

THANKSGIVING

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God bless you,

Oluwatobi S. Adewuyi

Coordinator

Topic:

THANKSGIVING

Key Text: Psalm 100:4

Teacher: Moses O. Adewuyi

Prayer

Father in the name of Jesus, we bless You for today, thank you for this evening. we pray that you will lead us through this study in Jesus name, minister to our soul, Lord. Thank you Jesus, for in Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Introduction

Today, we will be looking at one of the topics God is so much interested in, when it comes to relating with Him. Before we go into our text today, let's briefly look at what thanksgiving means. We trust the Holy Spirit to inspire us today and cause a change in our lives, Amen.

Study

What is Thanksgiving?

According to Merriam Webster dictionary, thanksgiving is a public acknowledgment or celebration of divine goodness, a prayer expressing gratitude and the act of giving thanks.

Thanksgiving is an act of **giving thanks** while **thanks** itself is an expression of gratitude.

It is a pity that many times, we become too familiar with some words that have no effect on us. Many times we have heard the word, "thanksgiving" and we even tell others to "give thanks" to God. But do we really know what thanksgiving is all about and do we do this act?

By the grace of God, we will go deeply into what it is today.

Text:

Psalm 100:4:

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."

This verse, when meditated upon, is capable of changing lives greatly. It says "enter into His gates". The first question is, have you been outside the gate before? At least, if someone visits you and starts knocking on your door, what will you say? Enter! Which means the person was outside so you had to usher him/her in. If the person was inside, there wouldn't have been need for you to say enter, because the person is already inside. I want to show us something now. Have you ever seen a Christian working so much with the presence of God and you wonder if it's the same Holy Ghost that is in you that is in him? I believe we all must have thought about that at a point in time. We all know it's the same Holy Ghost that works in us all, hallelujah. Now, the reason the person moves and you can feel the presence of God moving with such a person is because the person has been able to easily gain access into the presence of God that even while he/she is moving, he/she moves with the presence of God all over. How is it that God lives inside us but many still fall sick and get crippled by this sickness? It is because if we don't know what we have, we can't really maximize its use. That's the truth. For us to really have an idea of

what that particular verse meant about "Entering into His gates", let's look at the previous verses. I am gradually laying a foundation, please don't get carried away. Kindly follow in the Spirit.

Psalm 100:1-5:

"A Psalm of praise. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. **Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.** Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. **Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,** and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."

If we follow from the first verse, we would see how that one of the verses talks about "coming to the presence of God with singing". This gives us an idea of what the verse which talks about "entering" is all about. For the previous verses to talk about coming to the presence of God joyfully and with singing, it means the gates also revolve around the term, "His presence".

Now, let's see this.

It is possible to come to the presence of God, yet you are not entering into the gate to talk more about His courts. If coming to His presence alone grants us access to beholding His glory and power, the latter verse wouldn't have mentioned anything about entering into His gates. It is like a mansion with a gate. If the owner of the mansion puts a call to his friend to come before his house, when his friend gets to the gate, he won't be able to enter until he has the access to either the keys that unlocks the gate or speaks to his friend to come open the

gate. Same applies to these verses. This is why a lot of people come to church these days, they come before the presence of the Lord, yet go back home the same way. It is because they refused to ENTER due to not being connected in the Spirit or distractions. And, this is one of the things the devil does to see that people don't get blessed when they come for services.

Entering into His **gates** does not mean when you come to His presence, you begin to look for a physical gate, no. Why? We are still on Earth and not in heaven where we can touch the gates of heaven. Entering into His gates is telling us to search deeper, go deeper into the presence of God to the point that we can behold His presence mightily and we feel no restrictions either by our flesh or the things around us. Kai! It also means being able to access what is found in His presence, His glory, power and majesty. Little wonder Moses, after he entered into the presence of God, the people could not behold his face. Because of what he met in His presence, the glory of God radiated over him that his face shone brightly. Wow!

Please, be sensitive as we proceed, the power of God is here and glory is hovering in our midst. You can pray in the Spirit softly.

