

A WORD ON WORSHIP

REVIEW OF MESSAGE FROM November 24, 2013

By Thom Rachford, SUNRISE COMMUNITY CHURCH

"Thanksgiving 2013"

Thessalonians 5:18

"... in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Thanksgiving. The word conjures memories of family gatherings to celebrate the day; gatherings in which a sense of joy permeated the whole day. The smells of the Thanksgiving dinner: turkey, dressings, yams with marshmallows, mashed potatoes with gravy, hot rolls with lots of butter, fresh vegetables trays, olives, green and black, celery, carrots, radishes, pickles, onions, perhaps peppers, green beans with almandine sauce, special juices, flavored coffee and pies, pumpkin pies with whipped cream. The wonderful smells seemed to be enhanced by the variety of colors on the table, which added to the joyous atmosphere. And the thrill of seeing and the enjoyment of being with loved ones. And the conversations that sprouted like new spring grass, colorful and plentiful.

This describes the wonderful events of a Thanksgiving celebration. It may or may not describe an actual celebration or parts of an actual celebration from your past. It remains, however, either a fond memory or a strong hope for a Thanksgiving celebration in the minds of many.

As wonderful as this type of celebration can be, it is not the full expression of Thanksgiving. The deeper purpose of the Thanksgiving celebration is to "give thanks" for all things, including the wonderful feelings brought on by the enjoyment of food, family and fellowship.

When you give thanks, it is the response you make because you have received something for which you are grateful; grateful for receiving something which has brought you gladness, ease, comfort or pleasure, etc. Now many in the country say they are thankful. They may be able to tell you what they are thankful for receiving, but do they know to whom to give the thanks?

Thanks can be given only to a living entity. You can't give thanks to a rock or the wind, or the air, for thanks cannot be given to things. Why not? Two reasons: First, inanimate objects have no will. Giving requires an act of will to decide to give something. Without a will, they can not will to give you something, let alone, give you something for which you would be grateful. Second, since inanimate objects do not give, they have no reason to receive thanks for anything.

Since inanimate objects cannot receive thanks, to whom should thanks be given? The best one to receive your thanks is the One who has given you the things you are grateful for. So who is that? Thanks can only be in response to receiving, and only beings have a will to give, therefore thanks can only be given to a Living Being.

The most appropriate Living Being to thank is the One who created you and knows beyond all others what is best to give to you. 1 Chronicles 29:12 says "Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone". Since God controls or rules "over all," He is the most complete Giver, able to give any and all gifts. In His giving, God demonstrates His great love for us. Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us". He gave all who will come to Jesus the gift of new life while we were unworthy. And as a believer in Christ, giving thanks to God is also God's will for you. Thessalonians 5:18 says "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

This Thanksgiving, may the Father help you express thanksgiving to Him as He desires and may the celebration of thanksgiving with food and fellowship be pleasing to Him.

Sunrise Community Church

Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst

EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.

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