

The Voyager

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NOVEMBER 2011

Thanksgiving: I Am Thankful For...

Compiled by Sister Barbara Hilliard

Thanksgiving Day, one of the most joyful events celebrated in America, is a celebration of the harvest season. Family and friends come together to worship, eat together and participate in sincere discussion as to the things for which they are thankful. Psalm 100, "a psalm of thanksgiving", admonishes us to always be thankful and acknowledge God as the Supreme Ruler.

As we approach Thanksgiving Day, it is important that we remember that this is not just a time when we simply focus on the meal we will enjoy. Thus, we solicited responses to the statement "This Thanksgiving I am thankful for..."

This Thanksgiving I am most thankful that our heavenly Father has continued to keep his arms of comfort and protection around my family and friends. I also feel enormously blessed to be a member of such a loving and supportive church family.

--Sister Evelyn Alexander Bishop

I give thanks to God our Father for His many blessings; for His grace and mercy so freely given and for health and strength as I seek His methods to glorify Him. I am so grateful this Thanksgiving, for God has purposed someone special in my life, a soon-to-be helpmate and soul mate who will continue to step out in faith, spread the "Good News", and "Launch out into the deep...", your pastor, Reverend C. Edward Rhodes, II. For this I am eternally blessed.

--Sister Allison Corlese Thomas

I think everyday should be Thanksgiving Day. This Thanksgiving season, I am thankful for the Lord who sends us blessings each day and for His son, Jesus. I'm thankful for God's grace and mercy. I am also thankful for the blessing I received to become a blessing to someone else. I am grateful for my church, family and friends. I am thankful for the Lord watching over us, good health/ healing and providing for my family and others.

--Sister Patricia Thomas

This Thanksgiving, I am thankful for family, friends, and great neighbors as I share visits, meals or just a lazy afternoon going to the movies or shopping.

I am also thankful for the memories of those who are no longer with us.

--Sister Rosetta Walker

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All About Gratitude

For centuries, people in many countries have held harvest festivals to celebrate the bounty of the land and the blessings of life. **In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln established a national holiday in the United States as "a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father."**

Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen thinks that most holidays have been corrupted by commercialism, while Thanksgiving Day has retained its intended purpose. He said, "This is a very rare day. It is wholly and entirely about gratitude."

No matter what others do, we as followers of Christ have the privilege and responsibility to extend the spirit of thankfulness to every day of the year. Paul urged the Colossians to keep growing in Christ while overflowing with thankfulness ([Col. 2:6-7](#)). We are to do everything "in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (3:17).

Abraham Lincoln's proclamation also declared that all our blessings "are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy."

This is a fitting day to express gratitude to God. And so is tomorrow, and every day that follows.

Reprinted from OUR DAILY BREAD, November 23, 2006.



Women to Observe World Day of Prayer

By Sister Emma Hurley

The **Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer** will be observed **Monday, November 7, 2011, 11 a.m.**, at Cade Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. The theme is "In Step with the Spirit". Music will be provided by the Jackson Metropolitan Retired Community Chorale. Lunch will be served. For additional information, you may call Sister Mary Coleman at 601-362-8105.

In 1948, following the devastation and division of World War II, European women organized themselves into a continental union. They gave birth to the idea of a special Day of Prayer among Baptist women. The first Day of Prayer was promoted as "a means to

reunite Baptists separated by the pain and devastation if war and to strengthen the spiritual bonds in years to come."

The idea and promotion of this observance spread to other continents. Women leaders met in Cleveland, Ohio, prior to the 1950 World Congress to make plans for organizing and expanding the observance. Since that time, the Day of Prayer movement among Baptist women has continued to grow. Observances are now held in nearly every country where there are Baptist groups. Women of the world are linked and provided spiritual lifelines that strengthen and give hope to mankind.



Time to Set the Temperature



Pastor C. Edward Rhodes, II

Our State Convention's Fall Session convenes November 14-16. As Baptist pastors and delegates gather for impartation and fellowship, I'm reminded of the salient words of a great Baptist pastor, Martin Luther King Jr, found in his epistle from a Birmingham Jail. I pray they remind our congregation and convention of what it means for the church to be the Church. Read and reflect on the following excerpt:

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? [...]"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson and the great grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

There was a time when the church was very powerful -- in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. *In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society.* Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators." But the Christians

pressed on, in the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven," called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests. Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent -- and often even vocal -- sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. *If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century.* Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekklesia and the hope of the world. *But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity [...]* I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour.



