



**CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX
CROSSLINKS**

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THANKSGIVING IS A COMMAND

Vicar's seven-minute reflection
THANKSGIVING IS A COMMAND



We all hear from time to time humorous stories of people who, in a moment of frightful crisis, will make extravagant promises to God, and then when the crisis has subsided, they reduce the levels of their promises significantly.

I heard about a man in Asia who was caught in a terrible storm. He promised God a sacrifice of 20 oxen if he survived. As the storm quieted, he thought: "Why be so foolish as to give oxen? Why not nuts instead?" On the way to offer the nuts, he became hungry and ate the nuts. He ended up offering the empty shells as his sacrifice. Empty lives and empty promises seem to go hand-in-hand. Some people do not feel there is a need to give thanks to God as their lives more or less depend on luck.

The biblical writers found it necessary to issue a corrective for ingratitude. We read in Deuteronomy these stirring words: "For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land... of fountains and springs... a land where you shall eat food without scarcity... . When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you." (Deut. 8:7-10)

I can tell you how spiritually mature you really are, by whether or not right now there is a fountain of thanksgiving and gratitude welling up in your heart. You may have the body of a giant and the mind of a genius, but you have the soul of a pygmy if you're not grateful to God.

In the United States of America, Thanksgiving Day is a special day, a national holiday. It is different from all others. On that day, the Americans do not celebrate a great victory in battle, nor do they honour a great person. It is a day when they thank God for the blessings they, as a nation, enjoy. Real Thanksgiving takes place when we focus on God. Real Thanksgiving takes place when we share with the needy. Best of all, real Thanksgiving takes place when we yield our hearts to God.

In 1 Thess. 5:18, we are commanded to "Give thanks." The verb for "Give thanks" is in the imperative tense. In other words, thanksgiving is as much a commandment as one of the Ten Commandments.

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Now you need to learn that anything that is commanded by God, is also commended by God. That is, if God commands you to do it, it is good for you.

Gratitude is not an option, it is an obligation. You are as obliged to give God your thanks as you are to give God your tithe. Did you know that it is a sin to be ungrateful?

Shakespeare once said, "I hate ingratitude more in man than lying, vainness, babbling, drunkenness, or any taint of vice whose strong corruption inhabits our frail blood."

Ingratitude is not only the mark of worldliness, it is the mark of an unbeliever. When Paul described a world without Christ, he said of them in Rom. 1:21, "Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful." You are never more like an infidel, an unbeliever, a godless person, than when you are ungrateful for the simple blessings of life.

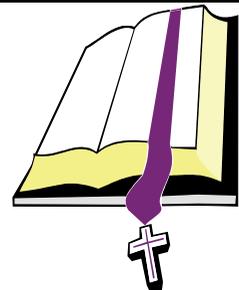
We are told to give thanks "in everything." Now that tells me that thanksgiving is more than a feeling. Nowhere in the word of God are we commanded to "feel thankful." Thanksgiving has nothing to do with feelings. Whether things are good or things are bad, whether it's dry or rainy, whether you've got money in the bank or flat broke, you are to be thankful. There are always at least three reasons why every Christian should be thankful: 1. We Are To Be Thankful For The Blessings Of Life; 2. We Ought To Be Thankful For The Burdens Of Life; 3. We Ought To Be Grateful For The Benefits Of Life.

In England you will discover that many of the English houses of the Eighteenth Century are very small in size, and they have many small windows in the house.

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Memory Verse

Give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is God's will for you
in Christ Jesus.



1 Thessalonians 5:18

STAND BY YOUR MAN (2)

8 winning ways to encourage him



Continued from September 2010 issue

Be on his side.

Keep thinking of you two as a lifelong team. So when your husband has a problem, it's your problem, too. A husband longs for this kind of companionship—to know he's not alone.

My friend, Alicia, talks about sticking up for her husband in public. You won't hear her voicing complaints about her husband, Dan, to friends at church, or making belittling comments to him in front of others. If they've got problems, says Alicia, they deal with them privately.

If you have children, include your husband in parenting decisions (even if he defers most of the troubleshooting in this area to you). Stand by his discipline decisions. Model your respect for him in front of your kids, and he'll really feel your encouragement!

Get off your agenda and onto his.

We get accustomed to organizing our family's weekly menus, schedules, social calendars, and errands. So sometimes it may be hard to let go of the reins and let our husband "drive" some of the family time. Yet it may be as simple as starting one Saturday with a flexible attitude, prepared to rearrange our tasks and errands around his plans for the day.

