

# HAVE A BLESSED THANKSGIVING

As we celebrate Thanksgiving Day we must truly understand what this day truly represents. Not just to ourselves but to every born again child of God. It is a day that we should be giving a true reflection on what we truly have as God's people. We must realize that our country is the only country in the world that is celebrating Thanksgiving Day. A day that we are to stop and thank our God!!!

Thanksgiving is literally referred to as the "sacrifice of thanksgiving" within the Bible. The term "sacrifice" means to utterly destroy and annihilate every part of the animal's flesh – down to the bones. We understand that the original sacrifices were animals that were sacrificed unto the Lord at various times. However, we must never forget that these sacrifices were always to be representative of the people who would be offering them. The animal sacrifices would be utterly killed in place of the people who offered them unto the Lord.

The term "sacrifice" to us now as children of God suggests that we must utterly destroy and annihilate our fleshly desires and worship the Lord. Throughout our lives, as we now continue to worship the Lord with this new attitude of heart, we are to now offer up to God, "spiritual sacrifices."

1Peter2:5 tells us, "*Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up **spiritual sacrifices**, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*"

As priests unto God through Jesus, we no longer offer up animal sacrifices, but rather "spiritual sacrifices." We are to now yield ourselves to and worship God with these "spiritual sacrifices." Let's take a quick look at what the Bible tells us about these "spiritual sacrifices."

Let us first take a look at the "Sacrifice of Righteousness." It is found in Deuteronomy 33:19 This is actually the term used for each believer to now give their lives as that "living sacrifice" unto the Lord. Romans 12:1,2 states, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a **living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*"

The "Sacrifice of Righteousness" is looked upon by our God as our "reasonable service." It involves a holiness that begins from the "inside out." It begins with your spirit being renewed through Jesus. (2Corinthians 5:17) It is truly a heart condition, having nothing to do with anything we do outwardly.

Next, let's review the "Sacrifice of Joy." It is found in Psalm 27:6. From the Biblical perspective, it has nothing to do with "happiness." Happiness is determined by outward circumstances. Biblical "joy" is actually a "spiritual force" that now comes from within you – your spirit being.

It is a supernatural vibrancy or excitement, yet a calmness deep within not caused by any outward source or stimulation. Joy is constant and remains constant. **It is the knowing that you know and it is being assured of victory and then living and walking in that victory.** Nehemiah 8:10 tells us that the "*...joy of the Lord is my strength.*"

Then, we have the "Sacrifice of Praise" which is found in Hebrews 13:15. As we have discussed, "praise" is the physical actions that stem from the attitude of our heart towards God such as singing,

dancing, playing musical instruments as well as blessing the Lord and telling others about the Good News of salvation through Jesus. It is the actions of our lifestyle as a child of God.

We must remember that worship begins from within our heart and praise becomes the physical manifestation of what is in our heart. The "sacrifice of praise" is the offering up to God our praise according to all the ways the Word shows us. It is the physical expression of the attitude of our heart towards God.

As we get to the "Sacrifice of Thanksgiving," we find it mentioned in Psalm 107:22 and Psalm 116:17. On Thanksgiving Day we gather family and friends around us to say thank you to the Lord for all His blessings. Psalm 103 is a perfect psalm for this as it declares, "*Bless the Lord oh my soul and all that is within me bless His holy name.*"

But wait a minute, isn't it God who is supposed to do all the blessing to us? Well, let us take a look at what the Bible tells us about this. **The word "bless" literally means to kneel and adore.** When God pours out His good things upon us, He is literally expressing His adoration to us His children.

God is literally, bowing down to us, not in submission or obeisance, but rather as a loving Father who would bend down and bestow wonderful things onto His children. When God pours out all that He is to us we can do nothing else but get down on our knees and adore Him and thank Him right back with our "sacrifice of thanksgiving" and "Bless the heart of our King."

The terms, "thanksgiving, thanks, and thankful" all come from the root Hebrew word, "*yadah.*" It means to express and make a confession of gratitude. It also means to have deep appreciation of someone or something and the acknowledgment of being pleased by having your desires and needs satisfied and met. It is the acknowledgment of receiving great benefits and favor from our God.

In this Hebrew word it expresses the idea of "shooting arrows into the air." The actual physical expression of this for the worshiper is the extending of the hands. We shoot our "arrows" of not only praise but "thanks" to the Lord. The arrows of thanks and appreciation are to be aimed right to the heart of our Abba God and it pierces his heart and gives him a joy and a delight that floods his heart and "blesses" Him.

That is why "thanksgiving" is such a powerful force. Psalm 100:4 tells us that with thanksgiving, we are able to enter into the "gates" of His presence. We bless the heart of our God!!!

So why is it called, the "sacrifice of thanksgiving?" Let's remember what the idea of "sacrifice" is. It is the total dying and putting away of self. Many times we fail to recognize where our blessings come from. It becomes all about me and what "I" did. No, it is ALL ABOUT OUR GOD!!!

1Thessalonians 5:18 states, "*In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*" Of course everyone says, "How can I do this when stuff is flying at me from all over." Well, the scripture is very clear. It is not saying to give thanks for the stuff flying at you from every which way, but rather it states that "**...in everything.**" A "sacrifice of thanksgiving" is not truly a "sacrifice" unless it comes with effort or expense. A worthy sacrifice always comes at a cost. We may not always feel like it but we are to and must thank our God in and for all situations

Remember in the midst of everything – good and/or bad – thank the Lord for who He is.  
He is our everything!!!

From Trish and Myself, we would like to wish you all a very Blessed Thanksgiving