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## THANKSGIVING DAY EVERYDAY – GIVE THANKS ALWAYS

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Thank you Lord for your many blessings! Thank you for intervention and protecting your people; for your constant love and your everlasting mercy. Please accept our gratitude for this time to pray and praise you and we commit our hearts, minds and lives into your hands in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen!

Thursday was Thanksgiving Day here in the United States and the day that the Seattle Sea Hawks won the football game over the San Francisco Forty-Niners, nineteen to three. The week before that the Seattle Sea Hawks beat Phoenix by the same identical score of 19 to 3. I am thankful for many things this week including the Seattle Sea Hawks victories. During half-time there was a segment about Russell Wilson, quarterback for the Sea Hawks of the National Football League (NFL) that was most interesting.

When the director of corporate annual giving for the Seattle Children's Hospital's foundation first heard about the Seahawks' rookie who called Seattle Children's Hospital, unsolicited, asking if he and his wife could come by and spend some time with patients and if there was anything he could do to help, she didn't believe it at first. Kopp felt she'd done this dance with professional athletes before, and it frequently resulted in a few awkward, superficial photo ops and eventual disappointment. Most of the staff had never even heard of Russell Wilson. "At the time, he was just a third-string quarterback, fresh out of the University of Wisconsin. Some athletes have it written into their contracts to do charity appearances, and so it's easy for them to select Seattle Children. It might even be part of a requirement from the team. Typically, we see them once and that's about it. We figured with Russell, we'd see him once or twice, and then never again."

Wilson, however, kept showing up, every Tuesday. He enjoyed what the hospital initially set up for him, goofing around with a big group of kids in a playroom. But what he really wanted, he admitted, was to spend time with families in one-on-one settings. He wanted to do something that would allow him to have real conversations with them, if only for 30 minutes. Kopp was stunned and thrilled. "It's really rare for an athlete to feel comfortable going room to room, seeing sick kids with bandages all over and IVs in their arms," Kopp said. But Wilson felt like it grounded him. It took him away from the regular chaos of his life. Wilson explained that he had lost his father, Harrison, from Diabetes complication in 2010. Seeing his Dad struggling with debilitating disease for several years meant he wasn't uncomfortable in hospitals. As long as it was OK, he'd like to keep coming back, keep meeting families and spending time with even the sickest kids, week after week.

Even as his football responsibilities grew, he kept coming back for what the hospital soon dubbed as Blue Tuesdays, a play off the team colors. He didn't want publicity, he preferred to keep it relatively quiet, but once he got permission from the families, he started posting pictures on Twitter of himself and his wife together with kids they visited. He wanted to show the world there was nothing to be afraid of. A lot of people hear about the visits and they start speculating what the real motive really is. Kopp says, "It's almost too good to be true. But it's really this simple: He was raised right, and he has amazing morals and ethics. He's an avid Christian, and he wants to walk the talk. Russell has won the hearts of the kids and the staff. Internationally recognized staff at the research institute are advancing new discoveries in cancer and pushing the boundaries of medical research to find cures for pediatric diseases and improve outcomes for children all over the world."

People often take God for granted, as well as each other, and forget to give God thanks and praise. I admire anyone who loves others and especially children. You can know a person by their fruits. David gives thanks to God for his enduring mercy in **Psalm 136:1-26** —"Give thanks to the Lord for he is good! His **mercy endures forever**. He is the God of gods! The Lord of lords! He alone does great wonders. By wisdom he made the heavens, laid out the earth above the waters, and made great lights. The sun rules the day and the moon and stars rule by night. Give thanks to the Lord who struck Egypt in their firstborn, and brought out Israel from among them with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm. To Him who led his people through the wilderness, who struck down and slew great kings and gave their land as a heritage to Israel His servant. Give thanks to God who remembered us in our lowly state, and rescued us from our enemies and gives food to all flesh." God's mercy does endure forever.

In my personal Bible study this morning the instruction in **Proverbs 23:17** impressed me as a key to help each of us to remember to be thankful to God every day of our lives. "Do not let your heart envy sinners. But, be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day; for surely there is a hereafter and your hope will not be cut off." We need to keep our destiny in mind and God's great plan for us and for the human race to be his heirs that are to be living children — sons in the family in the kingdom of God ruling over the entire Universe that is the hereafter. A limitless spiritual life after this present physical life we now have. There is a destiny and a plan that God is working out here below. We can have faith in God that our hope will not be cut off, so we need to be zealous and filled with zeal for the fear and the awe of God all day long —"morning to evening, from the time you rise in the morning until the time you lay down to sleep through the night."

