

### Gratitude, Which Does Not Come Naturally But Must Be Cultivated, Leads to Generosity and Enough for All

"Living a life of gratitude and maintaining a spirit of gratitude is not the natural, human response to the good things we enjoy in our lives," the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his sermon on Harvest Festival Sunday. "Because of this, gratitude is a response which needs continually to be cultivated and nurtured in our lives.

"This is why the writer of Deuteronomy cautions the children of Israel, and says to them, 'When you enter the good land the Lord is giving you, you will find much abundance there. You will enjoy many good things. *But be careful to remember the Lord your God.*'

"Gratitude to God does not seem to be a naturally inherent or automatic response to the blessings in our lives," Pastor Thelander continued. "I think perhaps one reason for this is that we human beings like to perpetuate the myth that we are independent and self-made, that we can do it all and manage it all ourselves. In our stubbornness and pride, we human beings simply do not like to admit that we are dependent upon God for all of life.

"So, when the children of Israel enter the land of Canaan and things are good, they are tempted to say, 'My, look what we have done.' It's no wonder that the Trappist monk Thomas Merton exclaimed, 'The essence of sin is ingratitude.'

"But there is a reason why God has blessed us, brothers and sisters. Paul tells us (and the Corinthians) what that reason is. According to Paul, we've been blessed in order to be a blessing. . . .

"Paul gives us great insight into God's economy as he asks the poor Corinthians to contribute to an offering being taken for Christians in Jerusalem. You see, most people live today with a philosophy of *scarcity*, where there are limited resources and only so much to go around. In that kind of world, persons are careful to look out for themselves first, to hoard resources. . . .

"But Paul lives with the philosophy of *abundance*. For him, God is the great Multiplier, who does his work by blessing persons and then asking them to pass on the blessings to others. And because the law of sowing and reaping states that one always reaps more (p.2→)



"My, look what we have done," the Pharisee might have said, but instead he said, "I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there." And so Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1794-1872), in the book *Die Bibel in Bildern*, depicted above characters in Jesus' story in the Gospel reading for this Sunday. "For the proud will be humbled, but the humble will be honored," Jesus said. Engraving credit: [www.pitts.emory.edu](http://www.pitts.emory.edu)

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**Sundays**  
10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service  
11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation  
11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion  
6:00 p.m.: (First Sundays only) Choral Evensong, tea & refreshments

**Thursdays:** 6:30 p.m.: Evening Prayers. 7:00 p.m.: Singing & discussing hymns.

**For the poor: Thanksgiving needs:** Turkeys, corn, canned green beans, stuffing mix, instant and fresh potatoes, cranberry sauce, disposable salt and pepper shakers, paper plates, tamale ingredients (masa corn meal, pork, beef), spices. **Christmas needs:** Hams, ready-to-serve rolls, butter or margarine, frozen pies, cake mixes, breakfast/brunch foods, eggs, muffins, pancake mix, sausage.

**Readings, 10/28:** Jer. 14:1-22; Ps. 84:1-12; 2 Tim. 4:6-18; Luke 18:9-14. **11/4, 10 a.m.:** Neh. 9:7-14; Ps. 149:1-9; Eph. 1:15-23; Luke 6:20-26. **11/4, 6 p.m.:** Ps. 84; Neh. 5:1-19; Acts 20:7-12.

**Prayer Emphases:** Japan; Fellowship of Grace Brethren; St. Michael's Cathedral, Boise, and the Very Rev. Richard Demarest; The Order of St. Luke; parishioners on Poplar Drive.

(**Sermon, cont'd.**) than is sown, God is able to take the generosity of people and multiply it beyond human measure or understanding." Citing Paul's words that "God will generously provide all you need" with "plenty left over to share with others," Pastor Thelander urged us to "live like this was really true", so that we will "be conduits of God's abundance" to others.