



A Contrastive Study of Arabic Islamic and English Christian Oration a Stylistic Study

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Abstract

Oration is a form of oral communication, it is immediate in its audience relationship and reactions. It is an art cultivated for itself; it serves many fields like politics, law courts and religion. A religious oration expresses the fears, hopes, and attitudes of people who attentively hear it. It helps the congregation to understand the content of their faith and how to live according to its instructions. In spite of the differences between Islam and Christianity regarding the scope of interest in the affairs of life, the similarity of the purpose of the orator, which is to influence the thought and behaviour of the congregation, brings about an inevitable recourse to the use of certain common linguistic aspects which can point to the existence of language universals in the religions oration.

The study aims at identifying the linguistic aspects which Arabic Islamic and English Christian Orations share and ascertaining which of these aspects is more characteristic of the language of religious oration in both languages.

The model of analysis adopted for this study is Leech and Short's (1981) linguistic level of analysis. The data for analysis consist of six orations; three of which are Arabic and the others are English.

The analysis of the Arabic and English texts has revealed that there are common features at the lexical and grammatical levels, which may contribute to any possible research into the existence of language universals in the field of religions oration.



The Theoretical Part

1. Introduction

One of the greatest arts with which man has been endowed is the oration (with all its types). Through the development of this art, the orators swayed public opinion and secured the leadership of their peoples. According to صفوت (١٩٦٥:٩٠) and Baird (1974:33), every oration must have a direct and simple style in order for people to believe it easily. Moreover, an oration must have certain types in order to be active and fruitful in all fields of life. These types are legal, political and religious. Cicero and Aristotle stated that oration is an instrument to serve religious purposes; they were content with high – sounding assertions of the power of orations to adorn virtue and dissuade from vice, to curb the violent and protect the oppressed, (Clarke, 1966:54).

Arabic authors, like درويش (١٩٦٨:٧٠) and عماره (١٩٩٧:١٩٠), agree on the fact that religious oration is also political since it is the voice of the state and sometimes it is legal since the imam attempts to advise his congregation to adopt or to avoid a certain action .

2- Elements of Arabic Islamic and English Christian Oration

2-1 Good Language and Style

Good language is considered to be the vehicle by which truth is passed from one mind to another ; therefore , the religious orator must appeal to the emotions of his congregation through the use of effective words , (Galperin , 1971:296 and Ijsseling, 1976:27) . Akbar (1987:2f) states that the religious orator, in control of the word and with a perfect command of his language, can reach the most exalted things.

Moreover, in order for a religious oration to be effective, it must possess four elements.

- 1- Clarity: the style of an oration must be clear, distinct and grammatically correct.
- 2- Precision: in a religious oration precise, common words can express profound thought. Imprecise speech cannot communicate exact meanings and it also reflects blurred thought.



- 3- Beauty: beauty differs from decoration, i.e. the lean style is often most pleasing to the ear.
- 4- Contextualization : a religious oration must fit the occasion and the minds of the congregation
(Nichols, 1963:14; ابو زهرة, ١٩٨٠:٣١ and ١٩٧٧:٢٣٢ عماره)

2-2 Persuasive Argument

The religious orator must be aware of the emotions and needs of his congregation and must also be able to treat certain themes which are always recurring like repentance , patience , the rights of people , etc (حاوي , ١٩٧٣:٨٢ and Clark , 1966:52)

2-3 Worthwhile Subjects

The religious orator, according to Stewart (1968:32) and Akbar (1987:4), must say all the practical and helpful things about a troubled human situation. A worthwhile subject must be worked out around exactly two elements: the Quran / Bible and the troubled life.

3- Leech and Short's (1981) Model of Analysis

Leech and Short (1981:75) argue that it is useful to have a checklist of lexical and grammatical features which enables them to collect data on a fairly systematic basis. Their checklist is not exhaustive but rather a list of categories which are likely to yield stylistically relevant information. Lexical and grammatical categories are used to find out how the choice of words, clauses and sentences involves various types of meaning.



The Practical Part

This study aims at investigating the aspects of similarity and difference between Arabic Islamic and English Christian orations; therefore, three orations from each language are going to be analysed on the basis of Leech and Short's (1981) model of analysis. The analysis includes lexical and grammatical categories with statistical application. In the study, the data selected include the following texts displayed in Table (1) below:

Table (1): Information about the Analysed Texts

Text No.	Arabic Texts		English Texts	
	Titles of Orations	Names of Orations	Titles of Orations	Names of Orations
1	عيد الفطر	خطباء مساجد امارة دبي	Worship that works: Selected sermons: Thanksgiving Day	Ben Helmer
2	عيد الاضحى المبارك	خطباء مساجد امارة دبي	The Pursuit of Happiness	Richard A. Rhem
3	الاستسقاء	عبد الله بن حسين	The Lack of the True Grace of God in Christianity Today	Mr. Padgett

1- Statistical Analysis

1-1 Arabic Text

The analysis below shows the significance of statistical data in describing the lexical and grammatical characteristics of three Arabic Islamic orations in comparison with the English ones. The comparison of the rates and frequencies of the intratextual components of style in the Arabic texts shows the following:

- 1- Abstract nouns (56.3%) are used more frequently than concrete ones (43.7%) owing to the general appeal to spiritual values and ethical codes.



Table -2- A Breakdown of Nouns in the Arabic Texts

Totals		Abstract		Concrete	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1077	100.0	606	56.3	471	43.7

2- Dynamic verbs have the highest frequency rates of (76.7%) in comparison with stative ones (18.9%). Concerning verb transitivity, transitive verbs are higher in their frequency rates (52.1%) than those of intransitive ones which stand at (43.5%) . These rates show a preference towards the description of actions and recommendable deeds.

Table-3- A Breakdown of Verbs in the Arabic Texts

Totals		Dynamic		Stative		Transitive		Intransitive	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
524	100.0	402	76.7	99	18.9	273	52.1	228	43.5

3- Concerning adjectivals, there is some equilibrium in the categories of gradable and nongradable adjectivals: (49.2%) for the first category and (50.8%) for the latter. This shows the division of the description between absolute qualities and relative ones.

Table -4- A Breakdown of Adjectivals in the Arabic Texts

Totals		Gradable		Nongradable	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
118	100.0	58	49.2	60	50.8

4- The Arabic texts show relatively comparable ratios of 4-5 between adverbials expressing place and those expressing time. This shows that the dimensions of Place and Time are made use of in the description of actions and events.

Table -5- A Breakdown of Adverbials in the Arabic Texts

Totals		Place		Time	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
28	100.0	12	42.9	16	57.1



Now we move to the discussion of the rates and frequencies of the grammatical categories of the Arabic texts in order to investigate their textual significance and functions in the organisation of Arabic Islamic orations.

- 1- Concerning constituent clause types, it has been observed that verbal clauses show higher frequency rates of (81.1%) than those of nominal ones (18.9%). These rates show that Arabic Islamic orations concentrate on actions and recommendable deeds.

Table -6- A Breakdown of Constituent Clauses in the Arabic Texts

Totals		Nominal		Verbal	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
646	100.0	122	18.9	524	81.1

- 2- As far as clause types are concerned, statements are the dominant type used having a frequency rate of (96.9%) .

Table -7- A Breakdown of Functional Clauses in the Arabic Texts

Totals		Statements		Commands		Questions		Exclamations	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
646	100.0	626	96.9	16	2.5	3	0.4	1	0.2

- 3-As for sentence complexity, complex sentences have higher rates of frequency (78.9%) than those of simple ones (21.1%). Such rates show that in Arabic Islamic orations, the orator is after the adequate statement of his arguments in the most explicit structures.

Table -8- A Breakdown of Simple and Complex Sentences in the Arabic Texts

Totals		Simple Sentences		Complex Sentences	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
147	100.0	31	21.1	116	78.9



1-2 English Texts

In the analysis conducted below, the description serves to give a global view of the statistical characteristics of the data as a whole. The lexical and grammatical characteristics can be summarized as follows:

- 1- There is an equilibrium in the use of abstract and concrete nouns in the whole data :(48.0%) against (52.0%) respectively. Such an equilibrium reflects the orators' need to use both of these categories in the conveyance of their messages.

Table -9- A Breakdown of Nouns in the English Texts

Totals		Abstract		Concrete	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
895	100.0	430	48.0	465	52.0

- 2- Regarding dynamic verbs, they have the highest rates of frequency (78.9%) in comparison with the category of stative verbs which amounts to (21.1%). This shows the orators' interest in describing actions and deeds. Within the category of verb transitivity, it has been found that the frequency rates of transitive verbs (65.1%) are higher than those of intransitive ones (34.9%). This confirms the fact that the orators prefer using the predicate as a carrier of the highest load of information.