Jesus' Pattern of Giving Thanks

Submitted by Sister Jessie Lampley from Scripture Dig, November 22, 2010

He spoke the world into being, created everything that exists, placed the planets in space, set the seasons in motion and continues to sustain the totality of all that is, yet, Jesus left us a beautiful example of giving thanks.

It's amazing how the Bread of Life was thankful for His daily bread.

"Then He took the seven loaves and the fish, thanked God for them, and broke them into pieces. He gave them to the disciples, who distributed the food to the crowd." — Matthew 15:36

The one who is our Wisdom was thankful for the wisdom given to the simple.

"At that time Jesus prayed this prayer: 'O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike.'" — Matthew 11:25

The one whose words move mountains and thunders through the heavens, speaks words of thanksgiving to the Heavenly Father for hearing and answering His prayer.

"Jesus responded, 'Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?' So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.'" — John 11:40-42

The one who established the Passover, became the Passover Lamb. Yet before He took His place on the cross as the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world, He gave thanks to the Heavenly Father.

"As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then He broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, 'Take this and eat it, for this is my body.'" — Matthew 26:25

Jesus leaves us the perfect example of what it means to be thankful. Whether eating, seeking wisdom, living to glorify Christ or facing difficult days, we must maintain a heart of thanksgiving.

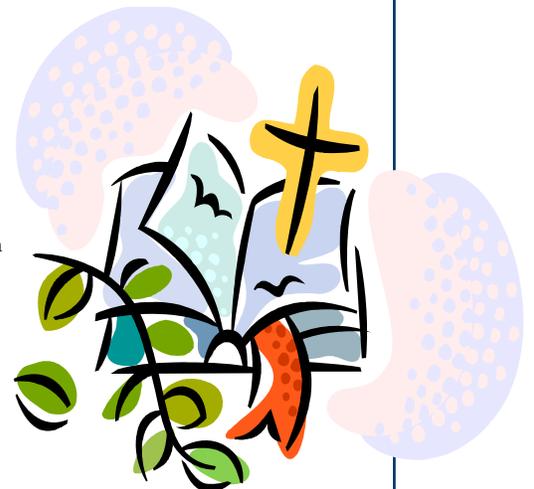
As we approach the day we celebrate with thanksgiving for all He is and all He has done, we are painfully aware that this may be a difficult time for you. Life isn't always easy.

Yet, Jesus has come that we might have life and have it more abundantly. He has called us to be thankful regardless of our circumstances. A friend of mine recently said, "Why do we thank God when things are good, but not when they are bad?" Should we only expect that which is good and easy?

Our thanks is to God because He is God and He is good -- regardless of what our life may whisper in our ears. No wonder the Word of God tells us to give thanks in everything, for this is the will of God.

Have you thought about how Jesus left us a pattern of thanks giving?

Do you struggle with being thankful in all things?





Religious Books Acquisitions

Brother Charles Holmes

Spurred on by Pastor C.E. Rhodes for the church to adopt the hymnal *Total Praise*, I rushed to Marshall Book Store on Farish Street to peruse it before purchasing it. It has a new copyright 2011 with endorsements by the President of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. and several member pastors in several states. The Church Covenant and Articles of Faith are featured. The preface states, "this hymnal includes songs of a number of genres: classic and majestic hymns, historic joyful songs and modern piano choruses." The price is \$18.00, published by the Townsend Press of the Sunday School Publishing Board in Nashville, Tennessee.

Another religious publication on the table that caught my eyes was *Images of a Preacher: A Study of the Reverend Joseph H. Jackson*, the fourth President of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., 1953-1982. The author of this biography is Sherman R. Tribble, Director of Book Publishing at the Sunday School Publishing Board. The price is \$19.95. This book was the author's doctoral dissertation at Northwestern University.

One other book that merits our attention, I believe, is *The Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of Jesus' Teaching* by Obery M. Hendricks, Jr. (2006), published by Doubleday. One may note that it relates to, among other teachings of Jesus, to the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:38-41 with the chapter "Strategy Sign: Take Blows Without Returning Them," our Sunday school lesson for November 13, 2011. The price for this book is \$15.90.

The Giving Tree

Sister Jessie Lampley

The Giving Tree, first published in 1964 by Harper and Row, is a children's book written and illustrated by Shel Silverstein. It is a tale about a relationship between a young boy and a tree. The tree always provides the boy with what he wants: branches on which to swing, shade in which to sit, and apples to eat. The tree loves the boy very much and gives him anything he asks for. In the ultimate act of self-sacrifice, the tree lets the boy cut it down so the boy can build a boat in which he can sail.

