

# THANKSGIVING 2020

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*“Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness,  
and for His wonderful works to the children of men! (Psalm 107.8-9)*

Thanksgiving Day gives us an opportunity to lift our minds and hearts above the turmoil and confusion of our strife-torn world and give thanks to the Lord God Almighty Creator of Heaven and earth.

At Thanksgiving we deliberately lift our thoughts and words to remember, recognize, celebrate and declare the mercies and blessings that surround us. Above all we thank the Lord for His goodness, loving faithfulness and redemptive ability to restore all that we lost through sin, sins and past mistakes. Thanking the Lord brings His continuous redemptive ability into our present day lives including the current confusion of Covid and political strife.

It was at the height of the Civil War, in October 1863 when America was going through its darkest hour that President Lincoln was inspired to make Thanksgiving a national Holiday - a day set aside as a “Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.” This Day of Thanksgiving is not simply a day of family togetherness and ‘thankfulness’ but it is specifically a day of prayer and thanksgiving *to God* from whom alone all our blessings come. It is a National Day of Prayer (not simply a day of feasting and fellowship) to welcome and draw down from God’s urgently needed mercies which can heal our nation.

Only four countries worldwide have a Thanksgiving Day: USA, Canada, Liberia and Grenada. It is a tradition that inspires these nations to acknowledge the Source of their blessing. When the spirit of gratitude comes, forgiveness comes and when forgiveness comes blessings flow. The act of thanking God breaks us out of the cycle of accusations, blame, grumbling and complaining that threatens to destroy our social cohesion. It causes us to realize that we are not competitor’s squabbling for limited resources and over competing viewpoints but sharers together of the endless goodness and providences of God, Our Loving Heavenly Father and Creator.

Thanksgiving lifts our attention from our problems, to the goodness and power of God. It can calm our fears, restore our peace, reset our perspective. Yes, the world is filled with hardships, and we are living in times of great difficulty. However, when we focus on the absolute reality of God’s goodness with faith and thanksgiving, His hand and power are released into our situations, and we experience His empowerment to go through life’s problems victoriously. In the realm of thanksgiving even our difficulties become occasions of thanksgiving because God, through His redemptive touch, is able to make every setback and problem work for our good. *“We know that **all things work together for good** to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”* (Romans 8.28) The practice of thanksgiving releases God’s ability to make the evil that was meant to harm us work for our good. This is what Joseph experienced when he said to his brothers *“You meant it for evil but God meant it for good to save the lives of many.”* (Genesis 50. 20)

Thanksgiving is miraculous. It turns problems into stepping stones. It turns mourning into dancing, fear into hope, difficulties into opportunities, enemies into friends, frustration into laughter and depression into joy. It releases the redemptive hand of God *“who makes all things work together for our good”* and who actually commands us to *“Rejoice always”* and *“to give thanks in everything.”*