

“How Thankful are We?”

Rev. Krystal Goodger

Matthew 6:25-30

November 16, 2014

A large family sat around the breakfast table one morning. As was the custom, the father gave thanks, blessing God for the food. Immediately after, however, as was his bad habit, he began to grumble about hard times, the poor quality of the food he was forced to eat, the way it was cooked, and much more. His little daughter interrupted him, “Daddy, do you suppose God heard what you said a little while ago when you were giving thanks?” “Certainly,” the father replied with the confident air of an instructor. “And did he hear what you said about the bacon and the coffee?” “Of course,” replied the father with a note of caution in his voice.” Then his daughter asked, “Daddy, which did God believe?”

How Thankful are we?

With Thanksgiving just ahead of us, have you made your mental list of all the things for which you are thankful? What is on your list???

Maybe it reads something like this: For family and friends who surround me with love and care; For a measure of health that makes it possible to enjoy life; For the church where I find the strength to continue when life is hard; For plenty of food and drink to stave off hunger and thirst; For ample income to maintain a reasonably comfortable way of life; For living in a nation of possibilities; For a warm, well-furnished home where I can relax and be contented; For this and that and a lot of other things. It’s really not a bad list at all – and, as the final phrase indicates, many more things could be added to the list, all of which are really quite good.

We are so very blessed aren’t we? God has provided us with so much! And yet we always want more don’t we? Have your children started their lists yet? I know my nephew growing up always had his done by about July! Though we have our thankful list, we also have the want/need list.

What is on your want list? Is it something like this?:

A new car because mine makes funny noises or isn't big enough;

A new laptop because mine is 7 years old, runs slow, and is not really compatible with the new ones;

New clothes, and of course because I want to look pretty;

And your husband's list might look like this:

An Xbox 360 with Kinect because it is way cooler than just the plain Xbox;

A 47 inch LCD TV, because his friend just got one and his TV can't be smaller than Joe's;

A new set of golf clubs, because he knows his game will be better with a new set of clubs;

And your children's list might look like this:

A Nintendo Wii, because they want it;

A new bike, because they want it;

A cell phone, because they want it;

A kindle, because they want it;

How Thankful are we? We are so very blessed, and yet we always seem to want more.

Our scripture for today in Matthew can be explained in one sentence: It's about knowing that God will always provide. God gives us exactly what we need, not want. God provides for the birds and give beauty to the lilies. They do not have to worry and be anxious. God provides. And how much more does God love us than the birds and the lilies. God will provide for us as well. We need to remember to pray, be patient, and thankful.

We are so very blessed, and yet we always seem to want more. So I ask you this?

What would you do if you woke up tomorrow with only the things that you thanked God for today?

What would you be left with? Would you still have a house? A bed? A pillow?

Your children? Your pets? Your spouse?

What did you thank God for yesterday? Have you thanked God yet today?

Why is it that we only seem to remember to be thankful around Thanksgiving? Around your Thanksgiving table next week, will you talk about your thanksgivings?

Here is an adorable list that I found:

1. Be thankful for automatic dishwashers. They make it possible to get out of the kitchen before the family comes in for their after-dinner snacks.
2. Be thankful for husbands who attack small repair jobs around the house. They usually make them big enough to call in professionals.
3. Be thankful for children who put away their things and clean up after themselves. They're such a joy you hate to see them go home to their own parents.
4. Be thankful for teenagers. They give parents an opportunity to learn a second language.
5. Be thankful for smoke alarms. They let you know when the turkey's done.

We are so very blessed, and yet we always seem to want more. How Thankful are we?

I don't know about you, but I don't fall asleep quickly. I toss and turn thinking about my day: what I did, what I didn't get done, what frustrated me... That hours later, not only am I not asleep, but now I am annoyed too! So I was once challenged, that before I go to bed, I needed to write or say 2 things I was thankful for that day. That if I end my day with my thanksgivings and gratitude's instead of my regrets, I might sleep better. There was a "catch," though. I could not say the same thing I did the day before.

Why don't you start your own gratitude habit? Whether it's a journal or something different, think today about ways you can keep track of your gratitude for the blessings you have. It's a great way to help you through a difficult day, too, because you are forced to find something to be thankful for. It's something to look back on later so you can be thankful for those things all over again. If you get stuck not knowing what you're thankful for, ask yourself this question, "What if I woke up tomorrow with only the things I was thankful for today?" I bet you'll find something.

How Thankful are we?

I will end today with an anonymous poem called, *Forgive Me When I Whine*

Today upon a bus, I saw a lovely maid with golden hair;
I envied her -- she seemed so gay, and how, I wished I were so fair;
When suddenly she rose to leave, I saw her hobble down the aisle;
she had one foot and wore a crutch, but as she passed, a smile.
Oh God, forgive me when I whine,
I have two feet -- the world is mine.

And when I stopped to buy some sweets, the lad who served me had such
charm;
he seemed to radiate good cheer, his manner was so kind and warm;
I said, "It's nice to deal with you, such courtesy I seldom find";
he turned and said, "Oh, thank you sir." And then I saw that he was blind.
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine,
I have two eyes, the world is mine.

Then, when walking down the street, I saw a child with eyes of blue;
he stood and watched the others play, it seemed he knew not what to do;
I stopped a moment, then I said, "Why don't you join the others, dear?"
He looked ahead without a word, and then I knew he could not hear.
Oh God, forgive me when I whine,
I have two ears, the world is mine.

With feet to take me where I'd go;
with eyes to see the sunsets glow,
with ears to hear what I would know.
I am blessed indeed. The world is mine;
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine.

We are so very Bless. How thankful are you? Amen.