

MAGNOLIA MINDS: Be Ye Thankful

By Clarence Cooper

Senior Pastor

Brandon Baptist Church, Brandon



Cooper

We celebrated Thanksgiving Day a couple of weeks ago and even though 2020 has brought us many challenges, we still had much for which to be thankful on that day and throughout the year.

As you know, the first Thanksgiving in America was celebrated by the Pilgrims in 1621. U.S. President Abraham Lincoln declared a national day of Thanksgiving in 1863, but long before Thanksgiving was a holiday it was a responsibility, a duty, an exercise in obedience.

God's Word says, "*Be ye thankful.*" God tells us in Colossians 3:15, "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body and be ye thankful." Read the last three words again: "*Be ye thankful.*"

Giving thanks can be an amazing medicine. When we are thankful, worries cease, complaining disappears, peace comes into our hearts. When we are thankful, when we develop the attitude of gratitude, we become happy, contented people. It spares us from being angry, complaining, critical, depressed people. Giving thanks has a marvelous healing, soothing quality to the people who learn to display it.

– **Give thanks for the grace of God.** A child of God should always be thankful no matter our circumstances, because every day is a day of grace: “And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in the praise” (1 Chronicles 16:35). “O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for His mercy endureth forever” (Psalm 136:26).

We should have enough gratitude for grace, to thank God for Grace, and we should have enough Grace to be grateful. “For by grace ye are saved through faith and that not of yourself it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

I pray from my heart you have received that gift of Salvation which comes by His grace alone. As the song says, “Twas grace hath brought us safe thus far and grace will lead us home.”

– **Give thanks for God’s guidance.** The next time you finish a project at work, the next time you finish a term paper for school, the next time you finish building that home, give thanks to God.

When Nehemiah finished rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem. here’s what he said: “So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall and appointed two large Thanksgiving Choirs. One went to the right on the wall toward the refuse gate. The other Thanksgiving Choir went the opposite way, and I was dividing them with half the people on the wall. Going past the tower of the furnaces as far as the broad wall. So, the two choirs, thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me” (Nehemiah 12:31, 38, 40).

When God guided Daniel to interpret the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar he said, “I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king’s matter” (Daniel 2:23.) Be thankful for God’s guidance.

– **Give thanks for God’s greatness.** The Psalmist said, “Sing praise to the Lord, you saints of His and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name” (Psalm 30:4). Again the Psalmists says, “For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations” (Psalm 100:5).

The song writer had it right when he said, “What a mighty God we serve.” We read that one day the entire universe, for all ages, is going to reverberate with thanksgiving to God: “We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and is to come, because you have taken your great power and reigned” (Revelation 11:17). Be thankful for God’s powerful might.

In closing I would like to say, “Today God has given you freely the gift of 86,400 seconds. Have you used any of them to say ‘Thank You?’”

Editor’s note: Cooper, a former two-term president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, is immediate past chairman of the Executive Committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.