**Giving Thanks – By Thailer Jimerson**

A few weeks ago, I wrote an article on Hallowe’en after the fact. Why ruin a good thing? So, here’s a few thoughts on Thanksgiving – after the fact.

Thanksgiving is a time for gathering together with family to consume mass quantities of food. (We say it’s about the family but it’s really about the food, isn’t it?)

There is so much the Bible teaches about thanksgiving and how it is to be a major part of our lives. Jesus exemplified a spirit of thanksgiving when He give thanks over every meal. And we want to be like Jesus. The Father has determined that He would be glorified for the great Giver that He is – when His children possess sincerely thankful hearts and it overflows in praise to His name.

A great question to just pause and ask would be, *“What gifts have I received today that I should glorify God by, through thanksgiving?”*

Consider what Paul says in **1 Timothy 4.1-5**, “Now the Spirit explicitly says that in the last times some will depart from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, by the hypocrisy of liars, who are seared in their own conscience, who forbid marrying and insist on abstaining from foods that God created for sharing in with thankfulness by those who believe and who know the truth, because everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is\* received with thankfulness, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.” (LEB)

**Now, contextually, what are these false teachings?** *Forbidding marriage and abstinence from food*.

Paul’s telling Timothy that there are going to be these teachers that are going to *add* to God’s word and say that these physical pleasures (marriage, food) are sinful. And we know throughout history there have been false religious teachers from then to today that say these physical pleasures are sinful. Specifically, in Timothy’s day, there would come teachers referred to as Gnostics that claim a demon created the physical world and so everything physical is sinful. There are false religious bodies today that command abstinence from perfectly lawful marriage and eating of various foods that God has cleansed for His people to enjoy. The only thing that is condemned in these physical pleasures are gluttony and over-indulgence, and lust for unlawful sexual relationships.

**Gifts to be Received by Believers**

Now Paul in this next verse reveals that, truly, the pleasures of marriage and food were created by God to be received with thanksgiving *for those who believe*. Every gift given by God is to be received with thanks. This would be a messed-up world if we weren’t thankful for what we received, especially from the Father who gives “every good and perfect gift from above.”

So, it makes sense that, as Paul says, these gifts are not designed for unbelievers. Because how will an unbeliever *in God* give thanks *to God*? God designed these gifts for those who believe and know the truth that He might be glorified through their thanksgiving. We see the problem with partaking in unbelief in **Romans 1.18-25**. After stating that God’s wrath is revealed against all idolaters who suppress the truth about God and what can be known about him, he says, **“**For *although they* knew God, they did not honor *him* as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasoning, and their senseless hearts were darkened.” (v.21, LEB)

**However, We See These Gifts Are Given to All**

Food and marriage are practically everywhere. The distribution is universal: to saints and sinners alike. Jesus said, *“God makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust”* (**Mt.5:45**). Good and evil fall upon all from the hand of God. In this world of sin, there is much delight, pleasure, food, marriage, sunshine and beauty – God in His graciousness fills the world with this – but these are not the *permanent possession* of those ungodly who partake with unbelief and no thanksgiving to God.

No, we learn in Acts 14.15-17 as Paul was preaching repentance to the gentiles that giving these gifts to unbelievers was how God provided witness for Himself, to encourage people to repent. God allows unbelievers these gifts to show His grace.

So, these gifts (marriage, food) are **gifts** to *believers* for thanksgiving toward God and **grace** to *sinners* for repentance toward God.

**So, Receive with Thanksgiving to the Glory of God**

So, finally we see that the truth of the New Covenant in Christ’s blood is that all is cleansed and everything created by God is good. It should not be rejected (provided it’s not sinful, obviously) when received with thanksgiving, having been sanctified and made good for use through God’s word and prayer.

I hope that as we gathered together with our families, we remembered to glorify our God by acknowledging Him in giving thanks to Him. And I don’t mean reciting the same old prayer – but really meditating, with a sincere thankfulness in our hearts to the Giver of all good things.

I hope we’ll give thought to these various passages:

“For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase *thanksgiving*, to the glory of God.” (**2Co.4:15**)

“Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be *thanksgiving*.” (**Ep.5:4**)

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with *thanksgiving* let your requests be made known to God.” (**Php.4:6**)

“Be *thankful*.” (**Co.3:15**)

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks* to God the Father through him.” (**Co.3:17**)

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with *thanksgiving*.” (**Co.4:2**)

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, *give thanks* in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (**1Th.5:16-18**)

And finally, perhaps we’ll give thought to those who are less fortunate. Those who do not have our large families. Those who will not be enjoying the warmth and love that many of us will. Those who are starving in the world. For the Lord Jesus had said Himself, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (**Ac.20:35**)