

## CANADIAN NATIONAL BIBLE HOUR- GEORGE FRANCISCO

### “THANKSGIVING SUNDAY”

Let me extend special greetings to you on this Thanksgiving Sunday, it is the time of year that we are to stop and think about all the blessings that we enjoy it is not the only time that we are to be grateful, but it is a special time when we as individuals and families and as a nation can bow our heads and hearts before God in gratefulness.

Gratitude is not one of the leading virtues of our generation; many people live fast self-centered lives and show little concern for others. The story is told of an elderly lady who entered a crowded bus and made her way with some difficulty down the line of the moving bus, finally a young man rose and offered her his seat, she fainted after regaining her composure and being helped to the seat she looked up and thanked the young man, then he fainted. It seems our generation is fast losing appreciation of others and is more adept at demanding things than in being grateful for that which we have.

The Bible has a good deal to say about giving thanks and we want to look for a few moments at the topic:

#### BIBLE THINGS TO BE THANKFUL FOR

I guess it is appropriate that we start with food as most of us will be enjoying some kind of special meal perhaps of turkey, mashed potatoes or whatever, but will we be grateful enough to pause before our feasting and bow our heads to give heartfelt thanks to the Lord for the food. The Bible teaches us that this is appropriate, in First Timothy 4 the Apostle Paul admonishes Timothy to be on guard against false teachers who forbid marriage and who command, it says in verse 3 to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.

The scriptures here teach that God has created creatures for food, the locusts that John the Baptist ate were food as much as roast turkey, but to us they certainly would not be that appealing. The Bible shows that the Lord Jesus gave thanks for food on several occasions, one of which was found in John Chapter 6, 5000 men plus women and children sat down on a hillside and verse 11 says Jesus took the loaves and when He had given thanks He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were sat down and like wise of the fishes as much as they would.

Jesus teaches us by example that we should recognize God as the ultimate provider and be grateful to Him as such. Giving thanks for our food helps us to have a proper perspective of God and of ourselves and of life.

If the saying of grace at your table has been neglected why not renew it at this special thanksgiving time.

Then we should thank God for more than just our food Psalm 116 verse 12 says what shall I

render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me. The Psalmist was aware of many, many benefits that God had showered upon him, perhaps he was thinking of many of the things that we often take for granted, for instance the gift of sight that enables us to see the glorious array of colors in flowers and field or the glistening top of the mountains or the fluffy drifting cloud in an azure sky.

The gift of hearing which enables us to enjoy the twitter of birds or the moaning of the fall winds or the prattle of little children.

The gift of smell which brings enjoyment when walking among the forest trees or being greeted after a tiring day at home by the smell of fresh baking.

The blessings of good health and good friends and a sound mind, the list can go on and on can't it. These benefits mentioned so far have all been physical or material, but for the Christian believer there are also spiritual benefits. The Apostle Paul mentioned some in Ephesians Chapter 1 verse 3 where it says blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

Then Paul enumerates a magnificent list of blessings that believers enjoy such as being chosen by God verse 4, predestined to be members of God's family verse 5. He has made us accepted verse 6 says and forgiven our sins in verse 7, He has given us an eternal heritage verse 11 says and confirmed us as belonging to Him by the seal of the Holy Spirit verse 13 says.

Then in Chapter 2 and verse 7 Paul speaks of the unfathomable eternal future of believers when he writes that God will in the ages to come show the riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

What vistas of the future this opens to us, ages to come, riches of His grace and kindness toward us through Christ Jesus and the list has just begun for scripture talks about a future eternal home, a mansion Jesus called it.

In John Chapter 14 in my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there He may be also. This mansion or place for you as Jesus called it is one of indescribable beauty according to the Book of Revelation, and I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and I John saw the Holy city, New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven. Prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain and there shall be no more curse and the gates of the city were 12 pearls every several gate of one pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold as it were transparent glass, and there shall be no night there for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign forever and ever, these selected verses from Revelation 21 and 22.

How are hearts should well up with gratitude for these and the many, many other blessings

that God has or will provide.

Bible things to be thankful for, well they include first the food, then all physical and material blessings, but more than that they include a myriad of spiritual blessings for the believer. Paul says there is a very special blessing that we should be grateful for II Corinthians 9:15 Paul writes, thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift, now the Apostle has already spoken of many great and wonderful spiritual gifts of God in the Book of Ephesians, and we have enumerated some of them, and of course there are many, many other blessings mentioned throughout scripture, so many in fact that the Apostle James went on to write, every good and perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of Lights with whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning.

James is saying there are many good gifts all showered upon us from our unchanging God, the God then that gave great blessings to the early Christians is the same today, He is giving us great blessings as well, and we can be thankful for all of them, but there is one special gift so great as Paul says to be unspeakable, that is so great that there are no words, there is no way to adequately describe it. The Bible says that special gift was the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ, now Christ coming is indescribably great because He was God's only Son. The familiar words of John 3:16 tell us for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that is there are no others like Him. That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Christ was very special to God the Father, in Matthew 12 and 18 the voice of God the Father was heard of Jesus and of those around Him saying, *"this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."*

Jesus was the beloved Son of the Father, and is very, very special to God the Father, so special that Paul says I don't have words to describe it. Then Christ is indescribably special because He was willing to come to a wicked, sinful world. Christ was the Holy One of God, yet He chose to come to a wicked, fallen, sinful world. Why, because He loved us and wanted to befriend us, now that is pretty indescribable, and then if that is not enough Jesus willingly suffered the rejection of men and the horrible sufferings of the Cross, and in so doing He took our place and paid the eternal price of our sins.

I Corinthis 15 say, Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. Verse 3 then after suffering so and dying for man, Christ sent His apostles to the very ones who were responsible for wickedly condemning Him.

In Acts 2 Peter speaks on the day of Pentecost saying in verse 22, ye men of Israel hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth a man approved of God by miracles and wonders ye have taken and by wicked hands have slain.

In Acts 3 and 26 it says unto you first God having raised up His Son Jesus sent Him to bless you in turning everyone of you from your iniquities.

God sent the Gospel of Forgiveness first to the very ones who had wickedly condemned His

Son to death, now that is indescribable.

We are just as guilty as they were for when we sin willfully our sins require the death of Christ as well as there's. Only when we stop living for self and sin and receive Christ into our hearts and lives can we be forgiven. Then the one we formerly rejected becomes indescribably precious, He washes us from our sins and adopts us into the very family of God for John 1:12 says but as many as received Him, Jesus, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God even to them that believe on His Name.

All sinners can be forgiven freely by repenting and inviting the Savior into their heart and life, when you do so, God adopts you into His eternal family. How can you describe that, on this Thanksgiving Sunday why not yield your heart and life to this Savior, He has promised in His Word to receive you, for John 6:37 says him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. Will you come to Him today.

Then another Bible thing that we are to be thankful for is fellow believers, I Thessalonians 1 and 2 Paul wrote we give thanks to God always for you all making mention of you in our prayers.

Paul later wrote something similar to the Philippians I thank God upon every remembrance of you and he wrote then to the Corinthians and later to the Romans. Paul rejoiced wherever people came to know the Lord and he wrote to tell them so that they would be encouraged.

Paul just was so grateful to God for the many blessings that he received and he wrote about them in the scripture, Bible things to be thankful for, food, physical and material blessings, spiritual blessings, so many as to be uncountable. Certainly there is much that we can be thankful for today, why not take a few moments to look into the scriptures and to find other things perhaps that you can be thankful for, and I hope you have a great Thanksgiving Day.