

I Corinthians 11:23-26 "Giving Thanks at the Table"

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- [0 : 0 0] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.
- All of you kids, we're going to talk about giving thanks for just a minute. So thankful that you all are here. We're getting to give thanks to God a lot this morning to thank Him.
- I wanted to ask you, when is it that you most often give thanks to God? When you pray and give thanks to God, when is a time you do that a lot?
- Thanksgiving. At Thanksgiving, that's true. Yes, when else? In my bed alone. Say it again. In my bed alone. Yes, that is also a good time. Is there a time that you do every day?
- At dinner. Okay, at dinner time. Do a lot of you give thanks to God before you eat? Yeah. Yeah. You always pray. Yeah. You pray before you eat. That's a very good time to give thanks.
- [1 : 0 3] We pretty much do God our Father all the time. Yeah. And some of you are going to get to give thanks. This week, a lot of you have a special meal where you give thanks to God and you see more of His blessings spread out on that table in front of you and around that table.
- And you take special time to give thanks this week at Thanksgiving. Yes. Yes. This morning, I want us to just think of one more special table.
- Okay. A table that is spread with God's blessings that give us special reason to give thanks to God. Can any of you see a table right now with things on it?
- Yeah. Do you see this table up here? You know, we call it the Lord's Supper. Yeah. Some of you have supper at home. This is God's supper.
- A meal where God sets the table and He invites us to eat with Him and to be a part of this with Him. So when you see a dinner table at Thanksgiving, you might see, what might you see on the table or near the table?
- [2 : 1 0] Turkey. Turkey. A lot of food. Yeah. That you'd be thankful for. Turkey. Are there people at the table that you're thankful for? Turkey. Yes. And turkey. And there are a lot of people.
- Chairs at the table. Other things that God gives us. Maybe friends who are there with you. Maybe cheese. Yeah. But I want to talk to you about what we see at God's table. Because this table is not turkey, is it?
- No. No. At this table, there's food on this table that is, it represents for us the body and the blood of Jesus.
- Did y'all know that? Did you know that every time we celebrate this, that that's what we are remembering and giving God thanks for, is that Jesus came and sacrificed His life for us.
- That Jesus' body was broken and His blood was shed. That He came to die so that we could have life with Him forever.

[3 : 11] Isn't that amazing? Do you think that's something that we should be thankful for? That God loved us that much? Do you think God wants us to remember that and be thankful for it?

He gives it to us a lot. Very often so that just like you sit at the dinner table every night and you get to give thanks to God for His good gifts. Every time you see us come to this table as a church family, that's what we're doing is giving God thanks for how much He has loved us and sending Jesus for us.

Can you remember that? That every time we come here it's a chance to give thanks. I hope you remember that this week even as you give thanks to God for other things in your life, that you thank Him for sending Jesus because He loves you.

Can you remember to do that this Thanksgiving? All right. Thanks for coming up here. Y'all go back to your seats now and have a great Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. For just a couple minutes I want us to contemplate that not just with our kids but as adults too as we prepare to come to this table together.

Imagine for just a minute that you're at the first Passover having come out of Egypt. God's people are gathered at this Passover celebration.

[4 : 38] What are you thankful for? It's not primarily how good the food tastes, is it? It's not even a new job you got.

It's not even the family that's gathered there with you. You're thankful for God's deliverance out of slavery in Egypt, aren't you? Imagine that not only are you there at that first Passover out of Egypt, but imagine you're the oldest son in your family gathered around that Passover feast.

What are you thankful for? It's not primarily for your friends, although those are great gifts. It's not primarily your academic success.

You're thankful for your life. You're thankful for the blood of the Lamb. The God who provided that blood for you to be put on the doorposts of your house as a means of deliverance for you and life, right?

That same kind of thanksgiving should be ours when we come to the Lord's Supper. Giving thanks is such an important part of the Lord's Supper that it's often been referred to as the Eucharist from the Greek word for thanksgiving.

[6 : 00] It's because as Jesus celebrated this with his disciples, we get this account in 1 Corinthians 11 that Paul gives us, I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. All of the gospel accounts of that last supper remind us of this, that Jesus took the bread and gave thanks.

That he took the cup and gave thanks. Thanks for what? For God's deliverance, right? That's what they were celebrating. For God's provision of the blood of the Lamb, even though Jesus knew that it would be his blood this time.