Table -10- A Breakdown of Verbs in the English Texts

Totals		Dynamic		Stative		Transitive		Intransitive	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
573	100.0	452	78.9	121	21.1	373	65.1	200	34.9

- 3- Concerning adjectives , it has been found out that :
 - 1) Attributive adjectives show higher rates of frequency (69.5%) than those of predicative ones (30.5%).
 - 2) The rates of stative adjectives manifest higher frequencies (77.4%) than those of dynamic ones (22.6%).



- 3) The frequency rates of gradable and nongradable adjectives show equilibrium in their use: (51.6%) and (48.4%) respectively.

Table -11- A Breakdown of Adjectives in the English Texts

Totals		Attributive		Predicative		Dynamic		Stative		Gradable		Nongradable	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
279	100.0	194	69.5	85	30.5	63	22.6	216	77.4	144	51.6	135	48.4

- 4- Concerning the category of adverbs, the majority of the members of this category (81.0%) function adverbially rather than as modifiers. Concerning their semantic types, adverbs expressing time and manner account for about two thirds of all the adverbs (68.2%). Adverbs that express place, degree, concession, and frequency vary in their rates of frequency. One plausible conclusion here is that the two dimensions of "when" and "how" (events and deeds) are more relevant to the orators than the other dimensions.

Table -12- A Breakdown of Adverbs in the English Texts

Totals		Adverbial		Modifier		Place		Time		Degree		Manner		Frequency		Concession	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
126	100.0	102	81.0	24	19.0	13	10.3	35	27.7	5	11.9	51	40.5	6	4.8	6	4.8

Now, if we consider the grammatical categories recurrent in the three English texts, we get the following:

- 1-The three texts show significantly higher frequency rates of statements (96.0%) than any one of the functional clause types. This is natural since a religious oration is concerned with the conveyance of information rather than interactional exchanges that allow for commands, questions and exclamations.



Table -13- A Breakdowns of Functional Clauses in the English Texts

Totals		Statements		Commands		Questions		Exclamations	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
573	100.0	550	96.0	9	1.5	13	2.3	1	0.2

2- As for sentence complexity, it is noted that complex sentences constitute (76.6%) of all the sentences, vis-a-vis (23.4%) for simple ones.

Table -14- A Breakdown of Simple and Complex Sentences in the English Texts

Tables		Simple Sentences		Complex Sentences	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
145	100.0	34	23.4	111	76.6

2-Contrasting Arabic and English Texts

2-1 Lexical Categories

It has been found that there is variation in the use of abstract and concrete nouns in both Arabic and English data. In Arabic, abstract nouns (56.3%) are used more frequently than concrete ones (43.7%). This indicates that in Arabic there is higher appeal to abstract values and entities than to concrete entities.

Conversely, in the English data, concrete nouns are used more frequently than abstract ones (52.0%) for the former and (48.0%) for the latter. Such rates show that Christian orations have a tendency towards concrete entities than towards abstract ones.

Table -15- Frequency and Type of Nouns in the Six Texts

Type	Totals		Abstract		Concrete	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Arabic	1077	100.0	606	56.3	471	43.7
English	895	100.0	430	48.0	465	52.0



As for verbs, it has been found out that in both languages dynamic verbs manifest higher rates of frequency: (76.7%) in Arabic and (78.9%) in English than those of stative ones. As for verb transitivity, it is noted that in the Arabic and English data transitive verbs are used more frequently than intransitive ones: (52.1%) and (65.1 %) respectively. This indicates a preference in both languages in using the predicate as a carrier of the highest load of information.

Table -16- Frequency and Type of Verbs in the Six Texts

Type	Totals		Dynamic		Stative		Transitive		Intransitive	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Arabic	524	100.0	402	76.7	99	18.9	273	52.1	228	43.5
English	573	100.0	452	78.9	121	21.1	373	65.1	200	34.9

As far as adjectivals /adjectives are concerned, Arabic nongradable adjectivals (50.8%) are used more frequently than the gradable ones (49.2%). The case is almost exactly the opposite in English with gradable adjectives being (51.6%) and nongradable ones being (48.4%).

Table -17- Frequency and Type of Adjectivals / Adjectives in the Six Texts

Type	Totals		Gradable		Nongradable	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Arabic	118	100.0	58	49.2	60	50.8
English	279	100.0	144	51.6	135	48.4

As for adverbials /adverbs , in both languages , adverbials / adverbs expressing Time- (57.1%) in Arabic and (27.7%) in English – show higher frequency rates than those expressing Place – (42.9%) in Arabic and (10.3%) in English .

Table -18- Frequency and Type of Adverbials / Adverbs in the Six Texts

Type	Totals		Place		Time	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Arabic	28	100.0	12	42.9	16	57.1
English	126	100.0	13	10.3	35	27.7



2-2 Grammatical Categories

In both Arabic Islamic and English Christian orations, statements manifest the highest rates of frequency: (96.9%) and (96.0%) respectively in comparison with the other functional clause types.

Table -19- Frequency and Type of Functional Clauses in the Six Texts

Type	Totals		Statements		Commands		Questions		Exclamations	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Arabic	646	100.0	626	96.9	16	2.5	3	0.4	1	0.2
English	573	100.0	550	96.0	9	1.5	13	2.3	1	0.2

The Similarity between the two languages extends to sentence complexity. Complex sentences – (78.9 %) in Arabic and (76.6 %) in English – are used more frequently than simple ones.

Table -20- Frequency and Type of Sentences in the Six Texts

Type	Totals		Simple		Complex	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Arabic	147	100.0	31	21.1	116	78.9
English	145	100.0	34	23.4	111	76.6

The Conclusion

The analysis of the Arabic and English texts revealed that Arabic Islamic and English Christian orations possess common linguistic features which are summarized as follows:

Both of the two languages favour the use of dynamic verbs more than stative ones, adverbials / adverbs expressing Time more than those expressing Place, statements more than the other types of functional clauses, and complex sentences more than simple ones.

However, the area of difference is limited; both languages vary in their use of concrete and abstract nouns and gradable and nongradable adjectivals / adjectives.



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الهوامش

1- Appendix

خطبة عيد الفطر

(الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر) (الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر) (الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر) له الحمد في الاولى والآخرة ، وله الحكم ، وإليه ترجعون .
الله أكبر ما هبت نسيمات العيد تنتشر في الكون عبير الفرح والسرور .
الله أكبر ما أقبل العيد ليملاً قلوب المؤمنين بالبشر والنور .
الله أكبر ما استقبله المسلمون في كل بقاع الدنيا بالشوق والحبور .
الحمد لله الذي أكمل لنا ديننا ، وأتم نعمته علينا ، ورضي لنا الإسلام ديناً ، وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله لا شريك له ، أعاننا على أداء صيام رمضان ، وأكرمنا بالفضل والإحسان ، وهدانا إلى الأمن والإيمان ، وأشهد أن سيدنا محمداً صلى الله عليه وسلم عبده ورسوله ، وصفيه من خلقه وخليله ، أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون .
أوصيكم عباد الله – ونفسي – بتقوى الله ، وأحسبكم على طاعته ، وأحذركم وبال عصيانه ومخالفة أمره ، وأستفتح بالذي هو خير ، (فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ، وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ) (سورة الزلزلة: ٧-٨)

أما بعد : فبأبها الأخوة المؤمنون : يقول الله عز وجل : (يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ * وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ) (سورة البقرة: ١٨٦)
فبعد أن ذكر الله عز وجل آيات الصيام في شهر رمضان أمر بإكمال شهر الصوم (وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ) ثم أمر بالتكبير بعد الصوم في يوم العيد على ما أنعم الله ، وتفضل ، وأعان ووفق ، ثم أشار إلى أن من صام كما أمر الله ، ثم أفطر كما أمر الله ، ثم كبر الله شاكرًا حامدًا إياه على هداه، فهو بهذا قد صار من الراشدين : (لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ) . و((لعل)) من الله للتحقيق ، إذا صدق العبد فيما طلب منه ، ثم بين الله لعباده أنه إذا سأل أحد منهم عن ربه ، ولا بد أن يسأل العاقل عن مولاه ، ليدعوه ويتقرب إليه (فَأِنِّي قَرِيبٌ) إن الله قريب من كل من دعاه بصدق وإخلاص ، وافئزاز واضطرار ، فإذا أراد العباد أن يجيبهم ربهم فيما يدعونه فليسمعوا قوله تعالى عقب ذلك : (فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ) فكيف نريد أن يستجيب لنا ونحن لا نستجيب له (يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ) (سورة الأنفال: ٢٤)

إخوة الإيمان : نحن في يوم عيد الفطر الذي هو الجائزة حيث يتفضل الله على عباده الصالحين بجوائزهم ومكافآتهم فيمنحهم ما يستحقون من الأجر والقرب والحب والتوفيق

المتواصل والطمأنينة والرحمة والمغفرة ، يقول رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : ((إذا كان يومُ الفطر وقفت الملائكة على أبواب الطرق ، فنادوا : اغدوا - يامعشر المسلمين - إلى ربِّ كريم ، يمنّ بالخير ، ثم يثيب عليه الثواب الجزيل ، لقد أمرتم بقيام الليل فقمتم وأمرتم بصيام النهار فصمتتم ، وأطعتم ربكم ، فاقبضوا جوائزكم ، فإذا صلوا نادى منادٌ : ألا إن ربكم قد غفر لكم ، فارجعوا راشدين إلى رحالكم ، فهو يوم الجائزة)) (أخرجه الطبراني في الكبير)

الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، لا إله إلا الله ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، والله الحمد .
أيها المسلمون : إن أعياد المسلمين تختلف عن أعياد الأمم الأخرى في أسبابها وفي واجباتها ، لقد كانت ولا تزال أعياد غير المسلمين مرتبطةً بعايير وذكريات عابرة من انتصار قبيلة أو تتويج ملك أو زعيم ، أو مرتبطة بعاقد فاسدة تتنافى مع العقل والمنطق .

