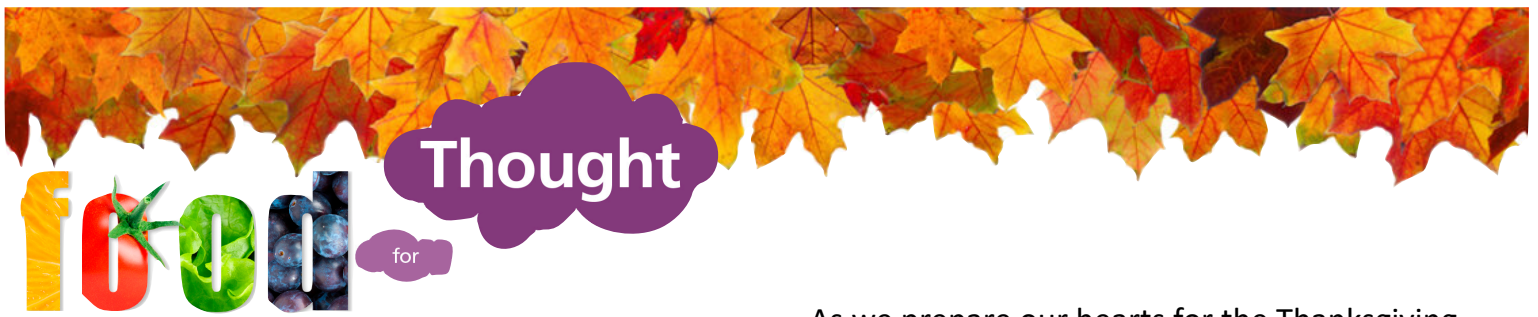




A Heart of Thanks

...in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NKJV)

Having a heart of thanks is easy when life is going well. A full table, a healthy family, and enough in the bank to pay the bills all draw a heart of thanks naturally.

But Scripture calls us to something deeper: a gratitude that doesn't depend on our food, family or fortune. In other words, we are to be thankful in all circumstances because it rests on who God is.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Psalm 107:1 (NKJV)

I notice Paul says to give thanks **IN** all circumstances, not **FOR** all circumstances. We don't have to pretend pain is pleasant. Instead, we look past the difficulty to the God who is always good and whose mercy endures forever. We can always trust that He is present in the circumstance, faithful, and working for our good.

Giving thanks shifts our focus from what we lack to what we have been given, above all the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Being thankful also guards the heart. Complaining breeds discontent, but thanksgiving breeds peace. Paul writes that when we bring our requests to God "with thanksgiving," the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:6-7). A thankful heart is a quiet one, because it trusts the Giver.

As we prepare our hearts for the Thanksgiving holiday, let's ask ourselves some questions.

- What blessings have I begun to take for granted?
- Where is it hardest for me to give thanks right now, and what might God be doing there?
- Whom can I thank this week, both God and the people He has used to bless me?

Here is challenge for us as we prepare to enter the holiday season.

Write down five things you are thankful for and thank God for each one aloud. Do this each day for a week, adding something new every time. By the time November 26 arrives, you'll have quite a list of things to be thankful for.

Here are some things to get the thanksgiving pump primed:

Thank God for His goodness, compassion, and mercy which is new every morning.

Thank Him for His forgiveness when we have grumbled and taken His gifts for granted.

Above all, thank God for His indescribable gift of sending His Son to die in our place and give us eternal life (2 Corinthians 9:15).

Just some Food For Thought...

~ Pastor Frank

