



Wednesday, 11/25 at 7 PM

Thanksgiving Eve – 2020

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: It's the eve of our national day of Thanksgiving; therefore, tonight, I want to address a number of *key aspects of Thanksgiving*:

1. **American Thanksgiving – History:** The roots of our American Thanksgiving date back to 1621, *when the pilgrims, after their first harvest, celebrated the first Thanksgiving*. At that time and in the years to follow, *“the New England colonists were accustomed to regular ‘thanksgiving,’ celebrations [meaning] days of feasting and of prayer thanking God for blessings such as military victory or the end of a drought.”*¹
2. **American Thanksgiving – Today:** Wikipedia notes that *“the centerpiece of Thanksgiving celebrations remains Thanksgiving dinner. The dinner traditionally consists of foods and dishes indigenous to the Americas [thus homegrown], namely turkey, potatoes, stuffing, squash,*

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanksgiving_\(United_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanksgiving_(United_States))

corn, green beans, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie. Thanksgiving is regarded as the beginning of the fall–winter holiday season...”²

3. **The Term: Thanksgiving:** The term, **thanksgiving**, is basically taking the phrase, **giving thanks**, and making it into a single word: **thanksgiving**. Therefore, *right now*, rather than talk about **thanksgiving**, let’s talk about **giving thanks**! What can be said about giving thanks? Here are *three essential elements* included in **giving thanks**:

- a. First, we **must identify** something good that we have been given – *like food or Jesus!*
- b. Second, we **must figure out** who gave us that thing – *like our Father in heaven!*
- c. Third, we **must express** our thanks to the giver – *by trusting, praising, serving, and obeying God!*

4. **American Thanksgiving – Analysis:**

- a. If we **fail** to identify the good, **or fail** to figure out who gave it, **or fail** to express our thanks; then our **thanksgiving** or **giving thanks** has been unsuccessful 😞.
- b. Let’s go back to what I noted above about an American Thanksgiving today: According to Wikipedia, the center piece is the meal; the day also marks the beginning of the fall-winter holiday season. However, what is missing? *All three of the essential elements!* Isn’t that so sad? Even though many in America on Thanksgiving Day will ✓gather with others, ✓eat

² Ibid.

food, and ✓ watch football or go shopping, *many will do so WITHOUT GIVING THANKS!* Let's see what the Bible says; then let us ☞ give thanks and ☞ encourage others to do the same!

5. **Our Thanksgiving Text – 1 Timothy 2:1-4:** ¹ **First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³ This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

a. How is calling us to pray for others?

- i. **Supplications** (δεήσεις): That is how we speak to God when *the need is serious or urgent*. For example, the angel said to Zechariah, “...your prayer [supplication] has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John” (Luke 1:13 ESV).
- ii. **Prayers** (προσευχάς): That is the *standard word* for requesting help from God. We ask things of God *because we trust in Him as our LORD and Savior!* Jesus said: “...whatever you ask in prayer [προσευχῆ], you will receive, if you have faith” (Matt. 21:22 ESV).
- iii. **Intercessions** (ἐντεύξεις): That is when we *go to God on behalf of another person*. Paul wrote: “...everything created by God is good... for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer [ἐντεύξεως]” (1 Tim. 4:4-5 ESV).

- iv. **Thanksgivings** (εὐχαριστίας): That is the *attitude of gratitude* and the *action of expressing thanks*. Jesus gave thanks to the Father: “...he took a cup, and when he had given thanks [εὐχαριστήσας] [to the Father] he gave it to them...” (Mk. 14:23 ESV).
- b. Who should be included in our prayers? All people, *including federal, state, and local leaders*. **Prayer:** Lutheran Book of Prayer, For All Leaders of Nations (1970 edition, page 95).
- c. What is the purpose of our prayers? Asking God for a *nation* and a *world* in which Christians can live peaceful, quiet, godly, and dignified lives – so that ✓ God is honored, ✓ the gospel may freely go forth, and ✓ all people might be saved and grow up in God’s Word of truth!

Conclusion: God is good, we all have our basic temporal needs and more – *SO LET US GIVE HIM THANKS!* But our greatest blessings are eternal; God desired for us to be saved from our sins – *THEN HE DID IT THROUGH JESUS!* Even now many are ignoring God; **NEVERTHELESS**, God still provides for them and desires for them to be saved!

Let Us Pray: Father in heaven, as we *gather with, or communicate with* family and friends on Thanksgiving, embolden us to ➡ talk about the meaning of the term, ➡ express our thanks to You, and ➡ testify to others about the peace and assurance we have through Jesus!