**Philippians 4:4 -7**—Paul instructed, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. <sup>6</sup> *Be anxious for nothing*, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

**1 Thessalonians 5:17-18**—"pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> *in everything give thanks*; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." This means include even your trials and tests, because they work character development and show God's hand in your salvation (saving you) as he did for the Israelites coming out of Egypt. It is important that we remember to be in a thankful spirit and

attitude at all times. **Colossians 3:14 -16**—“But above all these things — tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, put on love, which is the bond of perfection. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of God rule in your hearts (be settled and content), to which also you were called (peace) in one body; and *be thankful*. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do (all you do) in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*” Thank God for being given the opportunity of life to serve him. **Ephesians 5:19** —“do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> *giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,* <sup>21</sup> submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

How can we possibly do this? Paul answers this in **Romans 8:28-32** —“And we know that all things (the entire Universe) *work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called* (chosen by God) according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom he predestined, these he also called; whom he called, these He also justified; and whom he justified, these He also glorified.” God’s love is everlasting. “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Brethren we have a lot for which to be thankful, so let us be continually thankful!

There is a story in **2 Samuel** about a man, named Shimei, who wasn’t very thankful. He was the son of Gera, a Benjamite of the house of Saul who lived at Bahurim. [Saul had not been willing to obey God and was jealous of David]. *Peloubet’s Bible Dictionary*, page 621, “When David came to Bahurim and his suite were seen descending the long defile on his flight from Absalom Shimei came out cursing continuously as he came (**2 Sam. 16: 5-13**). The whole rebellious feeling of the clan of Benjamin burst forth without restraint in the person of Shimei. He ran along the ridge, cursing and throwing stones at the king and his companions.” <sup>9</sup> “Abishai the son of Zeruah said to the king, ‘Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!’ <sup>10</sup> But the king said, ‘What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruah (Zeruah was the mother of the three leading heroes in David’s army)? See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him. <sup>12</sup> It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day.’ <sup>13</sup> And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust.” “So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, ‘Curse David.’ Who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’ ” David knew his punishment was from God, so he just humbled himself and continued on his way.

Well, that is just the beginning of the story of Shimei. The next meeting was very different. The king was now returning from his successful campaign (2 Samuel 19:15-20) and came to the

Jordan River. Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and escort him and his household across the Jordan River. Shimei with a thousand men of Benjamin with him and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; hurried and came down with Judah. They went over before the king. A ferryboat went across to carry over the king's household. Shimei was one of the first persons to welcome David when he had crossed the Jordan and threw himself at David's feet in abject penitence. Then he said to the king, "Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, or remember what wrong your servant did on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem, that the king should take it to heart."<sup>20</sup> For I, your servant, know that I have sinned. Therefore here I am, the first to come today of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."

Abishai still had an attitude and said, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?" David again rebuked Abishai saying, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruah, that you should be adversaries to me today? Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I am king over Israel?"<sup>23</sup> Therefore the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king swore to him. But the king's suspicions were not set at rest by this submission. As David drew near to his death and Solomon was now king, he recalled the whole scene to the recollection of his son Solomon. Then Solomon gave Shimei notice (1 Kings 2:36-37) that from henceforth, he must consider himself confined to the walls of Jerusalem, on pain of death. Shimei had been forgiven for all his ranting and cursing and he kept his agreement for three years. "Now at the end of three years it happened that two of Shimei's slaves ran away and he was told that they were in Gath, so Shimei saddled his donkey and went to Achish at Gath seeking his slaves and brought them back to Jerusalem. Solomon was told that Shimei had gone to Gath and had come back."

**2 Kings 2:41-46** —"Then the king sent and called for him for Shimei, and said to him, 'Did I not make you swear by the LORD, and warn you, saying, "Know for certain that on the day you go out and travel anywhere, you shall surely die?" And you said to me, "The word I have heard is good."<sup>43</sup> Why then have you not kept the oath of the LORD and the commandment that I gave you?'<sup>44</sup> The king said moreover to Shimei, 'You know, as your heart acknowledges, all the wickedness that you did to my father David; therefore the LORD will return your wickedness on your own head. But King Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD forever.' So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he went out and struck him down, and he died. Thus the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon."

Shimei did not overcome his unthankful spirit even when he was forgiven; he took it lightly by breaking his promise and therefore forfeited his life. God wants us to be thankful that we have been forgiven all of our sins, and to be grateful by remaining obedient to Him and keep his commandments. The story of Shimei is written as an example for us. If we disobey God after he has forgiven us of all the sins we have committed, then we will earn a place in the lake of fire and be destroyed and forfeit our eternal life. We must remain obedient and give God thanks every day in all things continuously. Be strong, therefore, and keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written.