There's a tale of a boy born in a town called Bethlehem. His name is Jesus. He was born to save people from their sins, not His sins, but theirs. As the story continues, we find out the boy grew up to fulfill the mission that he was sent to do. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, clothed the needy and saved lost souls. His love for us is so great. His ultimate act of sacrifice was being crucified on the cross so we would have life everlasting.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." — John 3:16

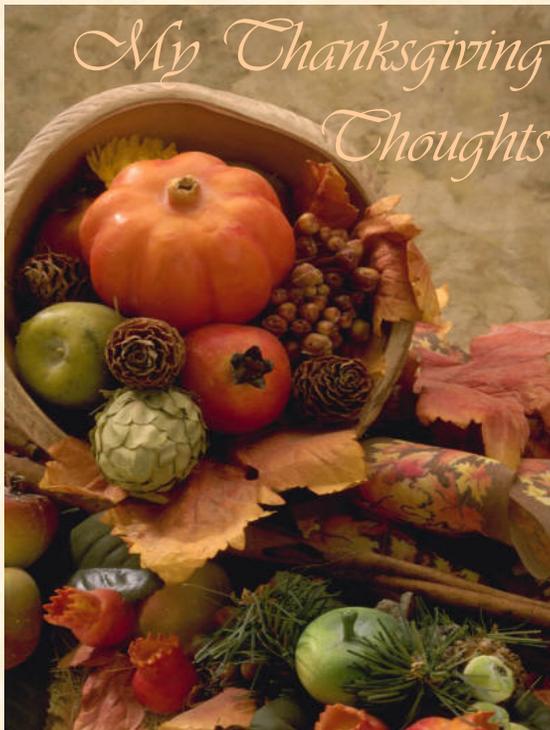
Leaving the power and glory in Heaven to come down to earth, Jesus gave up everything to save us from sin. He wants us to give generously. Jesus taught believers that God is pleased when we give and we cannot give "grudgingly" or "of necessity" but cheerfully, "for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

One can ask, "Is my giving like Jesus or the world?" (John 14:27) We tend to give to those we deem worthy, only what we deem necessary and we expect to receive something in return. Jesus gives because He loves all mankind. He gives generously, freely and only wants a relationship with us.

Because God has given us so much, He first wants us to give ourselves to Him. He wants us to give willingly, cheerfully and through love. When God gives us another day, we ought to thank Him for yet another opportunity to reflect on where we are in terms of our giving. When God gives us another day, we ought to thank Him for the many blessings given to us.

Not just this season, let's give to others as God has given to us. Not just this season but every season, let's remember everyday is a day of Thanks Giving.





By Sister Beverly J. Shaeffers

Almighty God, thank you for life;
 For my wonderful parents
 Who taught me that only you give life.
 God, thank you for the love and happiness
 Shared with/by my family and friends.

God, thank you for all that you have done;
 For the food you've provided;
 For the rain, sunshine, moon, flowers and trees.

God, thank you for all your blessings
 You have bestowed upon me;
 For health and strength; for the good and bad;
 For looking beyond my faults.

God, thank you for your love;
 For I am forever grateful for all your blessings,
 And hold them so dear;
 For they let me know you are always near.

God, that's why I give you the glory, honor and praise
 This Thanksgiving and everyday!

Gratefully Thankful

Sister Arva Fuller

Wednesday nights are where I hear Deacon William Rush pray beautiful prayers that begin or end with the phrase "gratefully thankful". This phrase is his very humble way of expressing his thanks to God. As we are now approaching the Thanksgiving holiday, there will be many essays and varied expressions of how thankful we are.

