



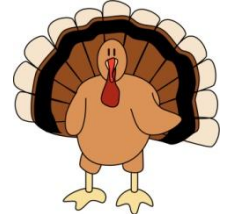
GOOD NEWS GUIDE

November, 2017

THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE

Giving Thanks

Dear Brothers and Sisters,



As I write this, Thanksgiving Day in the United States is just a few short weeks away.. It's good that our nation has a day dedicated to giving thanks to Almighty God for the many blessings He has poured out upon us. I hope you will regard it as a day to concentrate on thanking God, and to pray for continued guidance for our leaders and our people. But never forget: every day is a good day to give thanks to God.

I have enjoyed many blessings in life, for which I am profoundly grateful to God. I thank Him every day especially for the ways His love has been richly present in my family. In this letter I want to focus on several of His blessings for which you who read this may also want to lift up special prayers of thanksgiving, both now and often in the days to come.



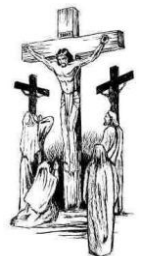
First, I thank God for life. He has given me existence. He created me just as surely as He created the first human being. His Spirit breathed life into my body; and when I took my first breath, and every breath I have taken since that first one, it was by His grace that I was able to do it. *Thank You, Lord, for giving me life.*

I thank God that, by and large, my body has been healthy. As I get older I'm finding I have a few health issues, and I know that will continue until one day (it will seem like much too soon) this body won't do the job any longer and I'll leave it behind. It's been better than just okay. *Thank You, Lord, for good health.*

I thank God for revealing Himself to the world, and to me. Through His Word; through His chosen people, the Jews; and especially through His Son, Jesus, He has shown Himself to be powerful enough to create this astonishing universe, filled with beauty and wonders far beyond our ability to understand or even appreciate. And yet He is close enough and personal enough to touch our individual lives with His loving, caring presence. What a wonderful God He is! *Thank You, Lord, for letting me know at least a little bit about who You are!*

I thank God for calling all of us to be His own. He could have been satisfied to call just His Chosen People, the Jews, and left the rest of us out in the cold. No, His plan included all of us, from the very beginning. We were created to be His, and to live eternally in a precious and intimate relationship with Him. *Thank You, Lord, for commanding me to love You, and for making it possible.*

I thank God that He did not compromise Himself to simply overlook our sins, but paid His own terrible price to atone for them. He died on the cross so that we might have life, abundantly, eternally; freedom bought and paid for by the Blood of the Lamb. *Thank You, Lord, for dying so that I might live.*



I thank God for guiding my steps daily. I take to heart Proverbs 3:5-6 ("Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.") and Romans 8:14 ("For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."). *Thank You, Holy Spirit, for guiding me. Give me grace to follow You more and more faithfully, willingly, and joyfully.*

I thank God for making me a worker in His harvest field. He has given me jobs to do. I haven't always heard the orders. Sometimes I've ignored the orders that I did hear. And often I fail to do the work as well as it should be done. Nevertheless, He continues to bless me with opportunities to serve. *Thank You, Lord, for using even a flawed vessel like me.*

I thank God for prayer. Why does God's Word command us to pray? Why does the application of His power to meet a need depend upon our prayers in some degree? I think the only answer must be that He wants us to be involved with Him in doing what He does. Of course, He wants us to listen to Him, as well as speak to Him. Sometimes, if we're listening, we will hear something important. *Thank You, Lord, for listening when I pray. Thank You for giving me grace to listen, when I will.*

I thank God for the Church. Not any particular congregation, but the Body of Christ, the universal brotherhood and sisterhood of all who trust in Jesus. I have experienced the love that flows from strangers who belong to Him. I know how it feels to be part of His family—it is truly a foretaste of Heaven. *Thank You, Lord, for the feeling of belonging that always greets me when I encounter a new group of Christian brothers and sisters.*

There are so many other intangibles that I am thankful for. The beauty of the world, the marvel of the seasons, the amazing and delightful variety of living things, the awesome scope of the heavens, the marvel of music, the song of a bird or a cricket, the feel of a small child's hand in mine, the beautiful smile of every little girl and goofy grin of every little boy, the pleasure of a cold drink on a hot day or a hot drink on a cold day. I could fill this page and a few more without half trying.

