

When God's People Give Thanks (Isaiah 12)

**By Mark Mayberry
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Introduction

What is the significance of Thanksgiving? (1) Many view Thanksgiving as a time of family, food, fun and football. (2) Others observe Thanksgiving as a celebration of diversity: eliminating the spiritual significance of the day, they would rather focus on the fact that Pilgrims and Indians sat down together in peace. (3) For those who posit that Western civilization is the cause of all the world's ills, the first Thanksgiving was a harbinger of doom, disease, death and destruction. (4) The Pilgrims, the founding fathers of our country, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln all felt the need to set aside a time to offer thanksgiving to God. This is the true heritage of Thanksgiving Day.

With Thanksgiving just around the corner let us consider the subject of being thankful, not just on one particular day, but throughout the entire year. This lesson touches on the characteristics of thanksgiving. When God's people give thanks, what happens? Four things. Let us examine Isaiah 12 to find the characteristics of thanksgiving. The first twelve chapters of Isaiah contain prophecies of condemnation directed against Judah for her waywardness and sin. Yet, this section closes on a positive note — the song of the thankful remnant (Isaiah 12:1-6).

They Are United

They are United (v.1) — True thanksgiving comes from all the faithful, not just a select few (Ps. 30:4-5; Rom. 15:5-6).

They Are Trusting

They are Trusting (v.2) — True thanksgiving comes from trusting (having confidence) in God, not in self (Isa. 26:1-3; Phil. 4:4-7).

They Are Joyful

They are Joyful (v.3) — True thanksgiving is an expression of joy, not a mere mechanical duty (Isa. 35:8-10; Acts 2:46-47).

They Are Expressive

They are Expressive (vv.4-6) — True thanksgiving is something to be spoken, not just silently considered. Therefore, let us give thanks to the Lord (Ps. 92:1-4; Rev. 4:9-11), making known His deeds among the peoples (Ps. 105:1-3; Col. 1:24-29), manifesting praise in the midst of the assembly (Zeph. 3:14-17; Col. 3:15-17).

Conclusion

Unity, trust, joy and expression – are these characteristics found in your thanksgiving? To the lost, will you unite yourself with other Christians in obedience to the gospel? Then you will have something to be truly thankful for this week. To the saved, will you review your thanksgiving to see if you are walking the highway of holiness? You too will have something to be truly thankful for this week.