



*"Give thanks to the Lord; call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted." Isaiah 12:4-5*

Thanksgiving 2023

Dear friend in Christ,

What is the "measurement" of thanksgiving? Is there a standard by which we gauge our own level of thankfulness? The prophet Isaiah gives us a scale upon which to weigh gratitude. It involves at least two elements - education and worship. He says to the people of God, "MAKE KNOWN [God's] deeds" (educate), and "PROCLAIM that [God's] name is exalted" (worship).

When we are truly thankful for something, or grateful to someone, beyond any feelings or emotions we might experience, there ought to be some outward expression of it, some tangible evidence. Thanksgiving shows through in our lives when we have known the blessings of God; making known God's deeds becomes second nature to us. Rather than take the grace of God for granted, we receive it with gratitude and share it gladly.

Another response, perhaps the primary response of a heart of thanksgiving is worship! Exalting God's name, praising our Redeemer and Lord, proclaiming God's glory in the company of others who join us in worship, places our thanksgiving in context. We share our joy with those around us, and witness to the fact that if it were not for God we would not be able to experience the fullness of life that Christ makes possible amid times of hardship and pain. It doesn't end there. We share our joy with our Creator and Sustainer in worship as well.

We all know the story of the ten lepers healed by Jesus in Luke 17, and how only one returned to give thanks. I've always placed myself in the position of the one that was thankful, yet I admit, looking over the many blessings of God that I've experienced, at times, I've acted as if they came about because of my hard work and ability, rather than through God's generosity.

How easy it is for us to overlook our place among the other nine - the ones who didn't give thanks. Reflecting on our own response to God's goodness is needed more today than ever before. When we do, it will lead to greater generosity in our conversations with others, and an increase in our acts of kindness and thanksgiving.

Here are just a few measurements that may help determine our own level of gratitude: when it comes to church, do we withhold offerings based on fear that we will not have enough for ourselves, or do we give with an attitude of abundance, and a desire to bless others, while trusting God to continue providing for every need we encounter along the way? When it comes to our work-life, do we withhold words of appreciation and encouragement for colleagues, employees, and our employer, or do we affirm their leadership or partnership in a job, recognizing it

would be less satisfying without them? When it comes to our families, do we withhold words of love and forgiveness and affection for our children, spouse or parents, or does our eagerness to let them know how thankful we are for them, show itself?

This Thanksgiving weekend let us consider the true measure of our own thanksgiving! Rather than shortchange anyone, especially God, or withhold any acts of gratitude and joy from those who enrich our lives, let's do what Thanksgiving calls us to do; let's make known God's deeds among the people, and proclaim that God's name is exalted! We have just the place to help make this happen — 110 Church Street, Markham, this Sunday!

For those who have yet to return to in-person worship, or have joined us less frequently, know this - not only do other people miss you, but GOD misses your public proclamation of faith. God misses hearing you exalt his name through corporate worship. Of course anyone can praise God at home, but they miss the witness and fellowship of all those in

whom God is at work causing miracles to happen, offering healing, or bringing someone through a time of discernment or difficulty. You'll miss their songs of praise as they sing out their thanksgiving to God. We don't want any one to miss any of these blessings! Looking forward to worshipping with you soon!

With gratitude,

Pastor Craig

"The life you see me living is not "mine", but it is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I am not going to go back on that." Galatians 2:20 MSG