ثم إن ما يجري في تلك الأعياد من الممارسات الخاطئة ، واقتراف الموبقات وانتهاك الحرمات أمر يندى له الجبين ، ويدل على انحدار خلقي وفساد اجتماعي وتخلف عقلي وإنساني ، أما أعياد المسلمين فهي أفراح مشروعة عقب طاعات مشروعة ، يفرح بها المسلمون بالفضل الإلهي وبالرحمة الربانية (قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ) (سورة يونس : ٥٨) وما فرحة العيد عند المسلمين إلا تعبير صادق عن شكرهم لله رب العالمين الذي وفقهم لعبادة الصيام والحج .

أيها الإخوة الأعزاء : في العيد تظهر أخلاق الأمم وعلاقات أفرادها ، وهذا ما يكشف عن حقيقة الإسلام والمسلمين حيث يتواصل المسلمون في كل وقت وبخاصة في أيام العيد ، فيتزاورون ويتقاربون ويتواصلون ويتصالحون ، وتتوثق عرى الإخاء والمحبة والسلام ، وتأتلف القلوب ، وتصفو النفوس ، وتتحقق فيه مشاعر الجسد الواحد وترابطه ووحدته ، ولأجل هذه المعاني السامية شرع الله صدقة الفطر وذبح الأضحية .

فمن أخرج زكاة الفطر قبل صلاة العيد فهي زكاة مقبولة ، ومن أخرجها بعد صلاة العيد فهي صدقة من الصدقات ، ومن حكمة مشروعية زكاة الفطر وأضحية الأضحى إغناء الفقير عن السؤال في أيام العيد ، بحيث يؤمّن ضروراته ، ويسد حاجاته ، ويكتفي بما عنده .

أيها الأخوة المؤمنون : أذكر نفسي وإياكم في هذه المناسبة الكريمة بضرورة صفاء القلوب وتخليتها من كل حقد وحسد وضغينة وشحناء ، وأن تكون صافية نقية سليمة من كل أذى بحيث يصبح المسلم وليس في قلبه غل على أحد ، وأن يُظهرَ البشرَ والسرورَ الذي ينعكس من قلبه الطيب الرحيم ، وأن يلق كل مؤمن بوجه طلق بشوش ، فإن ذلك بر وإحسان وصدقة.

عباد الله : إن الله شرع لعباده المؤمنين هذه الأعياد عقب ركنين من أركان الإسلام سمواً بالمؤمن إلى ان يكون فرحه وسروره بالله تعالى وبطاعته بعيداً عن الباطل والمنكرات والآثام.

فالإسلام يشرع لابنائهِ الترويح عن النفس مع عدم التنازل عن الاخلاق والقيم والوقار والاحترام. وقد روى البخاري أن أبا بكر (رضي الله عنه) دخل بيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على ابنته عائشة - رضي الله عنها - فوجد عندها جاريتين صغيرتين تغنيان بغناء بعثت ، وتضربان بالدف ، فقال أبو بكر (رضي الله عنه) مستنكراً : مزمار عند رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ، وانتهر ابنته عائشة ، فقال عليه الصلاة والسلام : ((دعهما)) ثم قال : ((يا أبا بكر إن لكل قوم عيداً ، وهذا عيدنا)) .

إن اليوم عيدنا - أيها الأخوة الأعزاء - عيد فرحة وسرور على طاعة قدمناها وعمل صالح وفقنا الله إليه فلا ينبغي أن نجعل هذه الفرحة والسرور مشوباً بالمعصية والمنكر فنكون كالتي نقضت غزلها من بعد قوة أنكاثا .

أيها المسلمون : عليكم بـير الوالدين والإحسان إليهما والطاعة لهما ، وإياكم ثم إياكم من التقصير في حقهما والوقوع في عقوقهما ، فالعقوق شقاء ودمار . وعليكم بصلة الارحام والزيارة لهم والإحسان إليهم ، فإن الصدقة على المسلم صدقة وعلى ذي الرحم صدقة وصلة ، وإياكم وقطع الرحم ، فإن قاطعهما ملعون ، قال الله عز وجل: (فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ * أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَارَهُمْ) (سورة محمد : ٢٢-٢٣)

أخي المسلم: صف نفسك ، وطهر قلبك ، ولا تترك فيه حقداً ولا حسداً لمسلم فإن قدرت أن تصبح وتمسي وليس في قلبك غلّ لأحد فافعل ، فإن ذلك من سنة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ومن أحب سنته فقد أحبه ، ومن أحبه كان معه ، وقد قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : ((المرء مع من أحب)) (رواه البخاري ومسلم) فهو معه في كل مراحل وأطواره وانتقالاته ، والحب يقتضي الطاعة والاتباع (وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا) (سورة النساء : ٦٩)

الخطبة الثانية : (الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر) كبيرا والحمد لله كثيراً وسبحان الله بكرة وأصيلاً .

أخي المسلم : لا تنس في هذا اليوم المبارك البذل والعطاء والإحسان لكل من تراه مستحقاً ففي ذلك الخير كل الخير لك وللمجتمع ، أما أنت فلك الفلاح والسعادة (وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ) (سورة الحشر : ٩) ولك الاجر المضاعف ، ولك البركة والنماء والتطهير ، ولك الحب والودّ والدعاء ، ولا تنسوا - إخوتي الكرام - في هذا اليوم المبارك وفي كل يوم مراقبة أولادكم وبناتكم وتوجيههم الى ما يحفظهم من كل مخالفة وفساد ، ويحقق لهم كل خير وفضيلة ، فلا تغفلوا عنهم ، وكونوا معهم ، وأبعدوا عنهم كيد الشيطان ومكر الأقران ، وصحبة أهل العصيان .

ولا تنسوا – أيها الاخوة المؤمنون – الاستغفار والدعاء لامواتكم وأموات المسلمين وزيارة قبورهم ، والسلام عليهم ، فإنها تذكر الآخرة ، وترقق القلوب ، وتنفع الأموات بما تشتمل عليه من استغفار ودعاء وصدقات ، ولا تنسوا أيضاً الأحياء من إخوانكم المؤمنين وأخواتكم المؤمنات الذين يعيشون الحروب والكوارث والظلم والقهر والحصار والنار والعري والجوع والبرد والزمهرير ، والمسلم أياً كان عندما يسمع بأخ له يعيش هذه الظروف فإنه يستشعر بالإلم والضيق ، لأن الإيمان بالله هو الذي يجمع المؤمنين في مشارق الأرض ومغاربها ((مثل المؤمنين في توادهم وتراحمهم وتعاطفهم كمثل الجسد الواحد ، إذا اشتكى منه عضو تداعى له سائر الجسد بالحمى والسهر)).

إخوة الإيمان : هنيئاً لكم صيامكم ، ومبارك عليكم عيدكم ، ووصيتي لنفسي ولكم باستمرار عبوديتنا لله وطاعتنا له وتقوانا وخشيتنا حتى يختم لنا بالخير والإيمان ، ونسعد في الدنيا والآخرة. وإن في علامة قبول الطاعة أن يستمر المؤمن في ما كان عليه في شهر رمضان ، وأن يزداد في كل يوم طاعةً وقربةً ، لأنه من استوى يومه فهو مغبون ، ومن علامة عدم القبول – والعياذ بالله- أن ينتكس الإنسان بعد رمضان ، ويرجع إلى ما كان عليه فيكون ممن قال الله تعالى فيهم : (فخلف من بعدهم خلف أضاعوا الصلاة وأتبعوا الشهوات فسوف يلقون غيا * إلا من تاب وآمن وعمل صالحاً فأولئك يدخلون الجنة ولا يظلمون شيئاً * جنات عدن التي وعد الرحمن عباده بالغيب إنه كان وعده مأتياً)(سورة مريم : (٥٩-٦١))
أقول قولي هذا وأستغفر الله لي ولكم وللمسلمين .

