

A  
bountiful  
THANKSGIVING  
to  
You

Illustrious Deputy James H. Upchurch and my Brothers and Sisters of Dr. G. Wesley Allen Council of Deliberation and Annie P. Rogers State Grand Assembly.

It is with great joy; I greet you in the name of The Most High God of Heaven. Even in these dangerous times, our God is still in charge, and we thank Him for all He has done and all He will do. In this Thanksgiving season, we lift Him up. For Jesus Himself said in St. John 12:32 (KJV), "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

How do you say thanks when someone shows you kindness? Our social custom dictates that people who are shown kindness should respond by saying thank you. It is an expected kindness, whether it is heartfelt or not. Saying thanks is easy for some, but there are others that find it difficult because they find gratitude a humbling experience.

Consider two men who received their fates in sealed envelopes. The first man received an envelope marked thrills. He felt fortunate to have received such a prize lot in life. As he opened it, his life was showered with exciting events. He traveled around the world and experienced every known sensation. After a while, he had seen everything and done everything. His thrills were dulled to meaningless, boring moments. He returned to his benefactor and complained violently, "Life is boring. I've been everywhere and done everything, but there is nothing else to do. . . I owe you no thanks, for this miserable state." Complaining of boredom, he left unhappy.

The second man had an envelope marked frills. As he opened his envelope, his life became surrounded by a mixture of experiences. He had moments of joy followed by moments of sickness. For every minute of joy, there were also a few seconds of pain. After many years, the second man also returned to his benefactor and offered his thanks. "Why do you thank me? the benefactor asked. "I gave your friend thrills, and he complained. I gave you frills, and you give me thanks." The man answered with an air of gratitude. "If you had given me only thrills, I would have soon become bored as he. But you gave me a package of thrills, ills, and chills, and called it frills. That made my life complete. The nights you gave me, made the sun look brighter the next day. I thank you for the frills. I thank you for the ills. Together, they have made me a better man." His benefactor smiled and said, "I have finally found a grateful man." He showered him with both health and wealth.

As Christians, we have learned the spirit of gratitude. We give God thanks for the sunshine and the rain, the joy, and the pain, for our losses and our gains. We have found that we can show our thanks best by keeping our promises to God and continually praising Him in the congregation of men. During this Thanksgiving season, we give God thanks for all of His many blessings, He has given to us.

May God continue to bless you and your families during this Thanksgiving and forever more.

GIG Samuel J. Cornelius 33°  
Illustrious Grand Prior