Shimei judged and accused wanting to pick a fight with David who let it go saying that maybe God would have mercy on him and God did. He restored the kingdom to David. Shimei begged for David's forgiveness and David gave it to him. After swearing an oath before the Lord to keep the command that Solomon had given him that he had agreed to and accepted he forfeited his life by disobeying. If our attitude is one of gratitude and thankfulness toward God, we will not be picking on our neighbor or other people. We will love our neighbor and not be going around finding fault (criticizing, complaining, contending, comparing, slandering) with them and being picky! Hear the word of the Lord. God's judgment is sure. Those who curse and find fault with their brother will suffer the vengeance of Almighty God. Shimei is an example for us NOT TO follow. If he had truly repented of his sin in cursing David God's servant, he would have kept his word and stayed in Jerusalem and treated his agreement seriously. **KJV**—"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."<sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit.<sup>20</sup> Do not despise prophecies.<sup>21</sup> Test all things; hold fast what is good.<sup>22</sup> Abstain from every form of evil."

**1 Thessalonians 5:18—NIV**—"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Thanksgiving Day is distinctively Christian and American. Our country was established by courageous men, women and children who lived honorably and through faith in God made enormous sacrifices to secure freedom for us all. The Pilgrims were ordinary men and women with extraordinary faith, and inspiring perseverance in their journey of faith. We need to understand the uniqueness of the birth of this nation and remember the miracles of God's sovereignty at work in the lives of our forefathers and His providential direction of their circumstances as our country grew through protection and deliverance. Nearly four hundred years later, we are the beneficiaries of their sacrifice and have set a national day aside at the end of the harvest season (last Thursday in November) as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father in heaven.

I am so thankful for my wife Cappy and the ladies who did the work to bring about a wonderful dinner and made sure to serve some of my favorite foods of mash potatoes, dressing, gravy, cranberry sauce, green beans with water chestnuts and pumpkin pie along with roasted goose instead of turkey this year. It is a time of spiritual fellowship and being at home together around the table where we share and talk about our blessings, faith, family, freedom and recognition of God's hand in our history. We share our thankfulness to God by reviewing and acknowledging what God has done in our lives and for his work and goodness of today. Thanksgiving is healthy and thankfulness is biblical. I feel sorry for those who go around saying otherwise and manifest a different spirit.

My special appreciation and thanks to my wife Cappy for the energy she finds to faithfully continue preparing the weekly Bible study summary transcripts in addition to all the other things she does in helping with the work and maintaining our home, gardens, health and inspiration day to day for the past 47 years and I continue to count our blessings each day. I rejoice that God gave me Cappy as my wife. He worked out the details. It is a miracle that amazed the people at Ambassador College. One person wrote a letter to someone in England with the comment, "Cappy is engaged to marry Bill Dankenbring—feature that!" Cappy was a striking blond that caused many people to turn their heads. She had already graduated from Loma Linda University

with a BS in nursing. I am thankful for our family, children and grandchildren, all our friends, neighbors, and all who help and are a part of this work and all whose hearts are serving God.

**Psalm 100** — *A Song of Thanksgiving*

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.

<sup>3</sup> Know that the LORD is God.

It is he, who made us, and we are his<sup>[a]</sup>;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

<sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations

**Psalm 103** — Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!  
Forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, heals all your diseases,  
redeems your life from destruction, crowns you with loving-kindness and tender  
mercies, satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the  
eagle's, The LORD executes righteousness and justice  
for all who are oppressed.

He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.

The LORD *is* merciful and gracious; slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our  
iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who  
fear Him;

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him.

For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes.

For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.

But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him,  
and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant,

And to those who remember His commandments to do them.

The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.

Bless the LORD, you His angels,  
who excel in strength,  
who do His word, heeding the voice of His word.

Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, you ministers of His  
who do His pleasure.,

Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

**Hebrews 2:5-8** —“For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. <sup>6</sup> But one testified in a certain place, saying: ‘What is man that you are mindful of him, nor the son of man that you take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor and set him over the works of your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.’ For in that he put all in subjection under him; he left nothing that is not put under him.” God is going to make man to rule over all things – to put all things under our feet. Moffatt translates “*all things*” as Universe. That means everything—all that is created. It is all going to be put under the feet of man after we are born into the family of God as his sons – with his very own family attributes! It is amazing how little we understand of the important things. Persevere in thankfulness and commit everything into God’s hands and be grateful, rejoice in thanksgiving.