خطبة عيد الأضحى المبارك

(الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر) (الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر) (الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر) والحمد لله كثيراً ، وسبحان الله بكرة وأصيلاً .
الحمد لله الذي أكمل لنا ديننا ، وأنم علينا نعمته ، ورضي لنا الإسلام ديناً ، فقال : (اليوم أكملت لكم دينكم وأتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الإسلام ديناً)(سورة المائدة:٣)
وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله ، الواحد الأحد الفرد الصمد ، الذي لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفواً أحد ، وأشهد أن سيدنا وحبیبنا وشفیعنا محمداً عبده ورسوله ، وصفیه وخلیله ، أدی الرسالة، وبلغ الأمانة ، ونصح الأمة ، وكشف الغمة ، فجراه الله عنا خير ما جرى نبياً عن أمته ، وصلى الله وسلم عليه وعلى آله وأصحابه والتابعين في الأولين وفي الآخرين ، وفي الملائكة الأعلی الى يوم الدين .

أوصيكم – عباد الله – ونفسي بتقوى الله ، فأتقوا الله العظيم حق تقواه ، وراقبوه مراقبة من يعلم أنه يراه ، وتزودوا من دنياكم لأخرتكم عملاً يرضاه ، فإن التقوى شعار المؤمنين ودثار الصالحين ، ووصية الله فيّ وفيكم وفي الخلق أجمعين .

أما بعد فيا أيها الأخوة المؤمنون : إن الله تعالى أكرم أمة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم بعيدين كريمين مباركين يختلفان عن أعياد الأمم السابقة ، في أسبابهما وفي واجباتهما ، حيث إن أعياد السابقين ترتبط بمعايير وذكريات عابرة ، كانتصار قبيلة على قبيلة ، أو تتويج ملك اور رئيس ، أو ترتبط بعقائد فاسدة يأبأها العقل والمنطق ، أما ما يجري فيها من ممارسات غير شرعية واقتراف للموبقات وانتهاك للمحرمات – مما يدل على الانحدار الخلفي ، والفساد الاجتماعي – فأمر يندى له جيبئ كل غيور .

أما أعيادنا – معاشر المسلمين – فهي أفراحٌ مشروعةٌ بعد طاعات مشروعة ، يفرح فيها المسلمون بفضل الله تعالى عليهم ، حيث أمرهم بذلك ، فقال : (قل بفضل الله وبرحمته فبذلك فليفرحوا هو خير لهم مما يجمعون) (سورة يونس : ٥٨) فقبل فترة امتثلنا علينا بعيد الفطر الذي يعد فرحة لكل المسلمين حيث إنه يُعدُّ تعبيراً صادقاً عن شكرهم لله رب العالمين ، الذي وفقهم لعبادة الصيام ، وفي هذا اليوم المبارك امتن الله علينا بعيد آخر ، إنه عيد الأضحى ، الذي رفع الله قدره ، إنه اليوم الذي يجتمع فيه حجاج بيت الله الحرام بمنى ، ليستكملوا مناسك الحج ، وليتقربوا فيه الى الله تعالى بإحياء سنة أبي الانبياء أبيهم إبراهيم عليه السلام بما يذبحونه في هذا اليوم العظيم من قرابين ، حيث إن الله تعالى أمر سيدنا إبراهيم بذبح ولده إسماعيل – عليهما السلام – فامتثل أمر الله طائعاً ، وخرج بابنه مسرعاً ، وقد صور لنا القرآن هذا المشهد العظيم تصويراً كاملاً ، ولنستمع إليه فهو يقول : (فلما بلغ معه السعي قال يا بني إني أرى في المنام أني أذبحك فانظر ماذا ترى قال يا أبتِ افعل ماتؤمر ستجدني إن شاء الله من الصابرين * فلما أسلما وتله للجبين * ونادينا أن يا إبراهيم * قد صدقت الرؤيا إنا كذلك نجزي المحسنين * إن هذا لهو البلاء المبين * وفديناه بذبح عظيم) (سورة الصافات : ١٠٢-١٠١)

أيها الأخوة المؤمنون : بما أن هذا اليوم هو يوم عيد الأضحى فلا بد من ذكر القول في الأضحى ، ولما كانت النصيحة واجبة فلا بد من التناصح ، ولما كان النصيح الذي يعالج الواقع أشد تأثيراً وأكثر وجوباً فلا بد من أن تكون نصائحنا هذا اليوم تعالج واقعنا ، وقبل البدء بها أودّ أن أوضح أمراً مهماً ، ألا وهو : الأضحى فإنها سنة مؤكدة على القول الراجح ، أكد عليها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم واعتبرها أحب الاعمال الى الله تعالى في مثل هذا اليوم وأيام التشريق ، حيث قال صلى الله عليه وسلم : فيما روته لنا أم المؤمنين عائشة – رضي الله عنها - : ((ما عمل آدمي من عمل يوم النحر أحب الى الله من أهرق الدم ، وإنها لتأتي يوم القيامة بقرونها وأشعارها وأظلافها ، وإن الدم ليقع من الله بمكان قبل أن يقع من الأرض ، فطيبوا بها نفساً)) (الترمذي (٨٣/٤) وابن ماجه ، وصححه الحاكم .

أيها الأخوة المؤمنون : إن الذبح أفضل من التصديق بثمن الأضحى ، لأن إراقة الدم لله عبادة مقصودة ، قرنها الله بالصلاة فقال : (فصل لربك وأنحر) (سورة الكوثر : (٢))

وقال : (قل إن صلاتي ونسكي ومحياي ومماتي لله رب العالمين * لا شريك له) (سورة الانعام : (١٦٢-١٦٣))) وبما أن الأضحية عبادة وقربة الى الله تعالى فيجب أن تكون خالصة لله بعيدة عن الرياء والمباهاة ، وأن تكون من مال حلال طيب ، لأن الله تعالى طيب لا يقبل إلا طيباً ، وأن يتحرى بها الأكمل والأفضل ، والأعلى والأعلى ، لأن ذلك من تعظيم شعائر الله تعالى ، وكلما كانت أعلى وأنفس كانت الى الله أحب ، وفي الأجر أعظم ، وعلى التقوى أدل ، ومن السنة أن يأكل منها ثلثاً ، ويتصدق بثلث ، ويهدي ثلثاً ، ولا يحق له أن يبيع منها شيئاً ، أو ان يعطي منها أجرة للجزار ، ووقت الذبح إنما يكون بعد صلاة العيد ، وينتهي عند غروب الشمس من اليوم الثالث من أيام التشريق ، هذا ما أردت أن أبينه في الأضحية حتى يكون المسلم على بينة من أمره .

أما النصائح التي أريد بيانها في هذا اليوم العظيم فهي كما يلي :
أولاً: بر الوالدين والإحسان إليهما إن كانا على قيد الحياة ، وإلا فالدعاء لهما ، وإنفاذ عهدهما، وصلة أرحامهما ، وبر صديقهما ، فإن بر صديقهما بر بهما ، وعلينا أن نحذر من عقوقهما والتقصير في حقهما أو حق أحدهما ، فإن الله نهانا عن التضجر في وجوههما ، وأمرنا أن نخفض جناح الذل لهما فقال : (فلا تقل لهما أف ولا تنهرهما وقل لهما قولاً كريماً * واخفض لهما جناح الذل من الرحمة وقل رب ارحمهما كما ربياني صغيراً) (سورة الاسراء : (٢٣-٢٤))
ثانياً: صلة الأرحام : فعلىنا أيها الأخوة المؤمنون وخصوصاً في مثل هذه الايام أن نصل أرحامنا ، فإن صلتها منسأة في الأجل وتكثير في الرزق ، كما صح هذا عن نبينا صلى الله عليه وسلم فقد قال صلى الله عليه وسلم : ((من أحب أن يبسط في رزقه ، وأن ينسأ له فق أثره فليصل رحمه)) (البخاري (٥٦٤٠) ومسلم (٢٥٥٧)) ولنحذر كل الحذر من قطعها ، لأن قاطعها بعيد من الجنة ، قال صلى الله عليه وسلم : ((لا يدخل الجنة قاطع رحم) (مسلم (٢٥٥٦)) بل إن قاطعها ملعون بنص كتاب الله تعالى ، واسمعوا إن شئتم قول الله تعالى : (فهل عسيتم إن توليتم أن تفسدوا في الأرض وتقطعوا أرحامكم * أولئك الذين لعنهم الله فأصمهم وأعمى أبصارهم) (سورة محمد : (٢٢-٢٣))

ثالثاً : التزاور بين المسلمين، لأن التزاور بين المسلمين سنة من سنن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وهذه السنة أشد تأكيداً في مثل هذه الأيام ، وخصوصاً إذا كانت من أجل الله ، فإنها سبب من أسباب حب الله تعالى لك أيها المسلم ، وفي هذا يقول رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ((إن رجلاً زار أخاً له في قرية أخرى ، فأرصد الله له على مدرجته ملكاً فلما أتى عليه قال : أين تريد ؟ قال : أريد أخاً لي في هذه القرية ، قال : هل لك عليه من نعمة تربها؟ قال : لا غير أني أحببته في الله عز وجل ، قال : إني رسول الله اليك ، بأن الله قد أحبك كما أحببته فيه)) (مسلم (١٠٦/١٦)) ومن كان بينه وبين مسلم شحنة فعليه أن يتصالح معه ، فإنه لا يحق لمسلم أن يهجر أخاه فوق ثلاث ، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فيما رواه عنه أنس بن مالك –

رضي الله عنه - : ((لا يحل لمسلم أن يهجر أخاه فوق ثلاث ليال ، يلتقيان فيعرض هذا ، ويعرض هذا ، وخيرهما الذي يبدأ بالسلام)) فعلينا ايها الاخوة أن نصفي نفوسنا ، ونظهر قلوبنا من الحقد والغل والحسد ، فإن أناساً بلغوا أعلى المنازل لا بكثرة صلاة وصيام وقيام ، وإنما بصفاء صدورهم ، وسلامة قلوبهم .

