

God Appreciation Day!
(Psalm 37:5)

THANK GOD!

How many times have we heard that expression? Do we really thank God? I've been doing some thinking lately about appreciation and contentment. Almost everyone has an appreciation day. Throughout the year there are several days set aside for us to appreciate others. We are all familiar with Mother's Day and Father's Day. Let us not forget about Grandparents Day. There are others of course! First one listed in a web search is System Administrator Appreciation Day in July. Of course there's Teacher's Day in May, Administrative Assistant's Day in April and January 28, is Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day!

The church has Clergy Appreciation Month and we just celebrated the wonderful ministry of Dr. Bill Harris here at Mathews with a Pastor Appreciation Day. All of these days or weeks or months are to say to people we love or people in different positions, "We thank you for all that you do."

I suppose Sunday (the Lord's Day) could be considered God Appreciation Day. But, do we really appreciate God? Most of us appreciate God in the sense of this definition (from The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language on Dictionary.com):

To be thankful or show gratitude for

In the ACTS model for prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication), thanksgiving and supplication are the easy parts. Most of us are very good at thanking God for all He does for us, and turning right around and asking for more. But God is a whole lot bigger than that.

I'm surprised that author J. B. Phillips didn't include "The Divine Santa" in his list of unreal or inadequate Gods in his book "*Your God is Too Small.*" To fully appreciate God in all His glory, we need to strive for the sense of this definition:

To recognize the quality, significance, or magnitude of

That is what adoration, or appreciation, is really about. Focusing on Who God is, not just what He does for us. Every prayer should start with this kind of appreciation, so that we have the proper perspective in approaching God.

The month of November is typically a month that has been set aside for us to count our blessings. This is especially true on Thanksgiving Day. While we can easily pause to appreciate the efforts of the Puritan immigrants who established their settlement at Plymouth Rock and the efforts of those immigrants to peacefully co-exist with their Native neighbors, it is beyond all importance that we also remember that those immigrants also gave thanks to God for their first year of settlement in this new land.

Yet, I'm persuaded to think that the Puritans didn't stop their thanksgiving to God after what is now known as "the first Thanksgiving;" nor do I believe that they started giving thanks on that day. The pilgrims lived a life of giving thanks, maybe in a way than we would today feel uncomfortable, but a life of thanks nonetheless.

Why is it, then, that we, even in the church, only pause to give thanks when the calendar tells us to do so? When we think about all that our Lord has given to us it's really awe striking.

Martin Luther probably puts it best, *“I believe that God has made me and all creatures ... He has given me all that I need to support this body and life;” “I believe that Jesus Christ ... has redeemed me, ... purchased and won me;” “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.”*

Think about it. There's nothing we can do on our own. God gives us what we need for life on earth and life in heaven. He works HIS will inside of us because we are lost without Him and could never provide for ourselves without HIS providing hand and the wondrous sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Think of adjectives, like all the omni's (omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent). Or God as the source of goodness, truth, and hope in our lives. And He actually desires a relationship with us! Now, that's a God worthy of appreciation! Go and make every day a God Appreciation Day! When you get right down to it, we really need to be living a **GOD APPRECIATION LIFE!** Maybe that's what Paul meant when he wrote to the Philippians “I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation.” (Philippians 4:12). What aspect of God do you particularly appreciate today? Amen.

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