



Grand Prelate's Monthly Message

NOVEMBER 2023

November is the month that we, here in the United States, set aside for Thanksgiving. It is on this day that we are supposed to offer up thanks to God for all the blessings he has bestowed upon us. Giving thanks is so much more than being thankful for our current circumstances. Thankfulness should be a way of life. Giving thanks is about coming before God and getting to know him. Serving God, and others, and living a life that glorifies God.

To celebrate this, most of us gather together with family and friends to share in the tradition of thanksgiving. This is usually done around a table of tasty foods for us to feast upon. But, unfortunately, too many people only show gratitude for the spurts of goodness where we see God working in our lives. While that gratitude is good, it misses the total perspective of God's goodness. In doing so, we thank him for the pleasurable things that bring us comfort, rather than becoming more like Jesus.

Take the Thanksgiving meal for example. We give thanks for the great feast we have on that day. But do we offer the same level of thanksgiving for the leftovers? Sure, we enjoy the leftovers, but are we really as thankful for them as we were on Thanksgiving Day?

Leftovers can be an example to us of God's continuing work in our lives. In John chapter 6 we find the story of Jesus feeding over 5000 people with two fish and five loaves of bread. John 6:11 tells us that "Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted."

A miracle took place in the hands of Jesus. He created food that was more than enough for everyone there. John wanted us to know that the crowd had as much food as they wanted. They had a feast. And when they had finished, we read in John 6:12-13, "And when they had eaten their fill, [Jesus] told his disciples, 'Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.' So, they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten." Twelve baskets of leftovers! The leftovers were evidence for all to see that a miracle had taken place. They showed that God provides bountifully for His people, and they remind us that we must not waste what he has provided.

God deserves our thanksgiving for all things. Corrie ten Boom and her family were sent to a prison camp for hiding Jews from the Nazis. While there, her sister said that they should thank God for everything in their barracks. Since their bedding was infested with fleas, Corrie refused to give thanks for that. But later she learned that the flea infestation kept the guards from entering their barracks, which enabled them to have daily prayer meetings without being disturbed or harassed. So, Corrie began giving thanks even for the fleas.

So, while you're thanking God, "Who satisfies your mouth with good things." (Psalm 103:5), remember that He is in control, and he knows what is best for each of us. So, let's bless God in all things, not just on Thanksgiving, but all the time.

Always and All Ways in Christ

Rick Saunders

Grand Prelate