

THANKSGIVING EVE SERMON-- THE THANKFUL JESUS

John 6: 1-14

Andy Rooney said: The two biggest sellers in any bookstore around thanksgiving are the cookbooks and the diet books. The cookbooks tell you how to prepare the food and the diet books tell you how to not eat any of it.

Orson Welles once said, "My doctor has advised me to give up those intimate little dinners for four, unless, of course, there are three other people eating with me."

Did you know that the average human being eats 16 times his or her own weight in an average year, while a horse eats only eight times its weight. So if you want to loose weight doesn't it make sense to eat like a horse.

Other memories of Thanksgiving day celebrations have always included 4 "F's"
fun, family, food, football.
For some reason, my memories as a child of Thanksgiving Eve services have always been 3 "S's":
Solemn, slow, and sleepy.

Have we become so bored with Thanksgiving that
That we have to move Christmas up to Halloween?
That by early November all the stores were decorated for Christmas
And we were still four week to Thanksgiving.

Is it because we feel we have an inalienable right
to have possessions and things,
But we don't feel we have any need or compulsion
to give thanks for what we have?
Have we lost the art of looking at life with thankfulness?

God says thankfulness is good for the soul.
The Bible teaches that a thankful attitude joins heaven and earth;
whereas, an ungrateful attitude keeps heaven and earth,
the spiritual and the material, separate.

The Bible says: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:15,17

Jesus taught them and healed their sick.
 At the end of the day when they became hungry,
 he took five small barley loaves and two small fish
 and miraculously multiplied them;
 there was enough to feed all the people and
 still have 12 baskets of leftovers.
 And that was before the Microwave.

It was a splendid miracle.
 Jesus' popularity skyrocketed because of it; in fact,
John tells us the crowd intended to make Jesus king by force.
 In our Scripture reading we see a crowd of more than 5,000 people
 overwhelming Jesus and His disciples.

On this Thanksgiving Day I want you to take note,
 that Jesus, before passing out the food
 did something that was absolutely pivotal to the success
 Of this miracle.
 He gave thanks.

I Jesus Gives Thanks

I was raised to give thanks before every meal.
 We always bowed our heads and prayed together as a family.
 We still do, no matter where we are eating.
 My little grandson can't talk yet, but when he gets to the table
 The first thing he does is fold his hands.

Today it has become almost a ritual.
 So commonplace that we miss its importance here in this story.

I don't believe the miracle would have occurred
 Had Jesus not given thanks.
 This is not Jesus miracle.
 It is God's miracle worked out thru Jesus.

This thanks on Jesus part isn't missed by the disciples.
 John records the thanks of Jesus twice.
 John 6:11 that after the five small loaves and two fish were given Him,
 Jesus "**took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as
 much as they wanted" (vs 11).**

Note the end of Vs. 11:

**He did the same with the fish.
 Took the fish, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as
 they wanted.**

The double blessing is so striking to John,

That he give an account of it the next day.

Vs. 22-23

²³The next day some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. John 6:23

The Gospel writer wants to make sure we get it right.

He is reminding us the miracle happens after the prayer of thanks.

The Bible clearly wants us to know Jesus was a thanker –

This was not the only time Jesus gave thanks.

Another instance is when Jesus established the Lord's Supper.

In Luke 22 we are told that when Jesus took the bread at the Last Supper, He gave thanks before passing it around; He broke it and lifted it up.

At that moment did the disciples have a flashback

to the miracle on the mountain and the feeding of the 5000?

Jesus does the same for the wine –

He gave thanks just before giving it to the disciples.

Paul makes the same point in our giving of the Lords supper.

(1Cor 11:23-25) For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, (24) and when he had given thanks, he broke it ... (25) In the same way, after supper he took the cup, and when he had given thanks ...

He broke the bread again.

Not just to feed 5000,.

But to feel 5 billion people with his body and blood.

Broken for you and me.

Why does Jesus give thanks?

II Thanks Points us to The Spiritual Dimension

Jesus gave thanks because He wanted us to see beyond the bread and fish to the God Who provided the bread and fish.

Too many people miss the connection between

God's blessings and our possession.