رابعاً : التصدق على الفقراء والمساكين ، فعلينا ايها الاخوة أن لا ننسى في مثل هذه الايام المباركة البذل والعطاء لمن نراه مستحقاً ، وإذا اردت - أخي المسلم - أن تكون من السبعة الذين يظلمهم الله في ظله يوم لا ظل الا ظله فأكثر من صدقة السر ((ورجل تصدق بصدقة فأخفاها حتى لا تعلم شماله ما تنفق يمينه)) جعلني الله وإياكم ممن يستمع القول فيتبع أحسنه ، وتوبوا الى الله جميعاً أيها المؤمنون لعلكم تفلحون .

الخطبة الثانية :

(الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر) (الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر) (الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر) (الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر) (الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر)

الحمد لله وحده والصلاة والسلام على من لا نبي بعده ، واعلموا - عباد الله - أن الله أمرنا بأمر بدأ فيه بنفسه ، وثنى بملائكة قدسه ، وثلت بالمؤمنين من عالمي جنه وأنسه ، فقال قولاً كريماً ، تعظيماً لقدر نبينا ، وتعليماً لنا وتكريماً (إن الله وملائكته يصلون على النبي يا أيها الذين آمنوا صلوا عليه وسلموا تسليماً) اللهم صل وسلم على نبيك الفائل : ((الدين النصيحة قالوا ، لمن يارسول الله ؟ قال الله ولكتابيه ولرسوله ولأئمة المسلمين وعامتهم)

أيها الاخوة المؤمنون : بقي لنا من النصائح التي أرجو ان تقبلوها بصدر رحب ما يأتي :
أولاً: التأكيد على اجتناب المنكرات والآثام.

أيها المسلمون : إنه - والله - لما يحزن كل مسلم غير هو ما يشاهده من محرمات تقتصر في مثل هذه الايام ، وذلك من تبرج وسفور ، حيث ان المرأة تخرج متبرجة مظهره انواع الحلبي والزينة ، وكانها عروس تزف الى زوجها بل وأكثر ، أما علمت تلك المرأة ولا ولي أمرها أنها إذا تعطرت وخرجت لتشم رائحتها فهي احدى الزانيات ، أما علموا أن من فعل ذلك أو رضي به فلا يدخل الجنة ، ولا يشم ريحها ، وإن ريحها لتوجد من مسيرة اعوام ، قال عليه الصلاة والسلام : ((صنقان من امتي لم ارهما : قوم معهم سياط كأذناب البقر يضربون بها الناس ، ونساء كاسيات عاريات ، مميلات مائلات رؤوسهن كأسنمة البخت المائلة ، لا يدخلن الجنة، ولا يجدن ريحها ، وإن ريحها لتوجد من مسيرة كذا وكذا))

فعلينا - أيها الاخوة - أن نخشى الله ونتوب اليه ، ونجتنب نواهيه ، ونقوم بحق الرعاية والقوامة ، ونقي انفسنا واهلينا ناراً وقودها الناس والحجارة ، وكذلك أنتن ايها المؤمنات : قرن في بيتكن ولا تبرجن تبرج الجاهلية الاولى ، ولا تبدين زينتكن للاجانب أبداً ، وأقمن الصلاة



، وآتين الزكاة، وأطعن الله ورسوله ، واحفظن أنفسكن من النار ، فإن أكثر اهلها النساء ، كما صح عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم .
ثانياً : الدعاء والاستغفار لآخواننا واخواتنا أحياء وامواتاً مع زيارة قبورهم والسلام عليهم ، فانها ترقق القلوب ، وتذكر بالآخرة ، وتنفع الميت المسلم بما تشتمل عليه من دعاء واستغفار وصدقات، كما يجب ان لا ننسى إخواننا في الايمان في فلسطين والعراق ولبنان وكشمير والشيشان ، الذين يعيشون ويلات الحروب والدمار ، والقهر والحصار ، والعري والجوع ، والبرد والزمهير ، لان المسلم إذا كان مسلماً حقاً فلا بد من ان يشعر بما يصاب به اخوه المسلم في مشارق الارض ومغاربها ، وفي هذا يقول رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : ((مثل المؤمنين في توادهم وتراحمهم وتعاطفهم كمثل الجسد الواحد ، اذا اشتكى منه عضو تداعى له سائر الجسد بالحمى والسهر)) إن امم الكفر تتداعى اليوم على المسلمين كما تتداعى الأكلة الى قصعتها ، وواجب المسلمين تجاه بعضهم كبير ، ونصرتهم للمظلوم واجبة، فالمسلم اخو المسلم لا يظلمه ولا يسلمه ولا يخذله .
وفي الختام : تقبل الله منا ومنكم ، وحفظنا من كل ذنب ومروره وجعلنا ممن يستمع القول فيتبع احسنه ... وكل عام وانتم بخير ، والامة الاسلامية في عز ورفعة وتأييد.

خطبة الاستسقاء

يكبر تسعاً تسعاً ثم يقول

الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم مالك يوم الدين ، لا اله الا الله يفعل ما يشاء ويحكم ما يريد، لا اله الا الله الولي الحميد . لا اله الا الله الواسع المجيد . لا اله الا الله المؤمل لكشف كل كرب شديد . لا اله الا الله المرجو للاحسان والافضال والمزيد . لا اله الا الله لا راحم ولا واسع سواه للعبيد . لا اله الا الله الذي استوى في علمه القريب والبعيد . لا اله الا الله لا ملجأ منه إلا اليه ولا مفر ولا محيد . سبحان فارح الكربات .

سبحان مجيب الدعوات. سبحان مغيث الالهامات . سبحان محيل الشدائد والمكروهات . سبحان العالم بالظواهر والخفيات . سبحان من لا تشتهه عليه اللغات. سبحان من لا تغلظه كثرة المسائل مع اختلاف اللغات وتفنن المسئولات . سبحان القائم بارزاق جميع المخلوقات في البراري والبحار والجبال والمسكن والفلوات . سبحان من لا تغيب خزائنه مع كثرة الإنفاق في جميع الاوقات . سبحان من عم بستره ورزقه حتى العصاة . سبحان ربك رب العزة عما يصفون وسلام على المرسلين والحمد لله رب العالمين . الله اكبر الله اكبر لا اله الا الله والله اكبر الله اكبر والله الحمد. الحمد لله الكريم الوهاب . الرحيم التواب . الهادي الى الصواب . مزيل الشدائد واللوى. وجابر المصاب. وفارج الهم وكاشف الغم ومجيب دعوة المضطر فما سأله سائل فخاب. علم عدد الرمل والتراب . وأبصر فلم يستر بصره حجاب . وسمع جهر القول وخفي الخطاب. وأخذ بنواصي جميع الدواب . بيتلى ليدعى فإذا دعي أجاب . ابتعث بحكمته في الهوى متراكم السحاب . وأنزل به الماء فأروى به الأودية والشعاب . وأنبت به الجنات وحب الحصيد والنخل والاعناب . وأخرج به أنواع النبات المختلفة الزهور والطعوم والالوان والروائح والطبائع والاضراب . وجعلها من البراهين على اعادته الموتى من القبور بعد التفرق والذهاب . فسبحانه من إله عظيم لا يماثل ولا يضاهى ولا يرام له جناب . هو ربي لا اله إلا هو عليه توكلت وإليه متاب . أحمده سبحانه حمد من تاب إليه وأناب . وأشكره على نعم تفوق العد والحساب . وأشهد أن لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له . الملك العظيم القاهر الغلاب . العالم بما شوهد وغاب . شهادة مبرأة من الشرك والشكوك والارتياب . أرجو بها النجاة من نار شديدة الوقود والالتهاب . وأؤمل بها من كرمه جنات كمل نعيمها وطاب . وأشهد أن سيدنا محمداً عبده ورسوله لب اللباب . وسيد الحضار والاعراب . أشرف نبي أنزل عليه أشرف كتاب. اللهم صل وسلم على عبدك ورسولك وخليتك محمد وعلى آله وأصحابه البررة الأنجاء. خير آل وأفضل أصحاب. (أما بعد) فيأيها الناس اتقوا الله تعالى وتوبوا إليه وأستغفروه وأخلصوا له العبادة ووحده ، لتفوزوا منه بخيري الدنيا والاخرة وتحوزوه . ثم أنكم شكوتم جذب دياركم واستنخار المطر عن إبانة لحروثكم وأشجاركم . وأن ربكم تبارك وتعالى أمركم أن تدعوه ووعدهم أن يستجيب لكم . فقال تقدر وعلا : وقال ربكم أدعوني أستجب لكم إن الذين يستكبرون عن عبادتي سيدخلون جهنم داخرين . وقال تعالى : أدعوا ربكم تضرعاً وخفية إنه لا يحب المعتدين ، ولا تفسدوا في الارض بعد إصلاحها وأدعوه خوفاً وطمعاً إن رحمة الله قريب من المحسنين . وقال تعالى : وإذا سالك عبادي عني فإني قريب أجيب دعوة الداع