God is helping us, let's proceed.

Also, in John 3:3-5

John 3:3-5:

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

We will see that Jesus mentioned about seeing and entering the kingdom of God. If you study these verses very well, you will see that verse 3 which talks about seeing the kingdom of God actually meant this: "Except a man be born again, he cannot EXPERIENCE the kingdom of God". This tells us that a person cannot work miracles or work in the dimensions of the Spirit except he be born again. He cannot continually experience the kingdom of God here on Earth. One of the ways to accessing and entering into that kingdom, having to captivate the heart of the father that He unleashes graces and rubs Himself on us is through **THANKSGIVING**.

David knew this so much which is **part** of the reasons God called him a man after His very own heart. His act of thanksgiving coupled with humility granted him a good reputation before God. Thanksgiving is **one** of the most important things that God demands from His children yet, it is one of the least things we do unto Him. As common as the word is, it is powerful and life changing when explored and made use of. One of the reasons we find it hard to really access Him in our secret places is because our hearts are filled with pride and we refuse to acknowledge Him. God so much loves a heart that shows gratitude. Let's even look at the case of our earthly parents. Have you ever been in these shoes before, that your mum or dad bought something for you and you do not thank them the next day for what they did the previous day. Some parents will decide to keep quiet and wait till you approach them for anything next time, while some would rebuke such a child for not giving thanks for what was done for them the previous day. It's a pity that our complaints and blames these days

supersede our Thanksgiving. Sometimes, the solution to the problems we are passing is only thanksgiving and not any other thing. But, we come to His presence with squeezed faces, grumblings and blames. We see what the verse says; COME BEFORE His presence with SINGING. ENTER into His gates with THANKSGIVING. We are not to come before His presence in order to blame or accuse Him of the things He has not done, rather our heart posture should maintain an attitude of singing melody to the Lord. This is one of the reasons we sing to praise God in church; to allow our heart posture to be regulated and be made right towards God. This is why, when you come to church in an angry manner or grumbling and a Spirit filled minister leads songs, you will feel broken. There is something that has penetrated the soul and Spirit through the song.

Sometimes, when we hear reasons behind the grumbling of some people, I shake my head because such grumbling was born out of an ungrateful heart posture. Someone who has complete arms and legs, yet complaining to God that he/she is slim or fat, tall or short. I wonder what excuse he has when someone without legs and arms still glorifies God for life. There is none on Earth who can say he is the one passing through suffering the most. If you think you are passing through **tough** times, there is someone passing through **tougher** times. That's just the truth! Thanksgiving is able to shift the attention of God towards a person more than asking repeatedly. Many don't pray for any reason than to ask. It is not bad to ask, but if the reason you are fellowshiping with the father is just to ask only, you will be missing out on a lot of things. I want us to understand that, it is not when God provides you a job/money or house, or when He saves you from evil or when does a good thing for you that you thank Him. This is the mistake many people make. We base our Thanksgiving on those

material things we see God providing for us and also thank Him based on any miracle that comes our way. We don't know that we live miraculously day by day and that even if there is nothing to eat or drink, there are still reasons to thank God.

Let's quickly look at those things we should be grateful for and why we are to thank Him for such.

Things to be grateful for and why we should be thankful for them:

1. The salvation of your soul:

Some might wonder why this is included, but it is still the major thing one should thank God for.

Matthew 6:33:

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

The bible makes us know that we are to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And, the first step to seeking first His kingdom is being saved. Salvation is the greatest gift you can ever receive from God, because His most precious Son died to earn you this salvation. And, it is a pathway that leads to spending your eternity in the presence of God.

Another reason you need to thank Him for the salvation of your soul is because of Colossians 1:13

Colossians 1:13:

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"

It is a very great thing to be delivered from the shackles of darkness and from the bondage of sin and be translated into life. Life which can never be bought with money, something priceless and precious. Hallelujah! This is why in some churches, they have been taught that during testimonies, you will first thank God for the salvation of your soul. This is to always remind the congregation that salvation is a gift that is very powerful and the greatest gift ever.

More reason we have to evangelize to others for them to partake of this wonderful gift.

2. We thank Him for our life/health:

One thing that provokes God's hands is when we thank Him irrespective of the situation we find ourselves in. No matter the health condition you find yourself, learn to thank God for life. No matter what you are passing through, God is still faithful. If only you know things that are happening spiritually concerning you, you would learn to be more grateful than you have always been.

Genesis 2:7:

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

The breath of life in us is something that is worth thanking God for. I just wonder if the moment a baby is born, his/her parents are required to start paying for the breath he/she is breathing to the bank of heaven, do you know the amount you would have paid for you to have grown to this stage? Yet, we breath in and out and still complain to God that He has done nothing good for us. Life itself is a reason to

be thankful. No matter how difficult situations are for a person, as long as there is life, there is still hope. The reason a person is declared dead and his body irrelevant again is when the person is unable to breathe anymore. This is when maggots and flies will then have access to such a person. I remembered years back when my grandma went into a coma for 9-10 days. Before then, we preached to her and she accepted Christ, then she slept due to the fact that she was old and very sick then. All the days she was in coma, she didn't eat anything nor did she drink anything, we only knew she was alive because she was breathing. If she had stopped breathing, we would have buried her but she was still breathing which signified life in her. It was after 9-10 days she opened her eyes and ate. She explained to us how she met Jesus and was given food by Him, during the time she was in coma. Then after some days, she gave up the ghost.

Why were we able to know that she was still alive, it was because she was breathing. If she had stopped breathing the first day she went into a coma, her corpse would have been stinking even before the 9th day. Also, our health matters, we should always be grateful for God for our health. Long ago, when people share testimony about them being able to go to the toilet and for good health, I saw it as a normal thing then. I never knew what it really means not to be able to pass out excreta (feces) from the body until I had a very strange experience. What happened was that I decided to engage in a deep fast. Even though I had been fasting so well before, I decided to step up the fasting and do a lengthy fruit fasting for one month. I planned to always break daily by 6pm with only fruits and not anything other than fruits. This was to be done for one month. I started on the first of a particular month and it was going well until I discovered that whenever I went to the toilet, I found it so difficult to excrete. It was

so difficult that I always forced it then. I had to break the fast on the 11th or 12th day when I saw that there was difficulty in passing out excreta and I was emitting blood instead. That was the period I really understood the prayer of thanksgiving concerning good health and being able to toilet with ease. Even though I had the zeal to fast then, I didn't really seek the knowledge of what I would have been taking with the fruits to make it easy to toilet. If I had been taking warm tea at intervals, it might not have been like that. This is why knowledge is very important when dealing with spiritual things.

Your zeal and passion is not enough, be sure you are doing the right thing the right way. Therefore, we should always learn to be thankful regardless of our health, for when there is life, there is hope.

3. We thank Him for what He will do:

This is one of the things that provokes God's speedy answers, when we thank Him for what He has not done because we know He will surely do them. If only everybody knows this, the issue of high blood pressure or depression will not always be heard of because we will believe He would do whatever we ask in faith and as such thank Him for doing it already. When a child, after or before telling his parents what he needs, he thanks them for what they have done in the past and what they will still do. It triggers the zeal of the parents to try getting what the child desires even if it is not easy for them. Because, they feel happy and emotional that the child is grateful even when he has not received what he asked for. However, they won't want to destroy the trust he has in them. This is how it also applies to our heavenly father. When you are in need but decide to just keep appreciating Him for what He has done and what He will do, it shifts His attention and makes you enter into His gates easily so that you are

able to access and captivate God's heart. If we are to thank Him for what He has not done, how much more what He has done for us. This tells us that, for every moment of our life, we should sustain a heart posture of thanksgiving as this is how we can easily access everything that abodes in His presence.

Take home work to do:

Deliberately reflect on your life to know if you have been ungrateful to God in any way, and maintain a heart posture of thanksgiving intentionally.

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