



# The Peace of Thanksgiving

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*—Colossians 3:15

*Thanksgiving just gets me all warm and tingly and all kinds of wonderful inside.*—Willard Scott

There is something magical about a Thanksgiving Day morning. Perhaps it's the fact that Thanksgiving Day is a guaranteed holiday (and the next day too) for most people from the rigors and routine of normal demands of daily life. It's the sense that if you wake up early enough, life as we experience it in the day-to-day seems to become quiet for a while.

Maybe it's the crispness of the autumn air outside, cup of coffee in-hand, out for a long walk. Or, maybe it's the anticipation of the food and family to come. Thanksgiving Day morning, at least for me, has to be the top contender for "most peaceful morning of the year," and I cherish that peace.

Before I go too much further in writing about *The Peace of Thanksgiving*, I readily admit that I can hear any number of friends and family members who do the hard work of preparation for all that food and family to come, saying, "Are you out of your mind?! There's so much to do on a Thanksgiving Day morning!!"

Yes, there certainly is so much to do. Absolutely. However, I'm simply focusing in on the early morning part of the day, and developing the thought from there. And on behalf of all of us who so enjoy the beautiful results of all

that hard work, let us collectively say, "Thank You!"

I can also hear many others insist that there's nothing magical about a Thanksgiving Day morning for them. Their children are grown and live thousands of miles away. They can't leave their assisted-care facility to travel to see them, and seldom does anyone come to visit them, let alone on Thanksgiving Day.

**Far greater than the peace of a quiet Thanksgiving morning, the peace of Christ that rules in our hearts is a deeper peace. It is a spiritual peace.**

Paul in his letter to the Colossians encourages us to *let* the peace of Christ rule in our hearts...for we were called to peace...and be thankful. Paul's use of the word *let* implies we have a choice, a participation in, the peace of Christ ruling in our hearts.

We can choose to *let* his peace rule, or we can stifle it. We can *let* his peace lead us to a spirit of thanksgiving, or we can deny it. The choice to *let* is ours. Christ Jesus gives us that freedom and invites us to respond in a way that best serves us. Christ Jesus invites us to choose peace and a spirit of thanksgiving.

The peace of Christ does not depend on large family gatherings. The peace of Christ is not all about the hard work that goes into preparing the home and food for those who will come.

Please *let* me ask you a question or two: Can we be uneasy, anxious, worried or even agitated when we

are truly at peace? Can we be lost in negativity or discouragement when we are feeling deeply thankful? I believe the answers to these questions are obvious—we cannot.

I'm not suggesting, however, that it is always easy to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. There are times when it is quite difficult to feel a spirit of thanksgiving.

More often than not, the world around us gives us every opportunity to feel uneasy, anxious, worried and even agitated.

Life on our planet today can lead us to a high degree of negativity, deep loneliness and honest discouragement. The emotions that often build inside of us can create a ground-swell, and we can be carried away. But that's not the end of the story.

As Christ-followers, we celebrate *The Peace of Thanksgiving*. We celebrate the peace we have in Christ Jesus, as we live our lives in him and he lives his life in us. His peace and spirit of thanksgiving give us a *warmth, a tingly wonderful inside*, to borrow Willard Scott's thought. And that peace and spirit of thanksgiving then transforms us, and gives us a different perspective on all we may face in the world around us.

Far greater than the peace of a quiet Thanksgiving Day morning, the peace of Christ that rules in our hearts is a deeper peace. It is a spiritual peace. The spirit of thanksgiving that he gives us is a continual and permanent gift. His thanksgiving is also spiritual.

All we need do is to receive it and *let* it rule within us. As we do, we carry within us a celebration that can last the entire year-round. □

—Ed Dunn