

Luke 12:13-21 ESV

Is This Your Pattern?

From God ➡ To Us ➡ To God and Others

Wednesday, November 25 at 7 PM

Thanksgiving Eve (Harvest Observance) – 2015

Wednesdays in Advent (12/2, 12/9, 12/16)

Worship Services at 11 & 7; **Free Meals** at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Jesus Christ: When we see **God** as the Generous Giver and **us** as the undeserving receivers; *then we are on the path of thanksgiving*. Since God owns everything, *He is the only True Giver*. Since we are sinners, *we deserve nothing good*. The more we comprehend such things, the more we will express our thanksgiving ➡ to God *in our giving* and ➡ to others *in our sharing*.

In tonight's Old Testament reading (Deut. 26:1-11) we heard God's instruction for the OT believers:

- ➡ They were to **recognize** the good land in which they were living as a gift from the LORD; *let us do the same!*
- ➡ They were to **show** their trust in the LORD by taking from the *first* of the land and *giving* it to the LORD; *let us also give to Him from the first of what we receive!*
- ➡ They were to **rejoice** in all the blessings the LORD had given them; *let us do the same!*

In tonight's epistle reading (2 Cor. 9:6-15) we heard about the connection between *giving* and *thanking*; they go together. Since God is *so good to us*, let us be *generous in our thanking* by being *generous in our giving!*

Let's benefit from tonight's gospel reading by understanding it and applying it to our lives.

1. **Misplaced Expectations:** ¹³ **Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus], "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."** ¹⁴ **But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?"** // Jesus was a leader, *people followed Him*. He came to seek and to save the lost, *to live and die to remove all sins*. However, He did *not* come to divide that man's inheritance. So let us have expectations that agree with God's Holy Word.
2. **Warning About Greed:** ¹⁵ **And he said to them [to the man who asked the question and to the whole crowd], "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness [a greedy, sinful desire for possessions], for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."** // We all have an inclination to sin, *to want more and more for ourselves*. But Jesus wants us – *as believers* – to see the big picture: life on earth now, life in heaven forever! In that big picture: **Most important** is our relationship with God; **then** our relationship with others. Since God is our heavenly Father we have no reason to focus on our possessions; *He will provide whatever we need!*
3. **Lessons About Thanksgiving:**
 - a. ¹⁶ **And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully [like in America, the rich get richer], ¹⁷ **and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?'** // The man had just received a blessing –**

an abundant harvest, yet †he did *not* acknowledge the Lord as the Giver, †he did *not* thank the Lord for the abundant harvest by giving, and †he did *not* think about sharing his abundance with others 😊. Let us be the *opposite* unto God's glory!

- b. ¹⁸ **And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.'** // The man's life and goods were from God – *the only True Giver*, yet he had no acknowledgment of God in his life. Instead, he made *his plans* to deal with *his stuff* for *his benefit*. Though we all face such temptations, let us ever *recognize* God's hand of blessing and *express* our thanks.
- c. ¹⁹ **'And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'** // **If** we were the true masters of our lives, then such thinking would be logical. **But** James wrote: "...you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away" (James 4:14 NAS). God is the One who †begins our lives, †sustains our lives, and †knows the end of our lives; so let us always *trust* in Him; then let us *thank and praise, serve and obey* Him!
- d. ²⁰ **But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'** ²¹ **So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich**

toward God.” // Jesus also said: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:19-21 NAS).

Conclusion: Having a lot of stuff sounds nice *but if Christ is not at the center of our lives, life will be hollow now and sad forever.* Therefore, let us ✨see God as the only True Giver, ✨express our thanks with our giving, and ✨share with those who are in need. And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

Thanksgiving Meal Prayer (LSB 163, Adoration, Praise, and Supplication): Almighty and eternal God, we adore You as the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus, and with the whole Church on earth and all the hosts of heaven we ascribe to You honor and blessing, thanksgiving and praise. Holy, holy, holy are You, Lord God Almighty; heaven and earth are full of Your glory. You created us in Your own image and redeemed us with the precious blood of Your Son. By Your Spirit You sanctified us and called us out of darkness into Your marvelous light. Grant that we may with thankful hearts receive these great mercies and express our gratitude, not only with our lips but also in our lives as we give ourselves to Your service and walk before You in holiness and righteousness all our days. Deliver us from sin and error, from the frailties of the flesh, the allurements of this present age, and the temptations of the devil. Give us faith that works in love, hope that never disappoints, kindness that never fails, confidence in You that never wavers, patience that does not grow weary, and courage always to be ready to confess Christ, that we may live in Your mercy and die in Your peace; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen!