

SHARE-A-THON UPDATE - TRUSTING GOD THROUGH THE STORM

PathPointe

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Thanksgiving Comes Before Christmas

Dr. T. D. Worthington

Although our friends in many foreign countries may not understand our text, people in America recognize the obvious truth. Of course, Thanksgiving comes before Christmas. Everyone knows that. Historically, I suppose, that is just the way it came about. Thanksgiving commemorated the harvest while Christmas celebrated the birth of Christ.

The interesting thing is those two special Holidays fall into a perfect order. Thanksgiving is naturally

a pre-cursor to Christmas. It is impossible to enter into the reality of the Christmas season without passing through a season of thanksgiving first.

There is no season of the year that brings us closer to the humanity of our Saviour than Christmas. At Easter we naturally focus more on His deity, while Christmas centers on His humanity. Likewise, Christmas becomes a grand season of praise.

The angels initiated the praise back when Jesus was born. The shepherds and wise men would follow suit.

Today, every believer will certainly praise God for the wonder of the season. Praise is good, but a prerequisite is required if our praise is to truly honor our Lord.

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

Psalm 100:4

This verse shows how we are to enter into God’s presence. We are to enter into the gates with thanksgiving

before we can venture further into His courts with praise. Coming with a thankful heart then becomes a prerequisite to bringing Him praise.

In the Old Testament, people were required to come to the temple and offer sacrifices for their sins. They brought their offering to the Priests who would in turn offer their sacrifice to God for the people. Thank God we do not have to do that today because Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice. That is why the veil was torn. We no longer needed a high priest to offer our sacrifice or petition to God like the priests did. Today, we can enter into God's presence on our own because of what Christ did for us.

The word **enter** in the Hebrew means: *“to go, come, abide, or employ.”* We are to come or employ ourselves into the gate of God's presence with thanksgiving. Being thankful is the key of admittance if we seek to enter a true spirit of praise and worship.

The Apostle Paul would counsel the Philippian believers about the importance of approaching God *“with thanksgiving.”*

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7

In reality, thanksgiving itself is a form of worship. Thanksgiving in the original Hebrew means: *“with extended hands, to revere in worship.”* Imagine every time you are thankful and expressing that to God you are actually worshipping Him!

Next, let's take a look at the word *“gates”*. This refers to an outer perimeter opening into something contained on the inside. Gates in the

Hebrew is translated *“an opening, door, or port.”*

When Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem he also rebuilt the gates and each one of the gates had a specific meaning. Gates signify the outer edge to enter into something more personal or intimate. It allows access. You have to enter through a gate so you can be in more of an intimate setting as you walk through the courts to go into the presence of the Lord. The same is true when you *“enter into His gates with thanksgiving.”* Again, Thanksgiving is the key in entering into God's presence.

Although the gate exists to give you admittance into something precious and exciting, it can only be entered with a spirit of thanksgiving. The court is where God is to be worshipped and praised, and it can only be entered with a spirit of thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving comes first and that is no accident of the calendar or quirk of history, rather it is a Scriptural truth. The only way to effectively enter the wonderful worship and praise of the Christmas season is to stop for a moment at the gate of thanksgiving and render to your Heavenly Father the gratitude He deserves. Perhaps that's why Thanksgiving comes before Christmas.

Happy Thanksgiving from our family to yours!



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry over forty years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries.



“Heavenly Father, what are we going to do? Our nation has become so debased. How could someone do this to a child? Many people have just become so evil!”

I was talking to my Heavenly Father through my tears as I watched the newscast. I could not believe my ears. A child’s mother, if you can call her that, looked for men on the Internet to rape her ten year old daughter while she watched. The authorities are not even sure how long it had been going on. The family and friends had no idea of the evil that was going on in that home. They appeared to be a “normal” family.

I could not sleep for a while. All I could think of was the fact that so many children were living their daily lives as a lie. They put on a smile during the day and dread going home in the afternoon. As sometimes

happens, my mind jumps around from thought to thought. I was thinking of all the things some people go through each day, and I suddenly became very thankful.

I became so thankful for my own parents. I had no idea growing up that other children did not have happy homes. As an adult, I have learned of women my age who were sexually abused by their fathers when they were children, and they thought all girls’ fathers did those things to their little girls. While I was in my “*Leave it to Beaver*” world, others were hurting. May I never take my parents for granted.

I thought about the women who have abusive or sorry husbands. I am so thankful for my husband. No, he is not perfect, but close. He is my best friend and hero. My sweetheart is there for me through thick and thin,

and he makes me feel like a Queen. He is my protector and provider. God has blessed me with a wonderful man to spend my life with. May I never take him for granted.

I thought about the parents who have disrespectful children who do not care about them, the parents whose children never check on them or have placed them in a nursing home without any thought of their needs, and the parents of teenagers who are rebellious and cause them grief. My husband and I thank God for our children. No, they are not perfect, but they care for us. They have had their rough times, but we have never once doubted their love for us. As adults they are very protective of us. If we are overdoing it in their eyes, we hear about it. Lord, may I never take my children for granted.

I could list so many things I am thankful for. The list is never-ending.

My life has been so blessed. If you think about it, I am sure yours has been as well. We all have so much to be thankful for. Each of us can find someone who has had it worse. If you doubt it, visit a nursing home or children's hospital.

Stop and listen to those around you. You would think life was just hopeless. We have become a society of grippers, and we take so much for granted. I would like to challenge you to listen to the people around you. Count how many comments you hear that are positive and upbeat versus how many comments you hear that are complaining and griping. I believe you will hear more negative comments than positive.

In devotions this week, we discussed how children complain about their parents. We talked about children getting upset because they can't go to the restaurant they want to go to or they can't buy the newest game that came out. We discussed the little girl in the news and how they all should be grateful for their parents. The students in my class know their parents love them.

I hear parents complaining about their children. If they were honest, most of the problems they complain about are their own fault. The children have been catered to and given every desire of their hearts. Why do they complain about the behaviors they created? The lack of discipline in our own lives creates a lack of discipline in the lives of our children.

There are times I hear parents complaining about trivial things, too. They are fussing about a relatively good kid who "can't do anything right." These parents need a swift kick

and an observation of the rebellion around them. A child needs to be trained, but we must encourage them as well as correct them. We must see the good in our children no matter how challenging they may become.

I hear many couples who do not uplift each other. They spend more time tearing their spouses down than building them up. I listen to many who make their mate feel stupid. They treat them like one of the children or worse than the pets. These things should not be.

When my husband and I go to a restaurant, we try to compliment the



chef and the server. We have noticed many people complain and gripe about their meals. I know there may be times we have to point out a problem, but there is a tactful way to approach it. We feel sorry for the servers. I guess the people who are complaining have never been hungry. Perhaps if they became really hungry, they would become more grateful.

I know life is not always rosy. We have accidents and trials. We owe money, and our car breaks down. One of our children is in the hospital. There is a death in the family, or someone we love has cancer. The list of troubles can be never-ending. **Job 14:1** states,

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." None of us can compare our lives to Job, but we can agree with his statement.

Do you know what the neatest thing is? As a Christian, I don't have to go through the struggles alone. I have Christian family and friends. They are a great encouragement to me. However, they may not always be able to be there, but there is One who is. **Isaiah 41:13** states, *"For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."* If we combine that with the promise in **Hebrews 13:5** *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,"* we must realize we have an awesome God.

We have so much to be thankful for! We worship a God in heaven who loves us so much He sent His Son to die for our sins, and He promises to be with us forever. He will hold our hands in our problems, and He will never let us go. How can we be so ungrateful? Look what we have in Christ!

If you do not know Jesus Christ, look at what you are missing. Will all your problems go away? No, but you will have a friend who will be with you through it all.

Let us be grateful and always have a thankful spirit. May we spread joy and gratefulness for the blessings we have wherever we go.

Lord, may I always be thankful!



Mrs. Worthington has five children and ten grandchildren. She serves as Principal of Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.

Radio**bits**

88.7, 90.1, 90.5, 90.9, 91.1, & 91.3

November, 2016
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Devastation Brings Opportunity

“In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion... Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress.”

Psalm 71: 1, 3

With the havoc wreaked by Hurricane Matthew during the month of October, many are in the midst of recovery. If you were not affected directly, there is a good chance you know someone who was. Widespread flooding caused many to lose businesses, churches, homes, and even lives.

Regardless of the devastation, we know our Lord will meet our needs as



He sees fit, there should be no doubt about that. As the book of Psalm says, He is our rock and our fortress. He is a safe place for us to run.

As for planning ahead, we each need to look for opportunities, open doors to be a testimony to others for Him. The world is watching how Christians deal with situations like these. How do we cope? Do we blame God? Do we blame each other? Do we waver in our faith? Do we believe His promises and trust He knows what is best for us?

As for Pathway Ministries, we *will* rebuild. We do not feel this is an option, for this is our calling. As Christians, we stand united and will work together to bring glory to God. In the midst of devastation and uncertainty, we have opportunities!

Let us pray and work together as one family in Christ Jesus so the world will see our faith, turn from sin, and glorify our Father in Heaven.

In response to the requests of our Faith Partners we will be sending out several hundred copies of Dr. Johnson's book on Revelation. If you forgot to check the box on your "green card" indicating your desire to obtain a copy, we still have some inventory left. If you will call our office and request a copy, we will be glad to mail one to you while our supplies last.

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The devastation caused by Hurricane Matthew has been massive across our listening area. Just when we thought we had survived the winds, the flood waters arrived at historic levels. Hundreds of families have been affected. At **GoMix** our prayers go out to those that are hurting. There are times when you feel so helpless to come to the aid of those you love.

I am sorry we could not better keep you informed during this crisis. Unfortunately, just like many of you, we were fighting our own battles just trying to survive. Most of our stations were silenced, some by simple power failures, others by water damage. Our Roanoke Rapids studio faced a flood of several inches of water inside the building, while roof leaks over vital equipment was a constant threat at our Snow Hill facility.

As of this writing, **WAGO (88.7)** is off the air due to transmitter issues caused by fluctuating electric voltages. We have two engineers trying to assess the issues at this time. **WZGO (91.1)** in Aurora may have suffered water damage; at this point the property is inaccessible. We have also not been able to gain access to **WGXM (also 91.1)** in Mount Olive. Right now we are praying the building did not flood.

Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro has been apparently flooded with over two feet of water. As of today, we have not been able to gain access to the building. Anticipating this possibility, we worked prior to the flood to remove all essential items from the building while lifting other items as high as possible. We are praying for the best.

This in no way compares with the loss some have experienced. Homes, churches, businesses, crops, and

cars are underwater, still others lost their lives. Satan will use this to bring a spirit of hopelessness upon us if we are not clothed in the full armor of God. ***Let's covenant to pray one for another.***

The second week of our **Fall Share-A-Thon** has been delayed. This is just not the time. Obviously, just like many of you we are scrambling to find the funding to sustain our work, while securing the resources we need to rebuild what was lost. The important thing is that we do get that chance to rebuild. As the old saying goes, we are knocked down, but not knocked out. Our God is still on the throne. We will do our best to keep you posted as the miracles of His unfolding grace meet our need. In the meantime, if our Lord is leading you to help provide financial funding during this recovery, it would be greatly appreciated. Of course, your prayers are always priceless.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Psalms 46:1

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Divinely Separate

Dr. Glenn Mills

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.”

I Corinthians 15:33

Separation is an everyday part of life. It is not a new thing that just came about in the last few years or so. There are lines down the streets and highways to hopefully keep us on the right side of the road. There are signs and instructions almost every place we go to give us information for our needs and safety. Many factories have lines on the floors to separate the workers from moving equipment. The zoo has fences, cages, and glass walls to keep us and the animals safe. Whatever the materials or sources of separation are, there are good reasons the separation is needed.

As believers, we too are instructed by God’s Word to be separate from those living as a part of this world.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

II Corinthians 6:17

Let’s look at some of the reasons for this separation.

Distinction

Kim and I love to visit antique stores. It is one of our favorite past-times. However, most stores are about the same. The sellers put so much stuff in the booths it is hard to really see an item individually. Occasionally someone will showcase an item so

that it really catches your eye. Those items often sell quicker.

There is a house I have always admired in a little town in North Carolina. It is a beautiful white two-story home built in the early nineteen hundreds with lots of charm and character. The problem is the house is the only one of its kind in the neighborhood. It is surrounded by little homes that seem to take away from its beauty. I have often pictured the home moved just outside the town, sitting up on a hill, on a larger piece of land. It would truly then be greatly appreciated for its true value.

That is what God desires for each one of His children. He never intended for us to blend in to the worldly



crowd. We were meant to stand out and show forth the character of Christ. It is only when we separate ourselves from the world that they begin to see the handy work of our God. Like that house, we would not just be the big house in town, but the masterpiece to be admired.

Contamination

This old world is polluted with sin, pride, and greed. My Grandma used to say, *“If you lay down with dogs, you get up with flees.”* Others have said, *“We are the company we keep.”* The Bible makes it clear we are in this world, but not of this world. When we fellowship with those who have no desire for Christ, we become contaminated with their lifestyles, thoughts, opinions, and actions. Something is truly wrong when believers live a worldly lifestyle that would be displeasing to God.

Sadly, today we see little, if any, difference between the Church and the world. Many Christians go to the same places and do the same things as those who do not know Christ. Many immoral practices of the world are also practiced by so-called believers. Some churches have accepted homosexuals as their ministers, which is completely against God’s Word and principles. Sexual immorality is running rampant in the body of Christ. Why? Contamination from the world.

We are instructed in God’s Word not to touch the “unclean” things. This simply means things that are not holy or acceptable to God. Jesus is returning for a spotless bride, not one whose garment is covered with the world’s filth. It is interesting that



many who would not want to be in the same room with a person having a highly contagious disease see no problem with fellowshiping with the world which can just as easily contaminate them with sin.

Influence

Please allow me to stress that being a Christian does not make us better than those without Christ. **Romans 3:23** says, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”*

We all need Jesus. What it does mean is while we are not better than others without Christ, we should be better for others without Christ. Our life and walk with Christ should cause the lost to desire a relationship with Christ as well.

The reason God separates us is so that instead of the world influencing us, we, through the Spirit’s leading, can influence them. When we live like the world, we do not cause the lost to examine their lives. On the

contrary, when we live Godly, holy, and pure lives it sets forth a standard that shows the lost where they are without God. Toleration will never help anyone make the changes they may need. Only true, Godly love can help multitudes see the error of their ways. We become a Godly influence when we allow the Word and the Holy Spirit to first influence us.

Separation is not isolation. God wants us to go into all the world and preach the gospel while remaining separated in our morals, standards, and Biblical principles. It is only when we are truly separated from worldliness that we become fully connected to God.



Dr. Glenn Mills is a full-time Evangelist with the Open Arms Evangelistic Ministry. He can be heard each weekday on GoMix Christian Radio.

Thanksgiving

In Action & Attitude

The Thanksgiving season is the time of year we are encouraged to set aside a few moments to render our appreciation to our Lord for His marvelous blessings. As a Christian, I have come to the conclusion that we greatly misunderstand the concept of giving thanks. True Thanksgiving requires suitable action and a suitable attitude.



Dr. T.D. Worthington

Thanksgiving in Action: *The Thanksgiving Offering*

In reality, we cannot “give” thanks; simply because the “giving” *is* the thanks. I know that’s a bit hard to comprehend, so let’s illustrate it a different way. When someone says “I love you,” that is a wonderful thing to hear. However, we know that saying it is not the same as doing it. You cannot love someone

by the simple utilization of the right words. In the same way, you cannot thank someone by merely articulating the tongue. We all know it takes more than that. *Love is an action word, and so is thanks!*

Certainly, we can speak words of gratitude and appreciation, but we must be ever mindful that this is not the same as being truly thankful.

In Old Testament days God required a special offering of thanksgiving. Obviously, He was not satisfied with just a few appropriate words. True thanksgiving is not in the speaking. It is in the giving. However, even there we see a problem begin to surface. For as a man, how can I really give anything to God that is not already His? Everything is His by creation and by purchase.

Our Lord, by His manifold grace has devised a way for me to give Him true thanksgiving. We read about it in the 25th chapter of Matthew's gospel.

“For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”
(Matthew 25:35-40)

This is true thanksgiving! We prefer the “cheaper way” of just saying “thanks.” Like the cheaper way of “loving” someone is just to say “I love you.” The words are nice, but words standing alone appear to be without a great deal of reality.

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone.”
(James 2:15-17)

Thanksgiving, love, and faith; to be genuine, must be backed up with more than words.

The good news is that all along life's pathway our Lord has ordained opportunities for us to do good works and thereby rendering Him true thanksgiving. As I meet people with legitimate needs I can fill, I must seek direction from the Lord; for perhaps this is one of those ordained “thanksgiving moments.”

Thanksgiving In Attitude: The Thanksgiving Spirit

Beyond the Thanksgiving offering, there is also a *spirit* of thanksgiving that should be manifested in our lives. This is the only element of the thanksgiving holiday that many Christians still recognize--and that, only in a minuscule way. Let me offer you a way to harness the abundant power of the thanksgiving spirit all year round. The concept is simple . . . almost juvenile. . . it is simply this:

Do It For The First Time!

It seems as if we often take so much for granted. When the Lord spoke to Moses on the mountain He made the following statement:

“Come up to me into the mount, and be there;”
(Exodus 24:12)

This simple statement indicated that God wanted Moses to anticipate and truly experience the moment that was about to happen. He desired for Moses not just to be physically present, but emotionally and spiritually present also.

As a husband, when I am with my wife; as a pastor, when I am at church; as a citizen, and I realize that I live in America; I want to truly “*be there.*” As I totally immerse myself in those moments, how could I possibly fail to be thankful?

Remember the first time you held your mate, or your child? Remember the first time you drove a car? You didn't just “*do-it,*” you truly “*experienced it.*” This, if you remember, is the way our Lord commands us to observe the Lord's table. He required more than just our physical presence. That, my friends, is the secret to the spirit of thanksgiving. Always, do it for the first time. Every time you turn on an electric light, drive your car, enjoy the benefits of running water, observe your closet of warm clothes; be there --and do it for the first time, while considering how life would be without these blessings. When I open my eyes, I must not forget the blind. When I take a walk, I must not forget the invalid. When I listen to music, I must not forget the deaf.

These simple concepts will help us to truly experience the real meaning of the Thanksgiving season. We are called to render our sincere thanks to our Lord in word and deed -- *in action and attitude.*



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry forty years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries.

And Finally...



Thankful...

I am thankful today for a God that has adopted me as His son and created me in His workmanship. I am thankful He has given me the desire to live for Him. I am thankful to my adoptive parents that have treated me as one of their own, if not better. I am grateful for the pain and struggles I've encountered in the first two decades of my life which have allowed me to grow in character and become a better person. I am thankful to be a part of a church that is dedicated to missions and discipleship. I am thankful for my dad's ability to be a faithful steward of his time and talent and for helping me understand to always be humble, yet have ambition for God. I am thankful to my mom for helping me understand what a Proverbs 31 woman looks like and for being an example of what I want one day in a wife.

C. R.

I am thankful for each goodnight kiss from my wife, the kindness of strangers, the first sip of coffee in the morning, having a job that allows me to pay my bills, hearing the laughter of my children, God's grace, friends that encourage me, and every sunrise I wake up to see.

B. B.

There are just too many things to mention in a small post that I am thankful for. Jesus is at the top of the list and family is right behind. I am blessed

beyond measure. Things are not always perfect and my struggles are probably similar to the struggles of others, but I know Who holds tomorrow, and I am thankful for the peace my Lord gives every day. Regardless of the state of this world, my future is secure in Christ.

H. J.

I don't know of a better person to be thankful for than Jesus. He is my peace, my joy, my comforter, and my very breath. There is no thing or no one more important to me. I thank Him for my many blessings and that He supplies for all of my needs.

J. S.

"A New Year"

We'd like your help for an upcoming edition of "And Finally..."

Write to us in 150 words or less and tell your plans and goals for the new year. The deadline for submission is November 20th, 2016.

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