

WEEK 12 “Thank you” THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING, Book of Common Prayer, p. 101

OPENING INVITATION *Read aloud the prayer slowly. After a time of silence each person identifies a word or phrase that catches your attention.*

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. *Amen.*

If technology and time permit, watch the accompanying video.

CONTEXT & HISTORY OF THE COLLECT *Take a few minutes to discuss the context of the prayer.*




The General Thanksgiving is attributed to Edward Reynolds (1599-1676), bishop of Norwich, and was possibly inspired by a private prayer of Queen Elizabeth issued in 1596. Some believe that this prayer – or a fuller form from which it was excerpted – was used as a Eucharistic prayer during the period when the Book of Common Prayer was banned from use.

Prior to the 1604 revision of the Prayer Book, Puritans complained that there were not enough prayers of thanksgiving in the Prayer Book. Consequently, this prayer was added to the Prayer Book in 1662 under the heading, “A General Thanksgiving.” The first American Prayer Book (1789) required use of this prayer at every Daily Office. In 1892, its use became optional, except on Sundays when the Eucharist did not follow immediately. An example of the goal of more participation by the people, the current Prayer Book directs it to be said by officiant and people.

Outline the thanksgivings in this prayer. What would you have included that is not in it?

How does the context affect your understanding of the collect?

After allowing each person to share, take a moment in prayer and ask God to speak through the Word. Then read the collect again, together aloud, slowly. Now, let each person read over the collect silently while being on the lookout for three things to notice and perhaps share:

	Light bulb: This should be something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most or draws your attention.
	Question mark: Anything that is difficult to understand in the collect or a question that may be raised as a result.
	Arrow: A personal application from your life.

SCRIPTURE *Read aloud and consider these scriptural verses as they relate to the collect.*

Luke 17:11-19. What is it about the action of the one leper who returns that so deeply affects Jesus? Some have argued that this is the only story in the Gospel of someone expressing gratitude to Jesus. What is the importance of gratitude?

What other scriptural references can you think of that relate to this collect?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION *These questions are only suggestions. Use one, all, or none. Create your own questions; let the group decide where the conversation might go.*

This is the last week of this series on praying the prayers in the BCP. Take some time to reflect over the course of these collects and consider writing your own.

1. How would you address God?
2. What do you most seek in your life? For what do you most yearn in the world?
3. What situation or condition would you address?
4. For what are you most thankful and would like to praise God?

CLOSING *Pray the collect together as a group.*

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. *Amen.*