Does any of this resonate with you? Do you say, "Yes, I'm thankful for that, too"? I hope so, because giving thanks to God for His goodness and mercy and generosity is very, very important. Why? First, because we are commanded to give thanks, to be thankful. Why is that? Is it because God somehow needs our gratitude? No, His ego doesn't need a boost, so it's not for His benefit. It's for ours.



When we give thanks to God for His blessings, we are merely acknowledging the truth of Scripture that "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights ..." (James 1:17) When we speak truth, we adjust our mind and spirit to be more in tune with the Spirit of God. Every time we praise Him, every time we thank Him for a blessing, we grow a little bit closer to Him. And that's really what life is about.

Besides that, there is the simple fact that an attitude of gratitude, and focusing on what is good and worth being thankful for, is simply better for you in every way—spiritually, emotionally, and physically—than occupying your mind with anger, worry, frustration, disappointment, or any other negative subject. "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things." (Philippians 4:8)

In the weeks after Thanksgiving Day we will go through Advent, which is the season of anticipation of the coming of the Lord, culminating with the birth of the Babe on Christmas. May I suggest that you focus on giving thanks to God for the gift of His Son, and for all of the other marvelous gifts I have mentioned above? If you will do that, I promise it will bless you.

The Peace of the Lord be with you.

Brother Roland

I Refuse

Author Unknown

I refuse to be discouraged, to be sad, or to cry;
I refuse to be downhearted, and here's the reason why:
I have a God who's mighty, who's sovereign and supreme.
I have a God who loves me, and by Grace I'm on His team.

He is all-wise and powerful. Jesus is His name.
Though everything is changeable, my God remains the same.
My God knows all that's happening, beginning to the end.
His presence is my comfort. He is my dearest Friend.

When sickness comes to weaken me, to bring my head down low,
I call upon my mighty God; into His arms I go.
When circumstances threaten to rob me of my peace,
He draws me close unto His breast, where all my strivings cease.

When my heart melts within me, and weakness takes control,
He gathers me into His arms; He soothes my heart and soul.
The great "I AM" is with me. My life is in His hand.
The "Son of the LORD" is my hope. It's in His strength I stand.

When challenges surround me, with problems all around,
He stands right beside me, so solutions can be found.
If I falter or I worry, my heavenly Guide is there.
I am His earthly helper, and He listens to my prayer.

I refuse to be defeated. My eyes are on my God.
He has promised to be with me, as through this life I trod.
I'm looking past all my circumstances to Heaven's throne above.
My prayers have reached the heart of God; I'm resting in His love.

I give God thanks in everything. My eyes are on His face;
The battle's His; the victory, mine. He'll help me win the race.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!

If you have a Bible question or a question about the Christian life, send it to me at
Brother Roland, PO Box 14, Fayetteville PA 17222
I'll do my best to answer it, and your question may be helpful to someone else as well.
God bless you! Please remember your prison chaplain in your prayers.

Count Your Blessings

Have you thought about the many blessings you can be thankful for? Each one of us has many reasons to be grateful for God's gifts. Try making your own list. Enjoy!

Puzzle:

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Words:

He has given us:

OUR DAILY BREAD
 STRENGTH AND HEALTH
 LEGS FOR WALKING
 HANDS FOR WORKING
 EYES FOR SEEING
 EARS FOR HEARING
 MOUTHS FOR SPEAKING
 SENSES FOR ENJOYING
 MEMORY FOR LEARNING
 MINDS FOR UNDERSTANDING
 HEARTS FOR LOVING
 LIVES FOR LIVING

He has given us:

LOVING RELATIONSHIPS
 -SPOUSE

-CHILDREN
 -PARENTS
 -SISTERS
 -BROTHERS
 -GRANDPARENTS
 -AUNTS AND UNCLES
 -COUSINS
 -CHRISTIAN FRIENDS
 -PASTORS
 -TEACHERS
 -MENTORS
 -NEIGHBORS

He has given us:

THE BIBLE
 LESSONS LEARNED
 GRACE TO CHANGE

FREEDOM FROM PAST HABITS
 OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW
 CHALLENGES
 VISION FOR THE FUTURE
 WAYS TO SERVE OTHERS
 SELF-RESPECT

He has given us:

THE FATHER'S LOVE
 FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST
 FORGIVENESS OF SINS
 SALVATION
 HOLY SPIRIT POWER
 HOPE FOR TOMORROW
 A WHOLE NEW LIFE
 PEACE WITH GOD
 AN ETERNAL HOME