

## **An Attitude of Gratitude**

**Text : Lev. 7: 11-21 ; I Thes. 5: 16-18**

### **INTRODUCTION :**

- A. The Thanksgiving Holiday in America has lost much of its true meaning ?**
1. We enjoy it as a time when we feast together with family and friends.
  2. To many it is a day off to watch football games.
  3. Merchants have made it the official beginning of the “*Holiday Season.*”
    - a. Sales abound to get people in the stores to start Christmas shopping.
    - b. In some families “Black Friday Sales” have become as much a tradition as turkey.
- B. We have become a very different country than the one in which the pilgrims declared that first Day of Thanksgiving in 1621.**
1. Our first president declared a national day of thanksgiving and others followed suit.
  2. Pres. Lincoln was the first president to have all of the states observe it the same day.
  3. Pres. Roosevelt signed the law making it the fourth Thursday in November.
- C. However, Thanksgiving Day did not originate in the United States.**
1. It has been around for more than 3500 years. ( *It was also a day of feasting then.* )
  2. We first read about it in the scriptures in our text, **Lev. 7** ( Cf - **Lev. 22** )
- D. Many Christians skip over the book of Leviticus. But it is a very interesting book for those who have the patience to invest time in a serious study.**
1. The book of Exodus tells of God rescuing Israel from Egypt.
    - a. They became a nation.
    - b. It's a type of mans being called from sin to form the kingdom of God, the church.
  2. **Leviticus 1-10** ... the way to God.
  3. **Leviticus 11-21** ... the walk with God.
  5. **Leviticus 21-24** ... the worship of God. ( **worship** : *ascribing worth to God* )
  6. **Leviticus 25-27** ... the witness for God.
- E. Leviticus records many sacrifices, but most are within five categories.**
1. Burnt offerings ... type of the fullness of Christ ( *all sacrifices typify Christ* )
  2. Sin offerings ... Christ removing the barrier between God and man
  3. Meal offerings ... pure, without leavening agents ( *leaven typified sin, evil* )

4. Peace offerings ... fellowship with God through Christ ( *Thank offering is part* )
5. Trespass offering ... removal of the Christian's sin ... turning back to God

## **I. The "Thank Offering" was one of the few voluntary offerings.**

### **A. There was no command to offer "Thank Offerings."**

1. One who did not want to offer one did not have to do so.
2. There was no time or occasion given when a "Thank Offering" was required.

### **B. Though it was voluntary, it was regulated.**

1. It had to be administered by a priest.
  - a. The offerer had to be the one to lay his hands on its head and then kill the beast.
  - b. The priest stood between the offerer and God; he sprinkled the blood on the altar.
2. The contents of the sacrifice had to be as prescribed by God.
  - a. One could offer a sheep, a goat or an ox, but could not offer birds.
  - b. Both leavened and unleavened bread were required parts of the offering.  
( *Bread with leaven took time to prepare so there was forethought required.* )
3. Much of the offering was given as a "**contribution to the Lord.**"
  - a. The breast and a shoulder from the beast went to God.
  - b. *God was the recipient, but the priest received it in His stead.* ( *our gifts to God* )
4. **There was even a law about the leftovers; two days max.**

### **C. The thank offering was given to express the attitude of one's heart.**

1. Sincere thanksgiving comes from an attitude of gratitude. ( *Feeling, not obedience* )
2. It stems from a deep-seated feeling of gratefulness for favor received.
3. It is part of the character of a Godly person. ( *As opposed to feeling entitled like...* )

## **II. Who should be more grateful than the Christian ? ( Particularly in America )**

### **A. Like everyone else we enjoy God's creation and His creatures.**

1. We understand that all good gifts come from God. ... **James 1: 17**
2. He blesses even the wicked with physical needs. ... **Matt. 5: 45**
3. In the U.S. we enjoy more wealth than any other nation in the history of the world.
4. God enabled us to supplant weak people and take a land of milk and honey.

**B. Much more than all of the physical blessings we enjoy, we enjoy spiritual blessings that holy men of old didn't even know existed.**

1. Jesus died to purchase our pardon from sin.
  - a. We did not deserve it.
  - b. We could not obtain it on our own; Jesus gave it as a gift.
2. Jesus died to give us access to God.
  - a. We have greater access to God than we do to any of our political representatives.
  - b. We can never gain access to our president or our governor and seldom our mayor.
3. At any time, we can go before the very throne of the sovereign ruler of the universe.
  - a. **Eph. 3: 11-12** *This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. ( *Not as stranger, as child* )*
  - b. When we have need, all that is required is that we go to Him in faith.  
**Heb. 4: 16** – Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**C. Only the high priest could go into the presence of God and only once each year.**

1. When their high priest went into the Most Holy Place, it was a time of great fear.
  - a. **Heb. 9: 6-7** *Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship, 7 but into the second, only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.*
  - b. They tied a rope around the high priest's ankle in case he died while in there.
  - c. It is said that the whole nation held its breath until the high priest came back out.
2. Today Jesus, the Christ, our high priest, dwells in the very presence of God.
  - a. **Heb. 9: 23-28** *For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, 28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.*
  - b. No matter when we have need of God, our mediator is there interceding for us.

