

# **In All Things Give Thanks**

**By Robert Johnson**

A French proverb states, “Gratitude is the heart’s memory.” Many years before that, Aesop wrote, “Gratitude is the sign of noble souls” (550 B.C.). Throughout the years, an attitude of thanksgiving has been recognized as a reflection of the person we are inside.

According to tradition, the English Pilgrims, who had founded the Plymouth Colony in what is today the State of Massachusetts, celebrated the first American Thanksgiving in 1621. The Pilgrims marked the occasion by feasting with their Native American guests—members of the Wampanoag tribe—who brought gifts of food as a gesture of goodwill. Although this event was an important part of American colonial history, there is no evidence that any of the participants thought of the feast as a thanksgiving celebration. Two years later, during a period of drought, a day of fasting and prayer was changed to one of thanksgiving because rains came during the prayers. Gradually the custom prevailed among New Englanders to annually celebrate Thanksgiving after the harvest. As the years passed, the event became a national holiday, and in 1941 it was legally decreed an event to be celebrated annually on the fourth Thursday of November.

While our nation celebrates a day of Thanksgiving annually, the Christian should give thanks continually. “Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father” (Ephesians 5:20). “In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). No matter our circumstances, in Christ we can always have a heart filled with gratitude for the rich blessings we have from God in Him, for today and eternally. None of our earthly problems can compare to the eternal glory we share in Christ (Romans 8:18).

Since every day is a day of God’s blessings to us, every day should be a day of thanksgiving from us to Him. As mentioned before, an attitude of thanksgiving is a reflection of the person we are inside. Make it a part of each day to look for God’s blessings, and what a difference it makes in how each day is lived. Does your life reflect this sign of a noble soul?

# **Commands to Disciples**

**By Cliff Holmes**

Before Jesus ascended unto the Father, He gave instructions to His disciples. Why did He give these instructions? Our Lord gave these directives because He wanted us to know what our purpose is as the church. He didn’t want us to get sidetracked from that purpose. Jesus knew that we could get so busy doing good things that we would possibly neglect doing the really important things.

In Matthew 28:18-20, we see that disciples of Christ were charged to evangelize a lost world. That evangelization is to be carried out aggressively. We are to go into the world and not wait for the world to come to us. Evangelizing a lost world can be as simple as relating how God freed us

from the clutches of Satan. If we share the Gospel, God will anoint our efforts, and we will see some of our fellow men come to know Christ as Savior. Then, we are commanded to baptize those who receive the good news and acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God and Savior. The new believer is to be baptized as an act of obedience to have his sins washed away by the blood of Christ. When the new believer is baptized, and he is added to the body of Christ, which is the church, by Jesus (Acts 2:47). Another command Jesus gave preceding His ascension was to teach “them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Notice that Jesus commanded us to observe all things which He has taught. There is no way we dare leave this command out of our lives in Christ.

Jesus also commanded us to love one another. “This is My commandment, that ye love one another as **I have loved you**” (John 15:12). If we love one another, it will reveal itself in the way we treat one another. Loving one another will enable us to fulfill the rest of the “one another commands” in the Bible. If we love one another, we will **bear one another’s burdens**. We will **confess our faults to one another** and **pray for one another**. We will **forgive one another**. If we love one another, we will **edify or build up one another**. Paul said the entire law is summed up by loving your neighbor as yourself. Jesus gave us this command because He knew that the world would know that we are of Him if we **love one another**.

Further, Jesus commanded us to be faithful. He wants us to be faithful in our devotion to Him. Our Lord rebuked the church at Ephesus because it had allowed its first love for Him to cool. The church at Laodicea was condemned for its half-hearted, lukewarm devotion to Christ. The world constantly demands that we turn from a love for Christ and turn to a love of the world. Satan will always put hardships in our path, which are designed to cause us to doubt God’s love for us. Yet, Jesus’ command is still to love Him with all one’s heart, soul, mind and strength.

Jesus wants us to be faithful in the duties that He has assigned us. It is required that we be found faithful stewards, faithful to family duty and responsibilities, faithful in sharing our faith, faithful in our church responsibilities as elders, preachers, deacons, teachers and members. Jesus wants us to be diligent to obey what He has said in His Word.

How are we to carry out these commands? Paul gave the answer in 2 Timothy 2:2 when he penned, “what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”