

Thanksgiving Baskets

Text : **Deuteronomy 26: 1-17 ; Colossians 3: 15-17**

S#1.
S#2.

A. We are approaching a fantastic holiday ... Thanksgiving.

1. The giving of thanks is to acknowledge the source of something received.
2. God is the ultimate source of all that is considered good by man.
 - a. **James 1: 16-17** – Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. **17** Every good thing **S#3.**
given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the
Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.
 - b. Our God who has always given all good and only good will never change.
3. The prophet David wrote a psalm to command us to express gratitude to God..
 - a. The Psalm begins :
I Chron. 16: 8 – Oh give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples. **S#4.**
 - b. The Psalm ends :
I Chron. 16: 34-35 – O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; For His
lovingkindness is everlasting. **35** Then say, "Save us, O God
of our salvation, and gather us and deliver us from the nations,
To give thanks to Your holy name, and glory in Your praise."

B. Our founding fathers believed in God and in His providential oversight. **S#5.**

1. Our present Thanksgiving tradition started with the pilgrims off the Mayflower, but history records previous settlers also having declared days of Thanksgiving.
 - a. In 1565 a Spanish explorer, Pedro Avile observed a day of Thanksgiving in St. Augustine, Florida and invited members of the Timucua tribe.
 - b. In 1619 the 38 British settlers that landed at Berkeley Hundred by the James River in Virginia issued a declaration of Dec. 4, 1619 as a Day of Thanksgiving.
 - c. Such declarations were common after significant events – survival of disaster, war.
2. This was the type of declaration made by the pilgrims in October of 1621.
 - a. Half of those who had originally landed had died before the first spring.
 - b. They had just harvested their first successful corn crop.
 - c. Without the help of the Indians they would have perished.
3. That first Thanksgiving was a joy-filled three-day festival.
 - a. 50 surviving settlers and 90 Wanpanoag Indians
 - b. Indians brought 5 deer
 - c. In addition to turkey, the fowl include things such as swans and ducks.
 - d. They ate pumpkins, but not pumpkin pie. (No sugar)
 - e. Seafoods : Lobster, shellfish, seal
 - c. Cranberries, but no sauce (blueberries, grapes, plums)

C. However, a thanksgiving holiday predates the settling of the Americas. S#6.

1. The observance of days dedicated to the giving of thanks punctuates history.
2. When God organized HIS nation, He ordained two annual days of thanksgiving.
3. Our text in **Deut. 26** makes reference to one of them ... Feast of First Fruits

D. God invented the Thanksgiving Basket.

1. **Deut. 26: 1-2** – Then it shall be, when you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance, and you possess it and live in it, **2** that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground which you bring in from your land that the Lord your God gives you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place where the Lord your God chooses to establish His name. **S#7.**
2. The “first fruits” were the best of whatever they harvested.
 - a. The land produced these items which may have been in the baskets : **S#8.**
Deut. 8: 8 – a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; **9** a land where you will eat food without scarcity,
 - b. The Lord is to receive HIS portion off the top. (*Not what's left after paying bills*)
3. Collectively or individually, the giving of “Thanksgiving Baskets” is customary.
 - a. First congregation I’ve ever served that did not give Thanksgiving Baskets.
 - b. Giving them is an act of worship in that it expresses faith and a heart for God.
4. When given in the name of God, it glorifies God before the world.

We learn at least three lessons from the baskets in Deuteronomy 26 :**I. We must always REMEMBER where our blessings come from.” S#9.****A. The warning given to Israel applies to us as well.**

1. **Deut. 8: 10-14** – When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you. **11** Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; **12** otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them, **13** and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, **14** then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. **S#10.**
2. In spite of this very clear warning, Israel did exactly that.

S#11.**B. Even after seeing God's response to Israel we Americans do the same thing.**

1. When is the last time you had to go somewhere to get water ?
 - a. You turn on a tap and water flows, but billions of people have to go fetch water.
 - b. Do you remember having blisters on your hands from pumping wash water ?
2. What would you do if you did not have hot water in your house ?
 - a. My hot water heater went out the other day and it was a major inconvenience.
 - b. Some of us remember having to chop wood to heat water for washing.
3. We take hot and cold water in our home for granted.
 - a. Hundreds of millions of people have NO access to clean drinking water.
 - b. Relatively few have running water inside their house and fewer have hot water.
4. Some in this audience remember that cold walk down the path to the outhouse.
 - a. Indoor plumbing started becoming more common late in the 1930s.
 - b. In much of the world it is still rare.