إذا دعان فليستجيبوا لي وليؤمنوا بي لعلهم يرشدون .وقال تعالى : أمن يجيب المضطر إذا دعاه ويكشف السوء ويجعلكم خلفاء الأرض, ءإله مع الله قليلاً ما تذكرون . وقال تعالى : ((هو الحي لا إله إلا هو فادعوه مخلصين له الدين الحمد لله رب العالمين ، فأخلصوا له العبادة واسئلوه وأنبيوا اليه واستغفروه فقد قال تعالى : ((والذين إذا فعلوا فاحشة أو ظلموا أنفسهم ذكروا اله فاستغفروا لذنوبهم ومن يغفر الذنوب إلا الله ولم يصروا على ما فعلوا وهم يعلمون أولئك جزاؤهم مغفرة من ربهم وجنات تجري من تحتها الأنهار خالدين فيها ونعم اجر العاملين)): وقال تعالى : ((ومن يعمل سوءا أو يظلم نفسه ثم يستغفر الله يجد الله غفوراً رحيماً)) وقال تعالى : ((ولو أنهم إذ ظلموا أنفسهم جاءوك فاستغفروا الله واستغفر لهم الرسول لوجدوا الله تواباً رحيماً)) وقال تعالى : ((وما كان الله ليعذبهم وأنت فيهم وماكان الله معذبهم وهم يستغفرون ، وأن استغفروا ربكم ثم توبوا اليه يمتعكم متاعاً حسناً إلى أجل مسمى ويؤت كل ذي فضل فضله وإن تولوا فأنى أخاف عليكم عذاب يوم كبير ... وياقوم استغفروا ربكم ثم توبوا اليه يرسل السماء عليكم مدرارا ويزدكم قوة الى قوتكم ولا تتولوا مجرمين .. واستغفروا ربكم ثم توبوا اليه إن ربي رحيم ودود .. فقلت استغفروا ربكم إنه كان غفاراً يرسل السماء عليكم مدرارا ويمددكم بأموال وبنين ويجعل لكم جنات ويجعل لكم انهارا وقولوا كما قال الابوان عليهما السلام : ربنا ظلمنا انفسنا وإن لم تغفر لنا وترحمنا لنكونن من الخاسرين . وقولوا كما قال الخليل عليه السلام : والذي أطمع ان يغفر لي خطيئتي يوم الدين . وقولوا كما قال ذو النون عليه السلام : لا اله الا انت سبحانك إني كنت من الظالمين. وقولوا كما قال موسى عليه السلام : رب إني ظلمت نفسي فاغفر لي فغفر له إنه هو الغفور الرحيم . ثم يرفع يديه فيقول : أَللهم أنت الله لا اله إلا انت ، أنت الغني ونحن الفقراء أنزل علينا الغيث ولا تجعلنا من القانطين . اللهم اسقنا واغثنا . اللهم اسقنا غيثاً مغيثاً وحيأ ربيعاً وجدأ طبقاً غدقاً مغدقاً مونقاً هنيئاً مريئاً مريعاً غبقاً خصباً رائعاً ممرع النبات سائلا مسيلا مجللا سحا عاماً دائماً درراً نافعاً غير ضار عاجلا غير راثث ، تحيي به البلاد وتغيث به العباد . وتجعله بلاغاً للحاضر والباد . اللهم أنزل في أرضنا زينتها ، وأنزل في أرضنا سكنها . اللهم أنزل علينا من السماء ماء طهورا فأحي به بلدة ميتاً واسقه مما خلقت انعاماً وأناسي كثيراً . اللهم اسقنا الغيث ولا تجعلنا من القانطين ، اللهم اسقنا رحمة لا سقيا عذاب ولا هدم ولا بلاء ولا غرق ، اللهم اسق عبادك وبلادك وبهائمك ، وانشر رحمتك وأحي بلدك الميت ، اللهم ان بالعباد والبلاد من اللأواء والشدة والجهد والضيق والظنك مالا نشكوه إلا إليك . اللهم أنبت لنا الزرع وأدر لنا الصرع



وأَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ بَرَكَاتِ السَّمَاءِ وَأَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ بَرَكَاتِكَ وَأَجْعَلْ مَا أَنْزَلْتَهُ عَلَيْنَا قُوَّةً لَنَا عَلَى طَاعَتِكَ وَبَلَاغاً إِلَى حِينٍ . اللَّهُمَّ ارْفَعْ عَنَّا الْجُوعَ وَالْجَهْدَ وَالْعَرَى ، وَاكْشِفْ عَنَّا مِنَ الْبَلَاءِ مَا لَا يَكْشِفُهُ غَيْرُكَ . اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْتَغْفِرُكَ إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ غَفَّاراً فَأَرْسَلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْنَا مَدْرَاراً . اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ فَلَا تَمْنَعْ عَنَّا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَضْلَكَ . رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ .. لَئِنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ . عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ . رَبَّنَا لَا تَوَاخِذْنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَّا إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا فِتْنَتُكَ تُضِلُّ بِهَا مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ أَنْتَ وَلِيْنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ . رَبَّنَا لَا تَوَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا . رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِيصَاراً كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ . اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلَى عَبْدِكَ وَرَسُولِكَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى جَمِيعِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَهْلِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِينَ . ثُمَّ يَحُولُ رِدَاءَهُ وَيَسْتَقْبِلُ الْقِبْلَةَ فَيَدْعُو سِرّاً فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُمَّ أَمْرَتْنَا بِالْإِجَابَةِ وَوَعَدْتُنَا بِالْإِجَابَةِ وَقَدْ دَعَوْنَاكَ كَمَا أَمْرَتْنَا ، فَاسْتَجِبْ لَنَا كَمَا وَعَدْتُنَا ، يَا سَمِيعَ الدَّعَاءِ وَيَا وَاسِعَ الْفَضْلِ وَالْعَطَاءِ .



WORSHIP THAT WORKS
Selected Sermons

Appendix – 2 –

THANKSGIVING DAY, YEAR ABC
Sermon for that Day

Deuteronomy 10:17, 18 (W-2); Psalm 136 or 136:1-5; James 1:17-18, 21-22; Matthe 5:12, 13

by the Rev. Ben Helmer

But be doers of the word, not merely hearers who deceive themselves (Jas. 1:22)

But strive first for the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well (Matt. 5:12)

The two verses from Scripture appointed for Thanksgiving in the Episcopal Church's Lectionary are at first glance not very Thanksgiving-like. In fact, there are other parts of Scripture that have much more to say about thankfulness than these, about the bounty of God, about the harvest and the things we normally associate with this great feast.

These passages move us from Thanksgiving as we usually think of it--hearth and home, a table laden with good food and drink - to a heartfelt thanksgiving of action, challenging believers to proclaim by word and deed our thanks to God in our behavior, as well as in our beliefs.

James takes a swipe at civil, comfortable religion. In fact, the entire letter is an admonition to live a life worthy of our calling. James challenges us not to show our wealth, but to give generously, to show mercy and remember that "faith apart from works is barren." (Jas. 2:14)

The writer of James also, in a most majestic passage, recalls who God is: The source of all good giving. *Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights...* (Jas. 1:17)

This beautiful description of God giving us all that we need is something to rejoice in and be thankful for. Far more than merely our table feast, our whole lives can respond to this generous act of life we have been given. To be created, and to be gifted for ministry, as we all are, is truly a profound action of the loving God and a thing to be thankful for every day. This is the God we adore; this is the God we worship.

But James wants us to show our thankfulness to and for God's gifts in all our lives, not merely in our Sunday obligation. That's why he reminds us that works, as an expression of our faith, are primary.

Matthew, in a different style, does a similar thing. He works the conventional material of worry and chides us for fretting about what we shall eat, drink, or wear. A few years ago there was a popular song: *Don't Worry, Be Happy!* Lots of sermons were preached on that title as many have been preached on this passage from Matthew, reminding us not to worry because God will provide all these things.



There's just one little problem: And to get at that, you need to know about a conference held in Missouri several years ago.