Humans can be very judgmental of others around them on little things. **Matthew 7:1**—“Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup> For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” **Luke 6: 42**—Christ said, “Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.” “How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” If you have gratitude in your heart, you will not be practicing judging everyone else and finding fault with others. God wants us to appreciate one another and not be critics.

One of my favorite sayings, “The Man in the Arena” was given by Theodore Roosevelt in his speech "Citizenship in a Republic" delivered at the Sorbonne, in Paris, France on 23 April, 1910. It hangs on a plaque in our family room.

### **The Man in the Arena (The Doer of Deeds)**

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither knows victory nor defeat.”

Brethren, think about being a doer of deeds. We may make mistakes. Who has not ever made a mistake? The person who has not made a mistake, never made anything. Where there is action and work there are mistakes. Sometimes we make the same mistakes again, and have to make the best of it. Enthusiasm and zeal in our lives must be developed, just as we have to practice in order to develop the habit of being thankful and grateful to God. I used the name Triumph when beginning to publish, because my aim is to triumph in the high achievement which God himself provides and not to fall short, but to persevere and endure on to the end and know victory in

Christ. Words of others can be negative and cutting, but God is able to heal the discouraged, hurt and broken-hearted.

**Psalm 103:11**—“ For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;  
<sup>12</sup> As far as the east is from the west,  
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.  
<sup>13</sup> As a father pities his children,  
so the LORD pities those who fear Him.  
<sup>14</sup> For He knows our frame;  
He remembers that we are dust.

“Man’s days are like grass, like a flower of the field flourishing then gone and his place is not remembered. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children, to those who keep His covenant, and do His commandments.”

**Psalm 105:1(NIV)**—  
“CALL upon God’s name and give thanks!  
Give thanks to the LORD. Worship him.  
Tell the nations what he has done.  
<sup>2</sup> Sing to him. Sing praise to him.  
Tell about all of the wonderful things he has done.  
<sup>3</sup> Praise him, because his name is holy.  
Let the hearts of those who trust in the LORD be glad.  
<sup>4</sup> Look to the LORD and to his strength.  
Always look to him.  
<sup>5</sup> Remember the wonderful things he has done.”

### **Psalm 145:2-21**

“Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee.”

**Psalm 147:1-19** —“Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful. He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds. He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name. Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite. The LORD lifts up the humble; great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite. He casts the wicked down to the ground. Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving. Sing praises on the harp to our God who covers the heavens with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, makes grass to grow on the mountains, gives to the beast its

food, and to the young ravens that cry.”

“He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.”

“Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! For He has strengthened the bars of your gates;

He has blessed your children within you.  
Makes peace in your borders, and  
Fills you with the finest wheat. He  
sends out His command to the earth;

“His word runs very swiftly.

He gives snow like wool,  
scatters the frost like ashes, and  
casts out His hail like morsels.  
Who can stand before His cold? He sends out His word and melts

them;

He causes His wind to blow, and the waters flow.

“He declares His word to Jacob, his statutes and His judgments to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation; and as for His judgments, they have not known them.

Praise the LORD!

#### **Psalm 149:2-4**

“Let Israel rejoice in their Maker. Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation.”

**Psalm 150:1-6** —“**Praise the LORD!** Praise God in His sanctuary; in His mighty firmament!

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet Praise Him for His mighty acts; according to His excellent greatness! Praise him with the

lute and harp!  
timbrel and dance;  
stringed instruments and flutes!  
loud cymbals with clashing cymbals.

“LET EVERYTHING THAT HAS BREATH PRAISE THE LORD. **Praise the LORD!** ”

Always **in all things**, give THANKS always!

Job was a righteous man, but he was tested and became distracted and stopped giving thanks and began to complain. God heard and God told Job to stand still and consider the wondrous works and revealed himself to Job out of the whirlwind and questioned Job. “Moreover the Lord said, “Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct

Him? He who rebukes God let him answer it. Prepare yourself and you shall answer me.' ” It was not until God revealed himself in his majesty and power to Job that Job saw his sinful attitude and confessed: “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” and acknowledges God’s sovereignty. Then it was that having seen his attitude to be worse than anything that he had ever done, he emerged from suffering praising and giving thanks and gives to God. He was tested by Satan, but remained faithful to God in spite of his afflictions and loss. The sufferings of Job are shown to be used of God to test and refine his character.

Brethren, we need to do the very same thing. Make use of this time in our lives to praise God with all we have in prayer and praise, giving thanks to him in everything all the time. Satan is a real fallen angel who is allowed to test mankind with deceitfulness, wickedness, lying, wonders. He wanders like a hungry lion seeking whom he may devour.

As you have the opportunity, do good to all men. Amen!