C. When is the last time you witnessed a child starving to death ?

1. Hundreds of millions of people are chronically malnourished.
2. Millions starve to death every year ... including children
3. Many children are born mentally deficient, blind or handicapped from prenatal malnutrition.
4. When is the last time you were unable to get food or medical ? (*considered a right*)

** Half of the Mayflower colony starved ?*

D. As we passed through the dark times, God heard our cries and rescued us.

1. God wants for us to remember what HE has done for us.
2. God expects for us to express our gratitude.
3. God wants for us to tell others what HE has done for us. (*Give Him credit*)

S#12.**II. God wants for us to REJOICE. We should be happy and enjoy God's blessings.****A. The giving of thanks is an occasion for rejoicing.**

Deut. 26: 10-11 –Now behold, I have brought the first of the produce of the ground which You, O Lord have given me.' And you shall set it down before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God; **11** and you and the Levite and the alien who is among you shall rejoice in all the good which the Lord your God has given you and your household.

S#13.

B. God is our provider. Regardless of what is or is not in your basket, trust our provider and be thankful.

1. God determines what our needs are and provides them.
2. **Father, We Thank Thee** By Ralph Waldo Emerson

For flowers that bloom about our feet,
 Father, we thank Thee.
 For tender grass so fresh, so sweet,
 Father, we thank Thee.
 For the song of bird and hum of bee,
 For all things fair we hear or see,
 Father in heaven, we thank Thee.

For blue of stream and blue of sky,
 Father, we thank Thee.
 For pleasant shade of branches high,
 Father, we thank Thee.
 For fragrant air and cooling breeze,
 For beauty of the blooming trees,
 Father in heaven, we thank Thee.

For this new morning with its light,
 Father, we thank Thee.
 For rest and shelter of the night,
 Father, we thank Thee
 For health and food, for love and friends,
 For everything Thy goodness sends,
 Father in heaven, we thank Thee.

S#14.

C. God wants for you to enjoy His blessings. (TRUST - We are secure in Christ.)

1. **I Thess. 5: 16-18** – Rejoice always; **17** pray without ceasing; **18** in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
2. You have the security of knowing that God has and will provide all you NEED.
3. **Matt. 6: 31-34** – Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' **32** For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **33** But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. **34** So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

S#15.

D. Too often our joy is robbed by worry about what we don't have, instead of just being grateful for and rejoicing in what we do have.

S#16.

III. The baskets of first fruits teach us to TURN LOOSE and WORSHIP.**S#17.**

A. The giving of thanks involves the giving of our means, sharing our increase.

Deut. 26: 10-11 – Now behold, I have brought the first of the produce of the ground which You, O Lord have given me.' And you shall set it down before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God; **S#18.**

B. All we have is given by God, worshipping Him involves giving to Him.

Deut. 16: 16-17 – Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. **S#19.**
17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.

C. Giving out of gratitude, requires a verbal expression of why one is giving.

1. **Deut. 26: 3-11** ... The giving of thanks involved a recitation of blessings received.

2. This recitation of blessings received is a “sacrifice of praise” to God.

Heb. 13: 15-16 – Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. **S#20.**
16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

3. Our expressions of gratitude must be an expression of our hearts, not recitation.

Deut. 26: 16 – This day the Lord your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. **S#21.**

D. Even atheists realize one should be grateful, but don't want to acknowledge God.

1. An atheist's grace before a meal.

“May this sharing of food foster peace and understanding among us,
 May it bring us to the recognition that we depend on each other for
 all the good we can ever hope to receive, and that all the good we
 can hope to accomplish rests in helping others in turn.”

2. These are the people who call Thanksgiving “Turkey Day” and bow before football.

CONCLUSION : May we never forget from whom all blessings flow. **S#22.**

A. Thanksgiving is one day to give special praise to our God.

B. May this day rekindle the attitude that should continually dominate our thinking

S#23. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**Deuteronomy 26: 1-17**

1 Then it shall be, when you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance, and you possess it and live in it, **2** that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground which you bring in from your land that the Lord your God gives you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place where the Lord your God chooses to establish His name. **3** You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, 'I declare this day to the Lord my God that I have entered the land which the Lord swore to our fathers to give us.' **4** Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God. **5** You shall answer and say before the Lord your God, 'My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; but there he became a great, mighty and populous nation. **6** And the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, and imposed hard labor on us. **7** Then we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression; **8** and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror and with signs and wonders; **9** and He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. **10** 'Now behold, I have brought the first of the produce of the ground which You, O Lord have given me.' And you shall set it down before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God; **11** and you and the Levite and the alien who is among you shall rejoice in all the good which the Lord your God has given you and your household.

12 When you have finished paying all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. **13** "You shall say before the Lord your God, 'I have removed the sacred portion from my house, and also have given it to the Levite and the alien, the orphan and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed or forgotten any of Your commandments. **14** 'I have not eaten of it while mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor offered any of it to the dead. I have listened to the voice of the Lord my God; I have done according to all that You have commanded me. **15** ' Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel, and the ground which You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as You swore to our fathers.'

16 This day the Lord your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. **17** You have today declared the Lord to be your God, and that you would walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments and His ordinances, and listen to His voice.

Colossians 3: 15-17

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. **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. **17** Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.