

THANKFULNESS



Thankfulness has always been at the centre of the life and worship of God's people. Under the Law of Moses, there were not only sacrifices for forgiveness, there were 'thanks offerings' as well. 'Songs of thankfulness and praise...' are at the heart of Christian worship. Thankfulness is directed towards God who gives and sustains life. Seeing the world as God's creation underpins the way we approach everything in life, seeing it as a gift and not as a right. Thankfulness is important. Luke tells the story of the ten lepers who were healed and is probably challenging his readers to examine themselves when he tells of the amazement of Jesus that only one, a Samaritan, came back to thank him. (Luke 17:11-19). Jesus gave thanks to God (Matthew 11:25) and although the word 'thankfulness' is not common in the Gospels, recognition of his dependence on the Father infuses the whole life of Jesus. Thankfulness is a wholehearted response. It stems from a consciousness of God's gifts and blessings. It is a joyfulness that erupts into praise. Paul frequently encourages us to 'be thankful' (Colossians 3:15), to 'give thanks in all circumstances' (1 Thessalonians 5:18) and says that our lives should 'overflow with thankfulness' (Colossians 2:7). For Christians the greatest of all acts of worship is simply called 'thanksgiving' - eucharistia in Greek - thanksgiving for the death and resurrection of God's Son and the way of forgiveness that is opened up.