This is a tough one for me. I like to plan ahead—while David's approach is more laid-back. He'll say, "Let's take a bike ride," and the next thing I know, we're at the park, then at Tastee-Freeze. But the family fun that evolves when we're doing things spontaneously creates a nice balance for us all.

Nothing shows our love and respect more than backing off to give our husband's plans and ideas some room to develop.

Stand by your man.

Be available for physical intimacy.

I asked David, "What do I do that encourages you?" Right away he answered, "Your black nightgown encourages me!" Of course David was deliberately being naughty. But you know what? I think he's right. He does handle the demands of work and family more cheerfully when we've been having sex regularly. Maybe it's because when that strong physical need is met, there's one less thing to distract him. But it's also because our physical intimacy's a barometer for the rest of our relationship. If we're coming together physically, it's a good sign we're working well as a team. It's a signal (an encouragement!) to him that he's doing fine at home.

Don't wait for your husband to "deserve it."

This last bit of advice is perhaps the most important. Maybe your husband takes you for granted. Maybe he never says thank you. So what I'm asking—for you to encourage and respect him anyway—seems like something requiring superhuman strength.

Ask God to help you see one or two good aspects in your husband you can praise and respect.

Here's the good news: There is superhuman power accessible to help you. Ask God to give you *his* love for your husband. Ask God to help you see one or two good aspects in your husband you can praise and respect.

My friend Michele Weiner-Davis, a popular marriage therapist, calls this "tipping the first domino." Jesus called it doing "to others what you would have them do to you" (Matt. 7:12). You both need affirmation and encouragement, but you can't make your husband speak the words you need. You can only be responsible for your actions, so go first! Be the one to set a new standard for encouraging words and behaviour in your marriage. God will honour your efforts, and your husband's going to love it!

THE MAN ON THE HILL

An old man lived on a hill that overlooked the ocean. At the bottom of the hill was a public campground where people would come to pitch their tents, hike along the beach, and play in the surf. One day the old man was looking out at the ocean from his window when he noticed a huge tidal wave bearing down on the campground. He knew that the people who occupied the campground below were doomed. He had no phone or any other way to warn them from his hillside perch. And he knew that if he attempted to run down to the campground, by the time he got there, he would be wiped out, too.

There was only one thing to do. He grabbed a book of matches and set his house on fire. Within minutes the people in the campground noticed the smoke from the fire and rushed up the hill to try to save the man. Just as the campers made it to the top, the tidal wave reached land and completely destroyed the campground and everything in it. But the people were saved.

The man on the hill sacrificed his home to save the lives of people he didn't even know. There was no other way. God did much more than that when he sacrificed his son on our behalf. There was no other way.

Just as the fire on the hill drew people away from the death and destruction of the tidal wave, so the cross draws people away from their lives of sin.

Jesus said, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32). When we run to the cross, we escape the death and destruction of sin. It's the only way to salvation.

A BROKEN FINGER- DISPOSITION

A man went to his physician complaining of pain in several places. The doctor asked him to indicate where it hurt. He pointed first to his leg, then to his back, then to his side, finally to his head. "Every time I press on these places, it hurts." After a careful examination, the physician diagnosed his problem. "You have a broken finger." If your heart is not right with God, you will not see things clearly

Vicar's reflection: Thanksgiving is a command

The reason for this is because of the "Window Tax," which is one of the most senseless taxes ever levied by any government. The government was charging houses for the use of the sun when they had more than six windows in the house. Now when I think about the cost of electricity, I shudder to think what would happen if God were to start charging for sunlight.

Aren't you grateful that the air that you breathe is free? Aren't you grateful that you don't have to pay an admission fee to see a sunset, or to hear a bird sing, or to smell a rose? Oh how grateful we ought to be just for the benefits of life.

Gratitude is desired by God and it is one of the marks of a growing Christian.

Did you know that gratitude is a real test of the kind of character that you have? For example, it is not difficult to notice that a baby is ungrateful. You can take a little baby when he has the colic, walk the floor with him for seven hours, rock him, sing to him; but when you put that little baby down he won't look up at you and say, "Much obliged." He'll just yell a little louder. We don't blame him because he's a baby. You don't have to teach a child to be ungrateful; you've got to teach a child to be grateful. Gratitude is not something that naturally comes, it's something that they have to learn.

I can tell you how spiritually mature you really are, by whether or not right now there is a fountain of thanksgiving and gratitude welling up in your heart. You may have the body of a giant and the mind of a genius, but you have the soul of a pygmy if you're not grateful to God.

