**For Release Wednesday, November 24, 2021**

**Capitol View
*Commentary by J.L. Schmidt***

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**Be Thankful In All Circumstances**

The words of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians were simple and direct. “Give thanks in all circumstances.” (1 Thess. 5:18 NIV)

They should give us pause as we celebrate Thanksgiving 2021, after 18 months of tension and division as some struggle to find reasons to be grateful. Mask or no mask. Vaccine or no vaccine. Go back to work. Wait for the next stimulus check. Is the pandemic over yet?

It’s important to note that he didn’t say be thankful *for* all things. But, *in* all things. That includes the hurtful, the mean, the ugly things of the world. Know that you aren’t in them alone.

In summing up his first epistle to the believers in Thessalonica, Paul admonishes them and us to live a life that is pleasing in the sight of the Lord. He calls us to encourage the fainthearted; to support the weak; to show goodness and grace to all people; and to not return evil with evil.

Paul’s letter was written between 52 and 54 A.D. Clearly, he was one of the first to encourage gratitude and Thanksgiving. But a look at similar words from a mixed bag of folks should get us in the proper frame of mind for Thanksgiving and beyond.

The late President John F. Kennedy encouraged that we “find time to stop and thank people who make a difference in our lives.” Those who have made and are still making a difference. Parents, preachers, teachers, friends, and mentors. Take a minute and thank them. Right now.
 Two-time Pulitzer Prize winning author William Faulkner said ““Gratitude is a quality similar to electricity: It must be produced and discharged and used up in order to exist at all.” When is the last time you produced gratitude and used it up?

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Motivational speaker, author, salesman and beloved encourager Zig Ziglar said, “Be grateful for what you have and stop complaining – it bores everybody else, does you no good, and doesn’t solve any problems.” Ziglar believed that everyone could be, do and have more. There’s the kind of guy you want in your corner of the world.

Marcus Aurelius, recognized as the last of Five Good Emperors of Rome, boiled it down to the simplest terms. “What a precious privilege it is to be alive – to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love.” He was emperor from 161 to 180 A.D.

Gratitude from the perspective of five very different people. Surely you have some of your own experiences that are worth sharing with friends and family during this holiday in which we turn to food to fill the holes in our souls.

Reach out to someone who’s been there for you and let them know how grateful you are for them. Let them know how thankful you are to have them in your life.

Most importantly, have a great Thanksgiving holiday. I hope this has challenged you to go beyond turkeys and Pilgrims and pumpkin pie. Look around you and be grateful! Be thankful.

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