go home later and surely tell his mother about the miracle Jesus did with that little lunch she packed for him! This would be something he would never forget!

Soon all the disciples were carrying food to the people as fast as they could walk up and down the hillside. Time and again they came back for more, and there was always more bread and fish waiting for them as it came from the hands of the Lord Jesus.

The boy, the disciples, and the people looked on in astonishment and amazement. This was indeed the God Who had made the world. It was easy for Him to feed thousands of people with five little pieces of bread and two small fish. All He needed was someone who was willing to give what he had.

Everyone ate until they could eat no more. Never had the boy had so much to eat. He had far, far more than he would have had if he had eaten his lunch by himself.

"I was just a child," related a retired Baptist preacher, "when one spring day my father called me to go with him to old man Russell's blacksmith shop. He had left a rake and a hoe to be repaired and they were ready, fixed like new. Father handed over a silver dollar for repairing them but Mr. Russell refused to take it. 'No,' he said, 'there's no charge for that little job.' But father insisted. And if I live a thousand years," said the preacher, "I'll never forget that great blacksmith's reply. 'Sid,' he said to my father, 'Can't you let a man do somethin' just to stretch his soul?'"

If you haven't got any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble.

Thanksgiving with Christ is marked by giving.

3. Thanksgiving with Christ is marked by suffering.

[Matthew 26:26-27](#)

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and **blessed it**, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body And he took the cup, and gave **thanks**, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.”

As they were eating the paschal supper, near the close of the Passover meal. Luke adds, that he said, just before instituting the sacramental Supper, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." This is a Hebrew manner of expression, signifying, I have greatly desired.

Hebrews 12:2, “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

And blessed it. Or sought a blessing on it; or gave thanks to God for it. The word rendered blessed means, to give thanks. It is also to be remarked, that some manuscripts have the word rendered gave thanks, instead of the one translated blessed.

It appears from the writings of some historians that the Jews were never accustomed to eat without giving thanks to God, and seeking his blessing. This was especially the case in both the bread and the wine used at the passover.

And brake it. This breaking of the bread represented the sufferings of Jesus about to take place--his body broken or wounded for sin. Hence Paul 1Co 11:24 adds, "This is my body, which is broken for you." That is, which is about to be broken for you by death, or wounded, pierced, bruised, to make atonement for your sins.

This is my body. This represents my body. This broken bread shows the manner in which my body will be broken; or this will serve to call my dying sufferings to your remembrance.

Albert Barnes writes, "The meaning of this important passage may be thus expressed: "As I give this broken bread to you, to eat, so will I deliver my body to be afflicted and slain for your sins."

The Apostle Paul writes in Galatians 6:14, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

That I should glory. That I should boast; or that I should rely on anything else. Others glory in their conformity to a set of moral rules; others in their zeal, or their talents, or their learning, or their orthodoxy; others in their wealth, or their accomplishments; others in their family alliances, and their birth; but the supreme boast and glorying of a Christian is in the cross of Christ.

The Cross is a subject of rejoicing and glorying that we have such a Saviour. The world looked upon him with contempt; and the cross was a stumbling-block to the Jew, and folly to the Greek. But to the Christian, that cross is the subject of glorying. It is so because of the fact that it procured for us admission into heaven, a title to the world of glory.

All is glory around the cross. It was a glorious Saviour who died; it was glorious love that led him to die; it was a glorious object to redeem a world; and it is unspeakable glory to which he will raise lost and ruined sinners by his death. Oh, who would not glory in such a Saviour!

Let us not glory in our strength, for it will soon fail; in our beauty, for we shall soon corrupt in the grave; in our accomplishments, for they will not save us; in our learning, for it is not that by which we can be brought to heaven.

But let us glory in the Cross of Jesus Christ. The Savior of the world who made the worlds; who is pure, and lovely, and most holy; and who has undertaken our cause, and died to save us.

Thanksgiving with Christ is marked by suffering.

In closing, what was Christ thankful for in His life? What marked His thanksgiving? Thanksgiving with Christ is marked by rejoicing; it is marked by giving; and it is marked by suffering. Let us celebrate Thanksgiving tomorrow with our eyes looking to “Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” Let us pray.