Dele Agbelusi

GIVING THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Matthew Henry, the famous Bible teacher, was once robbed of all of his money by some thieves. That night he sat down in a hotel room and wrote these words in his diary: I am so very thankful. First of all, because I was never robbed before. Second, because although they took my money, they did not take my life. Third, because although they took all the money I had, it wasn't very much. Fourth, it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed." That is the attitude we ought to keep continuously all of our life.

NEWS AND EVENTS

POPE BENEDICT'S VISIT TO THE UK

The Pope made his first papal visit to Britain on 19 September 2010. He was greeted by Prince Philip, soldiers from the Royal Regiment of Scotland and Catholic leaders as he stepped off the plane.

During his first speech of his state visit Benedict the Sixteenth warned of "aggressive forms of secularism" in Britain. After talks with the Queen, the Pontiff said the UK was striving to be a modern, multi-cultural society. But he warned that traditional Christian values mustn't be lost: "In this challenging enterprise, may it always maintain its respect for those traditional values and cultural expressions that more aggressive forms of secularism no longer value or even tolerate."

Harry Hagopian is the Catholic Church's ecumenical and interfaith spokesperson for the Papal visit here. He tells Premier the Pontiff raises a challenge that must be met: "People of no faith or people of other faiths should have their input as much and as eloquently within society as possible, but what is also important is to make sure that we also as Christians have our own input and our own say in the public sphere."

I do not always agree with the Pope but I respect him for his vision. He never allowed the loud voices of secularism to drown his prophetic voice to warn us in the UK that we will be heading for disaster if we neglect our Christian heritage and forget our Christian roots. The Pope was aware of other "pressing" issues like global warming and world economic woes, but he never failed to draw attention to the person, Jesus Christ, who can make the centre hold.

2010 Quiz NITE

Christ Church will hold its annual quiz nite on November 13, 2010 in the Parish Hall.

Cost: £10:00 including a hot meal and soft drink.

There will be lots of fun and fellowship.

You can obtain your ticket from the church office or by phoning 020 83401566

NEWS AND EVENTS

DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING

On October 27, we will be fasting and praying as a church family: to humble ourselves before the Lord and seek His direction on our Mission strategy. We will also be praying for God's blessing on during the last healing and anointing service for 2010 which takes place on 31 October 2010 at the 10:30am service.

HEALING AND ANOINTING SERVICE

On 31 October 2010 at 10.30am.

Theme: Not a coincidence

Please come and invite your friend to come and share in the blessing God is going to pour on us.

WORSHIP TIMES AND THEMES IN OCTOBER/ NOVEMBER

Date	10:30am	6pm, <u>5:00pm from Nov.</u>
24th Oct (HC)	Gen.41:1-18, Matth 24;1-14 (Straight to the top)	Isa. 9:1-7 What a Name!
31st Oct (HS)	Genesis 42:1-23 (Not a coincidence)	No Evening Service
7th Nov (MP)	Genesis 44 (Real Transformation)	Isaiah 11 (The Branch from Jesse)
14th Nov(FS)	Genesis 45:1-14; Lk. 21:5-19 (With God in the depths)	Isaiah 40:1-11 (Comfort in the desert)
21st Nov (HC)	Col.1:11-20;Lk 23:33-43 (Behold the Servant King)	Isaiah 40 Do you know this God?

There is Holy Communion at 8am every Sunday using the Book of Common Prayer

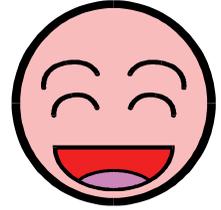
Note: **HC** denotes Common Worship Holy Communion; **MP**— Morning Prayer; **FS**, Family Service; **HS**, Healing and Anointing Service

LAUGHTER LINES

Humour: Brain of My Brain

My 4-year-old daughter shared with me what she had recently "learned" in Sunday school. "You know what, Mom?" she said excitedly. "God created man; then he took the 'brain' from man and made woman!"

—*Laurie Conger, Ukiah, CA. "Heart to Heart," Today's Christian Woman.*



A Wife's Honesty

When the pastor of a conservative small-town congregation received the gift of a white suit from a friend, he was a bit reluctant to wear it. But since it was so attractive and a perfect fit, he decided to put it on one warm Sunday. As he was leaving for church, he asked his wife what she thought of his attire. After giving him a curious look, she replied, "It depends. Are you going to preach or sell chicken?"

