

# What is Jesus Doing?

## THANKSGIVING. IT'S A VERB, NOT A NOUN

Noun: It's Thanksgiving. Let's eat!

Vs. Verb: Let us give thanks for our many blessings.

Thanksgiving is not a meal, it is a privilege, and if you love the Lord with all your heart, mind and strength, it is also an obligation. THEN we eat!

*For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.*

- 2 Corinthians 4:15

So today I gave the Word at Hope of the Valley's noontime meal, the usual Friday lovefest. I saw many old friends that I hadn't seen since three years ago when the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission shut down their Survival Outreach Services lunch program. The first guy I saw when I walked in was one of the humble and sweet, yet still inebriated, latino lambs that loves the Lord with all his heart, but drinks all day to numb his personal pain, which in this man's case, had to do with the fact that he left his family in Mexico with the best intentions to make a living and send home money, but he lost his first job here and started drinking and, well, that was fifteen years ago. He saw me and he lit up, stood up and hugged me. He asked me how I had been and I said to him "I'm grateful". He looked at me and said, "now that I see you, I'm grateful too". I told him that his English had gotten better since the last time I saw him and I was grateful for that since my Spanish is still terrible. We laughed and Jesus laughed too (don't ask me how, I can always tell when He's laughing).

Then I greeted and loved on the rest of the flock, while waiting for my translator, my great friend Laurie Craft, (who also runs that facility) who is the most fluent person in Spanish that I have ever known who was not born speaking it.

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There were about 80 folks there, and I met some new friends as well as re-connecting with the old. Laurie arrived, and I launched into the sermon about Thanksgiving being a verb, not a noun. Since every Word I give is extemporaneous, I can't really re-create it here, but the gist is... We were made to be grateful to the One who gave us life and who loved us so much that He allowed us to choose Life by dying on a Cross that we might live, and live life abundantly.

Such a deal! When we give thanks with a grateful heart, He is glorified and He is then able to bless us beyond our imagining.

As my friends are homeless or very, very poor, sometimes they feel that they don't have much to be grateful for... My response is to tell them to give thanks anyway for what you DO have and watch God move to clear the boulders out of your path. David was a terrible sinner, yet God called him "a man after His own heart", One of the reasons for that was David's simple gratitude, even in the midst of great trials, for what God had done and what He IS DOING. It astounds me how faithful David was even without the benefit of knowing Jesus (and yet he hoped for Messiah and knew that God was GOOD!). Here are some of his psalms that reveal the depth of his gratitude.

*Offer to God thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.*

- Psalm 50:14

*I am poor and sorrowful; Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high. I will praise the name of God And will magnify Him with thanksgiving.*

- Psalm 69:29-30

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*Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.*

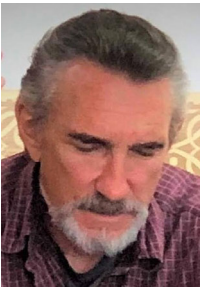
- Psalm 100:3-5

So let us be as the faithful ones in the Bible. Hear the Apostle Paul's encouragement and admonition:

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*

- Philippians 4:6

Above all, be grateful that God has sent His Son to die that we might live abundantly and eternally!



*With Gratitude and Godly Affection,*

*- John Henry Raskin, Roadhouse Rabbi*