



[TOP](#)

Thankful, Yes! But To Whom?

NOVEMBER 22ND 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Thankful, Yes! But To Whom?

*By Jason Lee
Special to SMT*

FORT WORTH, Texas -- "Pass the turkey, please." You can hear the subtle scrape of the fork on the plate to get the last delicious bite of grandmother's dressing with giblet gravy. Can you picture the scene? Aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, parents and grandparents all gathered around a table crowded with various casseroles, another new sweet potato recipe, cranberry sauce and of course, the majestic bird as the main attraction.

Just after everyone gathers at the table and way before the scramble for the best couch to nap on during the Cowboys game, someone announces, "Let's all say what we are thankful for." Sure, it is a great idea, but is it more than just a family tradition?

For the secular mind, the whole holiday makes no sense. Thanksgiving? Thanksgiving somehow implies that I am not in charge of my own destiny. Thanksgiving somehow implies that a higher power not only exists but is in some way personally interested and personally involved in my life. To the secular mind, the very notion of "thanksgiving" is repulsive and must be replaced. So, the movement to the title of "Turkey Day" is no real surprise. And in these economic times, one wonders whether the national celebration is for Thanksgiving or for the consumer spending on Black Friday. Since Christmas is really about the gifts, then why wouldn't Thanksgiving be about the department store sales and the electronic deals?

As Christians, we know intuitively that we should resist the secular revisions. However, is our list of what we are thankful for, enough to be a significant contrast with the contemporary climate? Does our thanksgiving actually confess a genuine hope in the Lord?

Believers recognize that we are not just thankful for the good things that we have but that we should direct our thanksgiving to God. If we do not add to whom we are thankful, then our thanksgiving becomes little more than a progress report or satisfaction quotient. So, it is not just that we are thankful for (i.e. happy with) our jobs, our homes or our health. We are thankful to God who is our provider, our protector and our sustainer.

But what if Grandpa's question is, "What are you thankful for?" Should I correct him and say that the real question is not "what I am thankful for" but "who I am thankful to"? No, don't do that or you may be dismissed from the table before the pumpkin pie. But it is not just that we remember that we should be thankful to God, but that we are also thankful for God (e.g. Psalms. 9:1-2). It is true that we are often overwhelmed by the gracious and loving acts of God including His good gifts of material provisions and life/health for us or our family. We are truly amazed at His provision of spiritual benefits such as forgiveness of sins, the fruit of the Spirit or a loving community of believers. However, we must never let our thanksgiving for the good provisions of God overshadow our thanks for God Himself. We need to thank Him because of His glorious nature. There would be no possibility of wonderful things such as love, mercy, truth, righteousness, beauty and life, except through God who IS these things. So, pass the rolls, but first remember to be thankful to God, for God.

Jason Lee is associate professor of historical theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. This column first appeared at TheologicalMatters.com, a blog of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

LAST UPDATED ON NOVEMBER 22ND 2011 BY UNKNOWN

<https://showmetimes.com/Blogpost/ukt3/Thankful-Yes-But-To-Whom>

[Go to post](#)

More from ShowMe Times:



SUBSCRIBE TO "FAITH MATTERS"

ShowMe Gold Sponsors