—"The Lighter Side," Partnership

Who's Marrying Whom?

My husband was performing his first wedding. Our children knew the bride well, and so for several weeks they heard comments about Daddy marrying Amie.

As the wedding approached, our 5-year-old daughter became depressed. One day I took her on my lap and asked why she wasn't happy. In a burst of tears she said, "I love Daddy, and I don't want him to marry Amie!"

—"Rolling Down the Aisle." Christian Reader

My dad is better than your dad

Three boys on the playground were bragging about their dads. The son of a musician said: "My dad scribbles a few words, calls it a song and they pay him 50 bucks." "Oh yah", said the son of a poet. "My dad scribbles a few words, calls it a poem and they pay him 100 bucks". The third boy, who was a son of a preacher thought real hard, and not to be outdone said, "Oh ya, that's nothing. My dad scribbles a few words, calls it a sermon and it takes six people to collect all the money".

LAUGHTER LINES

COMPUTER PROBLEMS OR ID...T?



As we Silver Surfers know, sometimes we have trouble with our computers. I had a problem yesterday, so I called Eric, the 11 year old next door, whose bedroom looks like Mission Control and asked him to come over.

Eric clicked a couple of buttons and solved the problem. As he was walking away, I called after him, So, what was wrong?

He replied, 'It was an ID ten T error.' I didn't want to appear stupid, but nonetheless inquired, 'An, ID ten T error? What's that? In case I need to fix it again.' Eric grinned. 'Haven't you ever heard of an ID ten T error before?

No,' I replied. 'Write it down,' he said, and I think you'll figure it out.' So I wrote down: ID10T. I used to like Eric, the little xxx.

Martin Stanswood



DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN THE BIBLE (2)

The woman who was addressed as a 'dog' (Matthew 15: 21-28; Mark 7:24-30)

One of the appealing characteristics of the historical Jesus is how open he was to people. People from all kinds of situations found themselves comfortable in his presence. He did not come across as stuffy or pretentious.

But the story about one woman who came to him for help, not for herself but for her daughter, makes some people think otherwise. The truth of the matter is that she made somewhat a nuisance of herself. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David," she cried out. "My daughter is severely possessed by a demon." Her intemperate tone made the disciples uncomfortable. "Send her away," they said to Jesus, "for she is crying after us."



Jesus himself was in an uncomfortable position. This woman was a Canaanite. Jesus' mission was to the Jews. "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," he answered. Jesus' Palestinian ministry was directed to the Jewish people; Matthew, in his account of the present incident, represents him as saying to the woman, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 15:24 RSV). However, in the record of Christ's ministry and sequel to it, blessing would be available for Gentiles too.

The woman was not perturbed. She knelt at his feet and said, "Lord, help me." She was determined to get what she wanted for her daughter. To this woman's plea for help Jesus makes another statement that we have difficulty in understanding. It does not sound like something that he would say. He said to her: It is not right to take children's bread and throw it to the dogs." That sounds like a contemptuous insult. Even today the term dog when used for a human being describes something particularly despicable. The actual word that Jesus used was not dog but puppy. He was referring to a household pet and not the kind of wild dogs that roamed the streets at that time.

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Difficult passages in the Bible

Who knows if there was a twinkle in Jesus' eye as he said "You know what we Jews are supposed to think of you Gentiles; do you think it is right for you to come and ask for a share in the healing which I have come to impart to the Jews?" While the written record can preserve the spoken word, it cannot convey the tone of voice in which they were said. Since the woman is said by Mark to be Greek speaking, the Greek diminutive used by Mark may have been the word actually used in the conversation.

The woman was quick-witted enough to deduce from Jesus' words the kind of reply that would win the granting of her request: "Sir, even the little dogs under the table eat the children's leftovers!" The woman's reply expresses just the kind of faith that Jesus so greatly appreciated and that never failed to receive what it asked from him.

We regard this Canaanite woman with more than just an academic interest. She awakens in us a feeling of admiration, perhaps even envy, because she stands where most of us would like to stand. What faithful Christian would not like it said of him or her by Jesus Christ: Great is your faith.

First, we can say of this Canaanite woman that she was willing to cross barriers. Her faith consisted mainly in the fact that she turned to Jesus for help. That was quite remarkable, however, when you remember that she was a Gentile, a Canaanite, and therefore a traditional enemy of the Jews. Faith still consists of turning to Christ for help and barriers today still must be crossed.