Without gratitude comes an attitude.

Scott Nelson, age 33, was charged with assaulting his wife.

Apparently he became enraged that his Thanksgiving turkey was not defrosted.

So he went out in the parking lot of their apartment complex and threw the frozen bird and a pie on the pavement.

When his wife, Jackie, gathered up her child to flee, he hurled the frozen bird at the car, breaking the windshield.

Scott ended up spending part of Thanksgiving in jail.

I Cor 10:31) So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1. We must learn to be thankful or we become bitter.
2. We must learn to be thankful or we will become discouraged.
3. We must learn to be thankful or we will grow arrogant and self-satisfied.

We can end up with a thankless attitude.

In one episode of the TV cartoon show, "The Simpsons,"

the young brat, Bart, is asked to say grace.

He prays, "Dear God, we paid for all this stuff ourselves, so thanks for nothing."

Now who says TV doesn't reflect our culture?

Jesus takes food in His hand, and by giving thanks

Point us to its source in the living God.

What part of your life announced that it is from God?

What part of your living demonstrates your gratitude to God?

III Thanks Makes the IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE

Why did Jesus give thanks

This wasn't an afterthought.

He gave thanks because he needed to plug into the power that went beyond this world to make it possible.

Now before all this takes place,

Jesus cranks up the stress level of the disciples.

Just so they get the whole meaning of the miracle.

I believe every cook here knows that a big dinner party cranks up the stress levels.

Is the turkey big enough,

Is the potato bowl large enough.

Is there enough salad,

Will the pie reach,

⁵When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"

⁷Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages^[a] would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

Now their getting nervous, and anxious.

How could they do it?

It was impossible money or bread in the town..

5000 people

Even today the fast food stores in Aberdeen might have a tough time at that.
 Where could they find food?
 Where could they find the money to buy the food if they found it.

One **disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish,**
 All the disciples must have looked at him...
 Then he said: Well **but how far will they go among so many?"**

Jesus, looked up to heaven and gave thanks.
 I'd like to believe that when he looked up.
 Everyone looked up.
 All eyes were taken off the bread and fish,
 Off their hunger and thirst.
 And turned toward the sacred. The creator God.
 He gave thanks.
 And they distributed the Bread.

And Jesus looked up toward heaven
 And Gave thanks for the Fish.
 And the disciples distributed them.

This wasn't a thanks for the meal,
 but a thanks for the miracles
 Two of them which occurred one after the other.

When they looked up to heaven the second time.
 With bread in their hands and food in their stomach.
 The second thanksgiving was greater than the first.
Their stress was gone.
Their hunger satisfied.
Their faith was complete,
 Because God was in complete control as their Heavenly Father.

What about us?
 Who are we trusting to satisfy our hunger
 And complete our faith?

Several years ago, Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks did a comedy skit called the "2013 Year Old Man". In the skit, Reiner interviews Brooks, who is the old gentleman. At one point, Reiner asks the old man, "Did you always believe in the Lord?" Brooks replied: "No. We had a guy in our village named Phil, and for a time we worshiped him." Reiner: You worshiped a guy named Phil? Why? Brooks: Because he was big, and mean, and he could break you in two with his bare hands! Reiner: Did you have prayers?

Brooks: Yes, would you like to hear one? O Phil, please don't be mean, and hurt us, or break us in two with your bare hands.

Reiner: So when did you start worshiping the Lord?

Brooks: Well, one day a big thunderstorm came up, and a lightning bolt hit Phil. We gathered around and saw that he was dead. Then we said to one another, "There's something' bigger than Phil!"

There is something bigger than Phil.

There is something bigger than you and I.

And thanksgiving come to us when we realize

As Jeremiah 32:17 You have made the heaven and the earth by your great power, and your outstretched arm: Nothing is too difficult for thee.

1. The Bedrock of our thanks is not in Events or places.

2. The Bedrock of our thanks is not in people.

3. The Bedrock of our thanks is in Christ.

Who is greater in us than he that in this whole world.

May you have a thankful and blessed day tomorrow.

And give thanks to the one who is bigger than any Phil.