Friends, our greatest thanks is not for material blessings. Even God's very good blessings for which we should give him thanks.

God's word says we should give thanks in all things, whether they seem good or bad. So it is good for us to share of the ways God is working in our lives practically.

[7 : 21] But the greatest thanks that we ought to have is for our life in Christ. For every spiritual blessing that we have in Christ.

I don't know what you think of every time we spend several minutes celebrating the Lord's supper. But I hope it provides you some perspective this morning as the Passover provided perspective for God's people.

Every time they celebrated it, perspective of what they were thankful for. As you contemplate this table this morning and any other day, especially Thanksgiving, give thanks for the body and blood of your Savior given for you that in him you might have every spiritual blessing.

Can you imagine that? Adoption as sons and daughters of the King. That you might have an inheritance that will never perish or spoil or fade, kept in heaven for you.

That right now you have his Holy Spirit so the very power of God lives inside of you. You have forgiveness from every one of your failures. Freedom from a burdensome yoke and working to justify yourself.

[8 : 42] You have true rest in Jesus because he has done all the work that was necessary for you. You have every spiritual blessing. You're redeemed from darkness into light, from death to life.

You have been rescued. You actually have relationship with a God who hears your prayers, who is there with you, who hears every cry of your heart. This he has given to you.

You are held in his strong hand and no one can snatch you out of his hand. All of that and many, many more. I'm just getting started.

It comes to you in Christ. It comes to you because he gave his life for you to unite you to him forever. Praise the Lord.

Amen? Amen? Every spiritual blessing in Christ. This is a table full of a feast of God's blessings.

[9 : 42] And as we come look around and realize that you're not the only one that's gotten all those. The people you've heard come and share this morning, the brothers and sisters sitting here online and even around the world also have been brought in to that family.

There's family around this table too because of a father who loves us, because of an older brother who gave his life for us. And so now we get to give thanks together.

Thanksgiving will fill the heart of an elderly man with dementia as he comes to this table and remembers that his God remembers him.

It's Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving that will fill the heart of the young woman who's been chased from her parents and husband and children because of her faith in Christ.

She has no source of income, but she remembers the treasure that she has in her Savior and her spiritual family. Thanksgiving that will fill as they come the heart of a couple grieving over their health, their children, their lives not unfolding the way they planned.

[10 : 59] And they come here and they remember the God who sees us, who endures our pain with us, who sovereignly delivers us from whatever it is that we're going through in this life into a glorious future that he has planned for us.

A future that includes a table that is set with a great feast, the eternal wedding supper of the Lamb. We're going to have a feast full of God's blessings.

Amen? Giving thanks forever. Can you imagine how you'll give thanks around that table? What will you be giving thanks for? I can't even imagine that we would think of anything else in that moment other than the life that we have because of the blood of the Lamb given for us.

We're there, Revelation tells us, because we're wearing robes that are white, washed white in the blood of the Lamb. And we will praise him and we will see him face to face and we will rejoice in his life and death and resurrection forever for us.

I pray this table, the Savior who is pictured here, will be the thing that stirs your heart to thanksgiving. Today, this thanksgiving and every day as you consider his great love for you.

[12 : 18] It was that night that Jesus was betrayed, a night of difficulty and pain for him for sure, that he took bread and he broke it and he gave it to his disciples.

As I'm ministering in his name, give this bread to you. He said, take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And then he took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. Drink from it, all of you. We come to this table because in it we see the Savior for whom we give thanks.

If that's what you see and what happens in your heart, then whether you're a member of this church family or any other that finds their hope in Jesus, come and celebrate and give him thanks with us.

If that's not you, if you hear about Jesus and see a picture of Jesus, but it doesn't cause thanks to well up in your heart, you feel like that's not for me, then don't come to this table and take these elements this morning.

[13 : 30] But we would invite you to come, to come watch, to come let us pray with you, or even stay where you are and just contemplate Jesus. He is a Savior who will fulfill every need that you have, who will meet you wherever you are, and who will never ever leave you.

He offers himself to you this morning. Let's pray and we'll come and celebrate together. Father, we're so grateful for your provision for us.

For the blood of Jesus that has been given on our behalf, would you use these very common elements for a sacred purpose in our hearts, that they might stir up thanksgiving that lasts forever.

Thanksgiving for how much you love us and for all that you've done for us in Christ. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org.

Thank you.