

October 9, 2005

*Loving God's Project*  
***In On It With Gratitude***

1 Peter 1:8

and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory...

The occasion is Thanksgiving. The topic is gratitude. The sermon features a four-point list on what to do about Thanksgiving... but because there is always a lot to be thankful for, it's not just what to do about Thanksgiving, but rather...

### **What To Do About Everything, In Four Steps**

#### **1. Be thankful**

It is and it isn't a natural reflex.

Perhaps especially a natural reflex at harvest time: "Will you just look at these pumpkins!!!"

More closely you look/more amazing! "Look what happened to some pumpkin seed!"  
Amazing stuff! **Germination ... osmosis ... photosynthesis ...**

The process that takes place in all green plants ---

**(Chlorophyll!** Which is what makes leaves green, and what absorbs the light and provides the energy...) -- by which carbohydrates are made from **carbon dioxide** and **water**.

THE PROCESS:

The **oxygen** is removed from water (H<sub>2</sub>O) and **released**, and then the **hydrogen** is hooked up with carbon and oxygen from **carbon dioxide** -- and transformed into a series of increasingly complex compounds that result finally in a stable organic compound, **glucose!** Just the sort of carb that a plant should eat!

The more closely you look/the more amazing you see it all to be!

ALSO REQUIRED.... **Soil** (Finely ground rock and organic matter from old plants and animals ... **Warmth** ... (The sun.... **Nuclear Fusion** 93 million miles away) ... and, just as amazing as any other part of the whole wonder: **Rain...**

- If one inch of rain falls on a pumpkin patch that is one square mile, that would be almost 28 million cubic feet of water, ...just over 200 million gallons of water ...800,000 tons of water.
- How? By **Evaporation!** (No time to explain... but water turns into water vapour: a liquid becomes a gas.
- First the water gets up there; then it needs to get down...by **Condensation**.
- The water molecules gather around little dust particles (Tiny! Between one hundred thousandth of a centimeter and one millionth of a centimeter in diameter. )
- And the salt has to be taken out. (I have no idea how!)
- These tons of water are sprinkled down in "rain drops:: big enough to fall for one mile or so without evaporating, and yet small enough to keep from crushing the pumpkin plants...
- "**Coalescence**." The specks of water start bumping into each other --- and connect themselves to one other (because of the **Electricity** in the air... which is there because of **Solar Radiation** which is a result of the **Nuclear Fusion**) and so the specks of water get bigger and bigger . And when they are big enough, they fall on the pumpkin patch.

2. **Direct your thanks** \_\_\_\_\_

- To whom?  
“Let’s be sure to thank Mr Cavilari, the school custodian. He’s the one that makes the daffodils grow!” (One of the years that our kids went to public school!)
- “Now then, Prince Hamlet : ‘To thank or not to thank,’ that is **not** the question”  
The question is: “Who are you going to thank?”
- Be careful with your answer: a lot depends on it.
- **So who are you going to thank?** You might look in the Bible for some help.
- And you might not! People tend not to.
- And this is principally what God has against humanity!

**Romans 1:18-21**

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or **give thanks ...**

2. **Direct your thanks to God**

- Meaning who?
- Of the Bible /of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob/ and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Job 5:8-10**

"... God; Who does great and unsearchable things, Wonders without number.  
He gives rain on the earth And sends water on the fields..."

So give thanks to God ... Which moves us on to the next question: How?

3. **Put your thanks into words**

**Ephesians 5:20**

...always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father...

- A very significant thing! Parents know it and teach their children to say it!
- For all sorts of reasons.
- Spiritually, it belongs to the process by which a person actually changes sides...  
changing from ***living under the wrath of God*** to ***living in the love of God***.

4. **Put your thanks into action**

- **What we say** is sometimes very significant. But talk is easy. Talk is sometimes cheap.  
So graduate from **gratitude in words...** to **gratitude in action:** thanks in action.
- It’s here that **it starts to cost something** to be thankful.

NOW...

- You know what they say, don’t you?  
(We don’t know who THEY are, but we know what they say.)  
They say: “Actions speak louder than words.”  
Actions? “Doing good, and sharing.”

**Hebrews 13:15-16**

Through [Jesus] then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

#### 4. Put your thanks into action purposefully.

- Put your actions: put effort into God's project.  
"Loving God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength:"

(Not only gratitude in words, but gratitude in action.)

- Not only gratitude in action; but gratitude in a certain sort of action...
- Gratitude in a life-defining, lifetime commitment to the project.
- As Jesus did... **John 4:34** "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."
- Here's where it really costs something to be thankful
- It's a lifetime commitment. So it is a big deal! (And how do you go about making a lifetime commitment? GOOD QUESTION!)
- Here's what I've learned... "Get as sure as you can be and then jump."

#### **Matthew 4:18-19**

Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

- Had already heard about him (Andrew from John the Baptist)/met Him/seen a miracle or two.
- Here and now, they were called to sign up. To enlist. To begin to devote their lives to this purposeful action
- And the records show: they jumped. They leapt off the cliff.
- In the years that followed, they experienced a lot: and many more reasons for giving thanks.
- Especially, they saw Christ in His suffering and His death
- Many long years later, Peter, an old man, wrote to some newer Christians
- People different from Peter and Andrew and John. Not eye-witnesses...

#### **1 John 1**

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also...

- These new Christians had no personal visible interaction, but still a personal relationship.
- **1 Peter 1:8** ... They believed in Him /loved Him/greatly rejoiced...
- This is a summary of their experience after they took the leap!
- For years... through great suffering: they loved Him whom they had never seen:
- They believed in Him and they loved Him --- with an inexpressible joy that was full of glory, because it was full of God!
- A whole full life of thanksgiving: an abundant life, that a horn of plenty and a table of harvest produce and a Thanksgiving dinner is a symbol of.
- **John 4:34 / John 10:10** ...May the Lord enable us and empower us and embolden us to do the same.