The conference was titled *A Consultation on Diversity*. It was sponsored by the Missouri School of Religion Center for Rural Ministry and by several churches. The agenda included some learned lectures on current trends in agriculture and food production, some Biblical study, and two full days of bus travel throughout the southwest corner of Missouri where conferees looked at poultry production and its impact on a lovely corner of that state.

In one poultry plant alone 10,000 chickens a day are processed for our tables. To say this industry has changed the area is an understatement. One town, Noel, now has 6% of its population who speak Spanish as their principal language. Eighty-five per cent of the workers at one large plant are foreign born.

These poultry workers do jobs you and I would not do, in bone-chilling, cold rooms on slippery floors with sharp knives that, along with repeated motions, often lead to accidental injury.

Some of the poultry workers have left poverty in Guatemala or Nicaragua and migrated illegally through Mexico to get to Missouri. Most of the workers have obtained false identity papers to work there. While they are there, they live in sub-standard housing, and frequently, alone or with their families, are forced to move from plant to plant to avoid possible deportation. They receive no benefits, are allowed little or no personal dignity, and they certainly have no real job security. But still, for many, they are better off than they were in their home countries.

The people attending the conference met some of the poultry workers, listened to their music, and heard their stories. The church has reached out to them, trying to help them and proclaim the Gospel to them.

But to most people, they are invisible: one rarely reads about them, or hears about their plight, or even knows they are there. Few local people are aware of them unless there is a racial incident or an illegal trespass committed.

One woman who lives near Noel has decided to work with these people. On her own she has set up an English-as-a-Second-Language program to help them learn English. Because she learned Spanish some time ago, she is able to teach others in her church the basics of that language. She helps the poultry workers with housing, legal problems, and the myriad of challenges that confront all of us in our culture. She loves them because she, herself, is a person of the Gospel.

But strive first for the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well (Matt. 6:33) This is the part of the reading that doesn't always get proclaimed. "Righteousness" in the Bible is not ethical, moral or legal behavior; it's not giving everyone their due. It's not even conduct above reproach. Rather, righteousness is fulfilling the demands of a relationship with God and with humanity.

This woman, her name is Joan, has a highly developed sense of righteousness because she relates to the foreigner, the stranger, as if that person were part of her family: because they are. She draws on the roots of her Christian faith, she says her prayers,



and she acts on that faith because she knows her relationship with God and with other people is what righteousness demands. Despite the difficulties she encounters, and the lack of enthusiastic support from her community, she is positive, gracious, and gentle. She knows where her gifts come from, and who provides her with all that she needs.

This Thanksgiving if you do nothing else, thank God for the gift of life, and for the opportunities God gives you to live in righteousness with your neighbors, and with those among us who are often neglected, exploited, or abused so that we might have the things we need. Don't feel guilty. That's what the devil would like. Instead, try to listen for what it is that God calls you to do as acts of righteousness, and remember these acts are marked by the quality of relationships that we enter into with those among whom we are placed. Finally, give thanks that the Good News of Jesus Christ is that God, who had no need to live as we do, decided to come among us, to live with us, and tell us of the Father's love.

If your Thanksgiving focuses on righteousness, you will be blessed beyond measure. The fun, the sheer joy of Christian thankfulness will be yours.

Ben Helmer is a missionary in the Congregational Ministries Unit at the Episcopal Church Center with responsibilities for rural and small communities and new church starts. He lives with his family in Missouri.

*Postings are in advance of use-dates but may not be in chronological sequence.
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Pentecost XXV

November 18, 2001

"The Pursuit of Happiness"

Richard A. Rhem

Scripture: Genesis 2:4-9; I Timothy 6:11-19

Because my movement within this civilization has been from the periphery to the center, I may have seen or felt certain things more freshly than people to whom those things were everyday ...

....

A later realization - I suppose I have sensed it most of my life, but I have understood it philosophically only during the preparation of this talk - has been the beauty of the idea of the pursuit of happiness. Familiar words, easy to take for granted; easy to misconstrue. This idea of the pursuit of happiness is at the heart of the attractiveness of the civilization to so many outside it or on its periphery. I find it marvelous to contemplate to what an extent, after two centuries, and after the terrible history of the earlier part of this century, the idea has come to a kind of fruition. It is an elastic idea; it fits all men. It implies a certain kind of society, a certain kind of awakened spirit. I don't imagine my father's parents would have been able to understand the idea. So much is contained in it; the idea of the individual, responsibility, choice, the life of the intellect, the idea of vocation and perfectibility and achievement. It is an immense human idea. It cannot be

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reduced to a fixed system. It cannot generate fanaticism. But it is known to exist, and because of that, other more rigid systems in the end blow away.

... V. S. Naipaul, Manhattan Institute, New York, 30 October 1990

My attention to that paragraph from V. S. Naipaul, who was an Indian writer, novelist of international repute, came through our Wednesday night discussion class of this fall in which we have been talking about the present crisis, using the text by Samuel Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations. We've had an interesting discussion trying to discern what is that hallmark of our life together and what its place is in the larger human story. The phrase, "the pursuit of happiness," of course, comes from the Declaration of Independence where we are told in that Declaration that we, as human beings, are "endowed with certain inalienable rights by our Creator," the rights of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. So, the pursuit of happiness has become one of those phrases that is so much a part of the fabric of our national life and our own training in civics that we repeat it, but I don't know how often we take it seriously. It is a phrase that one who came into the center of Western civilization from the outside chose as a significant phrase to express that which is central to the experience of Western civilization, of our American civilization and culture - that which marks our lives and makes them unique in the story of the world's peoples. The pursuit of happiness.

Naipaul entitled his address "Our Universal Civilization," and Samuel Huntington would challenge that. He would say there is no such thing as a universal civilization, that we should be content with the fact that we have a Western civilization which has its own uniqueness and we ought not to be engaged in imposing or impressing that Western civilization on the rest of the world.

I think there was a time when we felt that way, we have certain values, certain democratic values, certain political insights and experiences that really should be brought to the whole world. But, I think perhaps we're a bit sadder and wiser at this beginning of the 21st century to recognize that we are Western and we have these marvelous values of freedom and of liberty, of the rule of law, our political and economic institutions, the pluralism, the Christianity that has largely informed us because we come from that biblical tradition, the Jewish-Christian tradition. All of that has been for us a very great blessing, but we ought to be that with integrity and not necessarily see it as something that we have to bring to the whole world, because other civilizations and cultures have their own integrity, they have their own insights, they live by their own values and visions.

I admired Jimmy Carter at the time that he was linking political



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and economic advantage with human rights in other nations. That was spoken of as "linkage," do you remember? He was trying to bring to a broader spectrum of humanity those particular values that we enjoy. Even more recently, in negotiations with China there has been this dispute about trade advantage as opposed to human rights progress. In all of that, there is a certain nobility, but there is also perhaps an arrogance that we have the right to dictate to others, and Huntington, in his book, is very clear about that. We ought to be who we are, but what we really need to be is who we are with integrity around the globe rather than trying to impose what we are on others whose bloodlines and whose cultural lines and whose language unite them in quite another civilizational vision. But, for us, Naipaul would suggest that the pursuit of happiness is a happy phrase to sum up our national, our cultural, our civilizational experience. The pursuit of happiness.

I was the kind of preacher at one time that probably could have preached a strong sermon about the fact that human beings are not supposed to be happy. I would have told you what you ought to be. Then I could go on a tirade, making happiness look like a rather superficial sort of a goal and, of course, God forgives those who are young and without wisdom. Now, as I think about the pursuit of happiness, I think of it not as a kind of frivolous thing, or the end of self-indulgence and ease and comfort, but rather, the pursuit of happiness being a statement about the human person, about that vast potential within the human being to flower and to blossom, to grow, to spread its wings, to chase rainbows, that wonderful potential that lies within us for that marvelous experience of being human. The pursuit of happiness.

It's not a sentimental idea and it is not a superficial idea. It is a recognition of that created potential within the human animal to become a spiritual being, indeed, a human being, a being in union and in community, indeed in global community. The pursuit of happiness that unleashes us to live fully and to love wastefully and to be all that we can be, to quote our good friend Bishop Spong. The pursuit of happiness is simply a catch phrase that points to us as the marvelous, amazing creatures that we are.

When I go to the scriptures, I find that the pursuit of happiness has some justification. In that second chapter of Genesis, we have the old story of the creation of the Garden of Eden, and then the creation of the man and eventually the woman, and we have the human couple in the garden with meaningful occupation with union with each other and in communion with God. It is a beautiful picture, but the word Eden in the Hebrew means pleasure, and therefore, the insight of the Hebrew writer way back in our own tradition is that it was the intention of the Creator that the human being live in a garden of pleasure. I have a good friend who has threatened all of his life to write a theology of delight. Now, you see, if you have been in the church all your life, if you've had church experience like mine, you haven't had a lot of stress on the Edenic delight, because after chapter two in Genesis comes chapter three, and chapter three is spoken of as "The Fall." Rather than taking that as another Hebrew story which is pointing to an obvious reality, we, in our tradition, have taken that as a statement of the human condition - fallen. However, what the Hebrew writer was doing in this collage of stories was to say it is the creative intention for the full blossoming of the human being.