Secondly, we can say of her that she refused to be put off. There were at least three intimidating factors that could have made her give up. First there was the silence of Jesus. The scriptures tell us that to her cry of help and outstretched hand Jesus replied not a word: how unlike him. How uncharacteristic. There is no reaction harder to bear than silence. A flat "No" at least acknowledges your presence and tells you where you stand. But when there is silence you don't know what the person is thinking or even if they have acknowledged you.

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Difficult passages in the Bible

There is no sterner test of faith than the silence of God. It was that way to Job. He could have stood all of his endless suffering if only the Almighty had not seemingly gone "into hiding" and cut off all communication.

Another intimidating factor was that this woman received no help from the disciples. Indeed, they regarded her pleas for help as merely a nuisance. They urged Jesus: "Send her away; see how she comes shouting after us." They said the same thing when they saw 5000 hungry people at the Sea of Galilee. They said the same thing when a poor crippled beggar cried out for help at the Pool of Bethesda. Even when the children tried to see Jesus, they tried to send them away. Too often this has been the church's response to human suffering. Send them away--to prisons, to welfare agencies, to ghettos. The disciples, like the church today, had become fatigued under the constant pressure of the demands made upon them. Part of this woman's faith, however, was that she would not be put off by the indifference of people.

Which brings us to the third point of her faith: she realized that she had no claim on Jesus for the request that she was making. She must have said: "Sir, I admit that I have no claim upon you, but there must be some extra grace that you have that I would be deserving of. Jesus replied to her: "Woman, what great faith you have. Be it as you wish." From that moment her daughter was restored to health.

The greatness of this woman's faith consists in: 1. Her willingness to cross the barrier of racism. 2. Her refusal to be put off or ignored because of her position in life. And 3. Her humility in admitting that she did not deserve the Master's attention and time. Perhaps it was this woman who proved to be the inspiration for William Bathurst as he wrote the words of his great hymn:

O for a faith that will not shrink tho pressed by many a foe,
that will not tremble on the brink of any earthly woe
that will not murmur nor complain beneath the chastening rod
but in the hour of grief or pain will lean upon its God.

D.A.

HEAVENLY CORRESPONDENCE

E-MAIL FROM GOD (20)

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From: **GOD, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

To: **YOU, MY BELOVED CHILD,**

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me. (Revelation 3:20)

Subject: **INVITE JESUS IN**

My child,

Your heart is like a house where you spend every day. It's where you keep all your hopes and dreams, all your feelings and fears. Some rooms in your heart hold shiny trophies. But other rooms hide the things you're most ashamed of. Because the lock is on the inside, you're the only one who can invite someone into your heart. My Son Jesus is standing outside the door of your heart, knocking. If you invite Him in, I will come in with Him.

Don't worry. We won't be shocked by anything we find. We already know what's in there. We want to help you do some house cleaning, one room at a time. We want to live with you in the house you call your heart, and We will make it a home. Will you open the door? It's up to you.

Your Lord

God

MOTTO/TEXT FOR THE YEAR

“I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH HIM WHO GIVES ME STRENGTH” *PHILIPPIANS 4:13*

FINDING OUT ABOUT ...CHRIST CHURCH?

Tel/Fax: 020 8340 1566

We are a family of men and women, boys and girls who are trying to live for God in a world that has largely chosen to ignore Him.

We believe that it is God's world and that He has given the answer to all human problems in Jesus Christ.

As a body of believers, we offer to all who come regular opportunities for worship and service that point the way to God as our strongest resource in all aspects of life.

We will be pleased to welcome you to any of our activities. You will find a warm welcome at Christ Church.

Times of worship and fellowship are shown below:

- Sunday**
- **8.00am.** Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
 - **10.30am.** Main service with Crèche facilities
- There is family/parade service once every month– usually the third Sunday of the month unless otherwise indicated.
- **6.00pm.** Evening worship

ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

- Sunday - Choir practice in church (**9.30 am**)
- Monday - Baby n' Toddler Group (**9.30 am –11.30am**)
- Brownies meeting in church (**5.30pm**)
 - Prayer meetings –18th October, 1st and 15th Nov. in church(**8 pm**)
- Wednesday - Bible Fellowship in church - (**6.30 pm for 7.15pm start**)
- Friday - Bible Fellowship in church - West Chapel (**2.00 pm**)
- Scouts meeting in hall and church(**6.30 pm**) -
 - Music Team practice in choir vestry (**6.00 pm**)

Enquiry/Counselling/Prayer Lifeline - please phone 020 8340 1566

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