

MARSHALL COUNTY DEVOTIONAL PAGE

"And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." – **Colossians 3:17**

The apostle Paul in his letter to the Colossians zeros in on thankfulness. In fact, Paul mentions "thanks" or "thanksgiving" at least six times in this letter, and this word "thanks" in verse 17 is also understood as gratitude.

During the Thanksgiving holiday, the Butterball Turkey Company sets up a telephone hotline as well as internet assistance to answer consumer questions about preparing turkeys. One woman called about cooking a turkey that

had been in the bottom of her freezer for twenty-three years. The Butterball representative told her the turkey would probably be safe to eat if the freezer had been kept below zero for the entire time. However, she was warned that the flavor would probably have deteriorated and would not recommend eating it. The caller replied, "That's what I thought. Well, we will just give the turkey to our church."

Every year it seems that the heart of Thanksgiving keeps losing its sense of compassion for others, as well as gratitude towards God for His countless blessings. As we prepare for this upcoming holiday, consider with me those

who understood gratitude.

"So much has been given to me that I have no time to ponder that which I don't have." – Helen Keller (she was a blind, deaf, mute).

"I'm just thankful for everything, all the blessings in my life... I think that's the best way to start your day and finish your day. It keeps everything in perspective." – Tim Tebow (he was spared from being aborted).

"When we lose one blessing, another is often, most unexpectedly, given in its place." – C. S. Lewis (a one time atheist turned Anglican theologian).

"Giving thanks is not a matter of feeling thankful, it is a matter of obedience." - Joni Erickson Tada (she is a quad-

riplegic).

"Happiness isn't something that depends on our surroundings." – Corrie Ten Boom (she harbored over seven-hundred Jews from the arrest of the Nazi authorities).

"If we magnified our blessings as much as we magnify disappointments, we'd all be much happier" - John Wooden (college basketball coach).

"Gratitude isn't a burdening emotion." – Loretta Young (Academy Award winning actress).

"Gratitude changes the pangs of memory into a tranquil joy." – Dietrich Bonhoeffer (German theologian and anti-Nazi protester who was outspoken against Hitler).

Many times we read in the

gospels of our Lord Jesus giving thanks to the Father. He thanked His Father for things hidden and things revealed (Matthew 11:25). He gave thanks before feeding the multitudes with a few fish (Matthew 15:36; John6:11), before raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:41), and also before The Last Supper and the institution of the Lord's Table (Luke 22:17-19; Mark 14:22-25), just to name a few.

Understand that gratitude is what characterizes God's people from the rest of the world. The child of God can gratefully see God's love and grace at every turn! Can you?

David C. Hale, pastor
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