### III. However, before one will be accepted before God, he must be purified.

#### A. Remember our text :

1. **Lev. 7: 19-21** Also the flesh that touches anything unclean shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire. As for *other* flesh, anyone who is clean may eat such flesh. 20 But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the LORD, in his uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from his people. 21 When anyone touches anything unclean, whether human uncleanness, or an unclean animal, or any unclean detestable thing, and eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the LORD, that person shall be cut off from his people.
  2. One had to go through the purification process before he could offer thanksgiving.
  3. If he was accidentally made unclean in the course of life, he couldn't approach God.
- \* *This was the reason the priest and the Levite did not help the injured man. Lk 10: 30-37*

#### B. Remember the parable of the wedding feast ? ... **Matt. 22: 1-14** ( Esp. 11-13 )

1. All were invited, even from among the lower classes. ( *He was eager to fill his table* )
2. One came in without proper attire.
  - a. He was not forced to come.
  - b. Entering without proper attire was disrespectful.
3. He was bound and cast out of the master's feast. ( *Rejected by God* )

#### C. God invites all into His kingdom, but one must be cleansed before entering.

1. Jesus provides both initial and ongoing cleansing.
 

**Heb. 10: 10-12** By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, ( *He's permanently there* )
2. Those who would come to God need only submit to His rule in their life.
3. All who come to Christ in obedient faith are made holy (*cleansed*) and welcomed in.
  - a. Because Christ makes us holy, we can stand before God. ( **Rom. 8: 1** )
  - b. Because Christ keeps us holy, we have unlimited access to God. ( **Jude 24** )
4. Because Christ keeps us holy so long as we stay devoted to Him, we live in anticipation of Heaven and with no fear of judgment. ( **I Jn 4: 18** )
5. *Who has more cause to be more thankful than a Christian ?*

#### IV. The Christian should live with an attitude of gratitude.

##### A. Thanksgiving should be at the very heart of our worship.

1. We are commanded that our singing should be with gratitude.
  - a. **Eph. 5: 19-20** – speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; **20** always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;
  - b. **Col. 3: 16** – Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
  - c. Christians were forbidden to sing or pray in a foreign language w/o an interpreter because the hearers could not agree with their thanksgiving. **I Cor. 14:14ff**
2. Praise has always been inextricably linked to expressions of gratitude.
  - a. Both thanksgiving and praise acknowledge God as the source of blessings.
  - b. **Psalms 100:**
    - 1 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.
    - 2 Serve the LORD with gladness;  
Come before Him with joyful singing.
    - 3 Know that the LORD Himself is God;  
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;  
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.
    - 4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving  
And His courts with praise.  
Give thanks to Him, bless His name.
    - 5 For the LORD is good;  
His lovingkindness is everlasting  
And His faithfulness to all generations. ( *Let's live thankful.* )

##### B. Thanksgiving should be a part of our private daily worship.

1. It's not just for the table.
2. It's not just for the family devotionals.
3. As a part of our consciousness and our character it should be in every prayer.  
( **Train ourselves by always thanking others – spouse.** )

#### CONCLUSION :

##### A. The greatest blessing is salvation in Christ Jesus.

1. Cherish it. ( *We can't be truly thankful until we realize what's been done for us.* )
2. Praise God and thank Him for it.

##### B. Christ offers His salvation to you as a gift. Will you not accept it ?

**Lesson Texts :****Leviticus 7: 11-19**

**11** Now this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which shall be presented to the LORD. **12** If he offers it by way of thanksgiving, then along with the sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes of *well* stirred fine flour mixed with oil. **13** With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of leavened bread. **14** Of this he shall present one of every offering as a contribution to the LORD; it shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offerings. **15** Now *as for* the flesh of the sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace offerings, it shall be eaten on the day of his offering; he shall not leave any of it over until morning. **16** But if the sacrifice of his offering is a votive or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and on the next day what is left of it may be eaten; **17** but what is left over from the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burned with fire. **18** So if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings should ever be eaten on the third day, he who offers it will not be accepted, *and* it will not be reckoned to his *benefit*. It shall be an offensive thing, and the person who eats of it will bear his *own* iniquity.

**19** Also the flesh that touches anything unclean shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire. *As for other* flesh, anyone who is clean may eat *such* flesh. **20** But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the LORD, in his uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from his people. **21** When anyone touches anything unclean, whether human uncleanness, or an unclean animal, or any unclean detestable thing, and eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the LORD, that person shall be cut off from his people.' ”

**I Thess 5: 16-18**

**16** Rejoice always; **17** pray without ceasing; **18** in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.