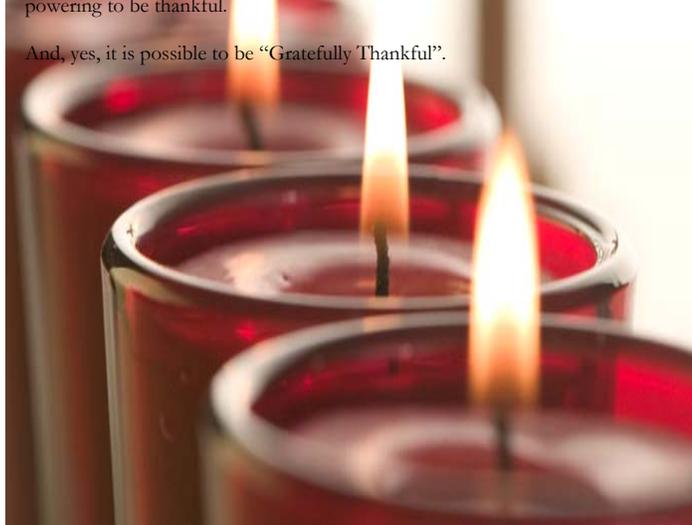
In the Old Testament there are many instances where providing a sacrifice of one's best material possession was a way of giving thanks. Then, there are other passages which simply exhort us to give praise whether it was during a sacrifice or not. Indeed, we do not need to provide our best possessions as a symbol of Thanksgiving. I Chronicles tells us, "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; For His mercy endureth forever". In other words, thanksgiving should always be the purpose of our praise. We've all heard the phrase "Lord, I thank you for waking me up in my right mind, for clothes on my back, for food on my table, etc".

Praise and thanksgiving are due for the large provisions of God, as well as for the smaller blessings He has given us. I like to say "thanks for the inconsequential things." Things such as being thankful that He led me to go on an alternate route and later finding out that an accident on my usual route would have delayed me. Or that even though I do not practice playing the piano regularly, He still guides my fingers to play pleasing songs on Wednesday nights. **Thankfulness is a matter of responding to what the eyes of our heart perceive. Thankfulness is really a matter of vision. We need to allow everything that happens to us cause us to draw closer to God in appreciation for who He is and what He has done. Therefore, God has designed Thanksgiving as a means to catapult us into His presence.**

So what about thanksgiving in difficult times? I Thessalonians 5:8 tells us to "Give thanks in everything". This can be difficult to do unless we realize that we serve an omnipotent, omniscient, all wise God. Secondly, God is pleased when we glorify Him by giving thanks in uncertain circumstances. Also, thankfulness bolsters our faith.

When we can meditate on His goodness to us, His sovereignty, His sure promises to us, then we can be truly able to express our sincere thankfulness. Saying "thank you" can lighten our hearts, even if only for the moment we say it. It may be difficult, but practicing gratitude at all times is one of the best ways to make it through setbacks and disappointments. It keeps us hopeful and reminds us that we made it through hard times before. It helps us to see that life is still good. Circumstances may be negative, but they can change. People may hurt us, but we can heal. Losses may never be recovered, but we can gain something new. The more we practice gratitude for what is good, right, beautiful and hopeful, the more real it becomes to us. So whether we are going through some bad times or the best of times, it is always appropriate and empowering to be thankful.

And, yes, it is possible to be "Gratefully Thankful".





Mt. Helm Baptist Church is adopting TOTAL PRAISE the new hymnal of the Sunday School Publishing Board of the National Baptist Convention, USA.



To support Mt. Helm, please make a contribution in your offering envelope, or mail your check or money order for \$20 (the hymnal cost is \$18 + \$2 for shipping) to:

TOTAL PRAISE PROJECT
Mt. Helm Baptist Church
300 E. Church Street
Jackson, MS 39202

To contribute online, please click on the PayPay donate link on our website at: www.mthelm.org.

THANK YOU!!!



ON THE HORIZON: NOVEMBER EVENTS

2, 9, 16, 30

Odyssey of Life Institute (6 p.m.)

Youth Meeting/Activities (6 p.m.)

Prayer Meeting (7 p.m.)

6 Communion Sunday

Daylight Saving Time Ends

Set clocks back one hour.

7 Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer

8 ELECTION DAY

Don't forget to exercise your right to vote.

11 Veterans Day

14 Brotherhood Bible Class Monthly Meeting

14-16 General Missionary Baptist State Convention of Mississippi FALL CONFERENCE

16 W.W. Colley Missionary Society Meeting

**17 National World Peace Day
Trustee Board Meeting**

20 Youth Sunday

23 Thanksgiving Eve Service

24 THANKSGIVING DAY

25 International Day Against Violence Against Women

1st, 2nd, and 4th Sundays: Children and Youth Services--11 a.m.

Each Saturday: Choirs Practice at 9:30 a.m.

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The *Mt. Helm Voyager* newsletter will be available to our members on the first Sunday of each month. Members are encouraged to visit www.mthelm.org to access a downloadable pdf on the Monday following the first Sunday of each month.

Articles, photographs and notices of special events may be submitted to Sister Barbara Hilliard. We thank you for your support.

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