

Give Thanks to a Great Savior

Intro – Thanksgiving is the best holiday.

Gratitude isn't just an emotion: It's also a value. In most cultures, but especially in America around Thanksgiving time, being grateful is seen as a virtue; the entire country stops working and gathers together, because being thankful is something we should do. But why, really? You can thank your grandma for making delicious pie, but who do you thank for the circumstances of your life?...
— Emma Green, “Gratitude without God”,
from The Atlantic

Hebrews 4:14–16

[14] Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. [15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (ESV)

3 things to be thankful for:

1. The Son of God is Our Great High Priest
2. Jesus knows us well and is sympathetic towards us
3. Promised and Permanent access to the Throne of Grace

The Son of God is our High Priest

[14] Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

- In the Bible, thankfulness, or lack of thankfulness, are key characteristics used to describe two types of people: the unrighteous and the righteous:

- ***Romans 1:18–21 — the unrighteous***

[18] For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. [19] For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. [20] For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. [21] For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (ESV)

- ***Colossians 2:6–7 — the righteous***

[6] Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, [7] rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (ESV)

- ***Colossians 3:15–16***

[15] And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. [16] Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (ESV)

- In the midst of all the difficulty, distress, disappointment and death that this fallen world brings us, we have a great reason to be thankful — Jesus, the son of God, is our High Priest.

Jesus knows us well and is sympathetic towards us

[15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

The word for sympathize here is a compound word formed from the prefix mean “with” (like our English prefix co-) joined with the verb ‘to suffer’. Sympathize here is not cool and detached pity. It is a depth of felt solidarity such as is echoed in our own lives most closely only as parents to children. Indeed, it is deeper even than that. In our pain, Jesus is pained; in our suffering he feels the suffering as his own even though it isn’t — not that his invincible divinity is threatened but in the sense that his heart is feelingly drawn into our distress.

— Dane Ortlund, “Gentle and Lowly”

- Jesus is our intercessor and our advocate.
- **Hebrews 7:15** — *He always lives to make intercession for them...*
- **1 John 2:1** — *We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

Jesus knows us well and is sympathetic towards us

[16] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need...

- In Christ, God has not given us access to his throne of mercy because we are weak — *even though we are* — he's given us access to his throne of grace because he loves us.