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God intended a garden of pleasure.

Now, did the human being respond? Well, no, and in the disobedience, there were all the consequences, but once again, that's the old story of perfection and fall. Rather than recognizing what we know today and that is that we who are human today are the long evolutionary product, the emergence of that animal kingdom.

As one of the members of my class e-mailed me after a certain class discussion this past fall in which we were talking about the human condition, he concluded the letter by saying, "So, for primates, we're not doing so bad." That is really a pretty good statement. For primates, we're not doing so bad.

Now, if you take it from the other perspective that we were created perfectly and placed in this Edenic pleasure, and then fell from that from which we were driven, then that whole story stands under the shadow of that darkness. But, if you see those Hebrew stories for what they were, you have to hear them and you hear them best if you sense that the writer was trying to say that the human being, God's creation, was intended for delight. The Hebrew writer was aware of the fact that that delight has been terribly messed up, and so you understand, as well, the story of the Fall that follows.

But, that ought not take away from the insight of the intention of the creative process to bring the human being who has evolved to a state of consciousness and community, into a situation of unleashing, setting the spirit free, giving the human spirit wings, allowing us to blossom and to flourish, and our civilization, our particular founding documents, our constitutional order, I do believe, more than any other, sets the human spirit free. The pursuit of happiness is one of those inalienable rights according to our Declaration of Independence, an inalienable right from the Creator. In other words, there is no structure of government that has any right to impinge upon the exercise of my human spirit.

Oh, society needs some order, to be sure, and there are the rights of the whole that limit my individual rights. Nonetheless, the insight was those who came from other shores came here in order to establish a democracy in which there was a severe limitation of the government. It was the dismantling of the royal establishment from which they'd come. And that setting free of the human spirit was captured in that phrase, "The pursuit of happiness," and it's a marvelous, marvelous heritage, because look at who we are. You are really something! Here we are gathered, here we are thinking together, here we place ourselves consciously before the face of God, here we are able to look into each other's eyes and embrace one another, here we nurture these little infants in arms and sign them with baptismal waters full of promise.

Just within the past couple of days once again at Ground Zero they came across some remains, a body, two or three, I guess, and everything stopped, and they had developed a ritual, a ritual by which they were honoring the sacredness of human life. We didn't just



bulldoze that thing down, for we recognize some other dimension that is embodied in the human. The pursuit of happiness is simply a phrase that expresses our optimism and our hope for the flourishing of the human being, and what a tremendous gift that is.

Now, to be sure, just as surely as Genesis three follows chapter two, and that Garden of delight can become a garden of anguish, so it is possible for us to get ourselves all messed up and to miss the wonder and the glory of what it is to be human. We can get all caught up in our own little schemes and our own little dreams, we can live egotistically and arrogantly and self-sufficiently and in isolation from one another. If I had read a bit earlier in the sixth chapter of I Timothy, I would have had that familiar phrase that the love of money is the root of a lot of evil, not money or wealth, but the love of it. In other words, the failure to understand it for what it is, the failure to use it for its intended use. All of the idealism of our Western civilization and our culture, all of that freedom which has allowed us to grow and to blossom and to flourish, all of that will be short-circuited unless it finds expression in justice and in compassion and in community. And so, the writer of this letter says, "As for those who are in this present age rich, command them not to be haughty or to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God." And then, as though the implication of setting one's hope on God is to get things right in one's perspective, he goes on, "They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, ready to share." And, of course, that is also what we are talking about this morning.

I wish all of the stories that are the consequence, the ripple effect, of who you are and what you do, and what we are together - I wish all of that, somehow or other, could be put up on a great collage before us, because it would move you to tears to hear those stories and look into the faces of those whose lives have been touched concretely, brushed by angels' wings, mantled with grace. Ah, the pursuit of happiness. The ultimate happiness is when I come to a sense of myself and am able to give myself away, when I become engaged beyond myself in the other. That is when happiness takes on its depth dimension.

I think in the wake of September 11, we have all had opportunity to think again, and once again there are anecdotes from across the country, the stories of people who have stepped back in the light of that terror that came in upon us, stepped back to say, "What really matters? What's really important? For what am I living? For whom am I living? For what am I pouring out my energy and my time?" And this Thanksgiving will be a bit of a different Thanksgiving. The most recent copy of Time magazine has a long, long section on Thanksgiving 2001. If you've seen the cover, it has a pumpkin pie with an American flag stuck in it, so that Thanksgiving must be as American as pumpkin pie, I guess. But, it is a good discussion from a lot of different angles. The paragraph next to the last talks about how many people are volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, for the National Security Agency, signing up to teach in the inner city of Chicago, on and on, people who are saying all at once, "Wait a minute! What is my life, and in what am I investing it?" And then these words of the final paragraph of that Time report:



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In fact when people talk about other lives and prospects have changed, the context may be fear and sorrow, but the response reflects great hope and resolve. This too marks a part of the Pilgrim's bequest. Whenever our ancestors came, it is likely they were willing to trade certainty for opportunity, to face a dangerous passage in order to arrive in a better place. This passage feels plenty dangerous now. But it has also given our children new heroes and our families new muscle and our beliefs new force, and that is more than enough to be thankful for, on the day we celebrate gratitude's birthday.

Indeed, Thanksgiving Sunday - what an amazing gift is life. What an amazing experience to be human. What a wonderful thing the human mind, the human heart, the human spirit, and what a blessing. As someone said, to be born American is already to have won the Lotto, if not the silver Beetle. What a great thing we have, what a great heritage we share, how much we have for which to be thankful, and let us together, with generosity, setting our hope not on uncertain riches, but on God, continue the pursuit of happiness.

This manuscript was taken from the tape recording of the message spoken extemporaneously by Richard A. Rhem on November 18, 2001, 10:00 AM, at Christ Community Church, Spring Lake, Michigan.



sincere human love of me or, as they think, God, and because of fear of what they think may be God's wrath and purgatory, if not eternal hell, they attempt not to sin and may be temporarily successful, but are dismayed to find that despite their beliefs that theirs is the way to God, they sooner or later succumb to the evils that cling fast to their souls, and they sin again, and this process continues repeatedly and with little abatement in their lives; and the only consolation which the sincere may have is the feeling that he is gaining to an extent in the constant warfare against sin, as his will continues to be strengthened and his increased love for his deity combine to lessen to that extent his desires to sin.

And thus he finds that the grace, or his baptism by the Holy Spirit, or Jesus' love and redeeming sacrifice of which he is supposedly the recipient by virtue of his faith in Jesus' name, has not purified him of sin, and thus had not really fulfilled the law, for he must continue to live by God's laws in order not to sin. For he knows that if the Commandments were given by God that he should not sin, then Christ's supposed sacrifice was also made that he should not sin and the Holy Spirit which he believes to be within him should have been the power which protected him against the desires to sin and make him free of sin. For Paul taught in Romans II verses 14 and 15 that Christians can do by nature the things contained in the law, and this has not come to pass. And so the sincere churchman finds that his grace, as the churches so preach it, has not fulfilled the law, which he must continue to obey; and he must find his consolation in the thought that as he has been taught, Jesus' blood will cover his sins. Yet if that is so, then Christianity degenerates into a religion wherein mankind may continue to violate God's laws, in that Jesus' blood will cover the sins of those who believe in his name, and that God can accept into His Holy Church a soul laden with sin and evil merely because of faith in that name.

Hence, Christians, and all mankind, must understand that neither Jesus' nor anyone else's blood, has the power to wash away the sins that each one has committed; and that a soul is purified only to the extent that it is obedient unto the laws of God. Christians must also understand that the "grace" they have been taught is theirs as a result of faith in God, or in Jesus as the so-called second person of the trinity, is not the "true grace" -- the Father's Love -- that comes to man only by prayer to the Father for it, and that it is only a purification of their own human love without that sure power to eliminate sin as does the Divine Love which not merely purifies the human soul but transforms it into a divine soul. And this is the reason why Christians, despite their clinging to the so-called vicarious atonement, are so much concerned with moral backsliding; sinning after they have been told they have won salvation through belief in Jesus' name; and that is why the Catholics have their "purgatory", the purification of the soul after the material death, after they have been taught that Jesus' blood has redeemed them from sin. And that is why as I have said, Christianity today is, regardless of the preachings of the priests and pastors, merely a religion identical with Judaism placing its ultimate reliance upon the Ten Commandments of Moses for human soul purification, without the power of the "new Heart" which I came to bring to the Jews and to all mankind, and that is why the churches do not know the message of Immortality -- through prayer to the Father for His Love -- as I preached it when on earth as the Messiah of God. With all my blessings, and those of the Father I am

Jesus of the Bible
and
Master of the Celestial Heavens