



LIVING MY THANKSGIVING

By now, you have had turkey breast, turkey sandwiches and turkey salad. In fact, you have probably eaten so much turkey that last night you let loose a gobble. As well, you have probably eaten so much Thanksgiving leftovers that you refuse to open the refrigerator door. In fact, you do not even desire to go into the kitchen.

Thanksgiving Day, though modified for this year, was a wonderful opportunity to consider the things for which we were thankful even though this year has brought so many changes and challenges.

Now that Thanksgiving Day is over, acknowledging the blessings of God and being thankful is fine. However, I submit that it is not enough. It is not enough to only tell God that I am thankful, it is important that I show God that I am thankful. I show God that I am thankful when I share the blessings that God has given to me with others. I show God that I am thankful when I create an environment – through my living and through my giving – where people experience how loving, and caring, and patient, and forgiving, and merciful, and gracious and compassionate my God is because they experience the love and care and patience and forgiveness and mercy and grace and compassion of my God through me.

From the time of Thanksgiving through New Year's Day, everyone – even unbelievers – become “concerned” about those who are less fortunate than they are. Therefore, the community will promote food drives, toy drives and many other drives to raise awareness and money for those who are in need. Whereas these drives are beneficial in meeting the immediate needs of those who are without, they do not address the core factors that create and sustain the spiritual, mental, physical and emotional beliefs and actions that keep people homeless and hungry. Additionally, these drives do not address the systematic and systemic underpinnings that keep certain people confined to certain areas of bondage.

For the month of December, our Sermon Series will ask the question: **IN IT TO WIN OR IN IT TO NOT LOSE?** Some may suggest that there is no difference between the two. However, there is a major difference between the two statements and how those statements are applied to the fulfillment of our ministries.

I have discovered that the difficulty for those who are in it to not lose is more than a lack of commitment to the Kingdom of God and a willingness to sacrifice for the Kingdom of God. It is also, and for some it is predominately, fear. Paul shared in 2 Corinthians 7:5b, ...*Outside were conflicts, inside were fears*. I have come to understand that the crippling effects of fear has more to do with what is happening on the inside than what is happening on the outside.

Internal fear manifests itself in three primary ways:

- The Fear of Trying
- The Fear of Failing
- The Fear of Succeeding

We will examine each of these fears through the lives of Biblical characters who came to Jesus with a desire to win over a desire to not lose. As they saw the Kingdom of God **forcefully advancing** through the ministry of Jesus, they sought to **forcefully taking hold of the kingdom to make it their own**.

I pray likewise, as we see the Kingdom of God forcefully advancing in the world as Jesus reveals Himself, that we come to Jesus, and go to fulfill out ministry calling for Jesus with a desire to win over a desire to not lose, **forcefully taking hold of the kingdom to make it our own**.

WORK FOR THE WEEK

NOVEMBER MEMORY VERSE

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. **James 1:22**

NOVEMBER MEDITATION QUOTE

“Just being there is not enough”

Dr. Larry Murphy

TODAY'S STUDY QUESTIONS AND MEDITATION:

Am I in it to win or am I in it to not lose? _____

Am I actively seeking to establish God's Kingdom here on earth? _____

FOR THE YOUTH

How do you feel when you win? _____

How do you feel when you lose? _____

Which feels better? Why? _____
