Who is the feast for?

Good morning, everyone. Welcome to "Try Jesus!" If this is your first time joining us, it’s great to have you with us. I would like to thank new members for joining "Try Jesus" this week from Utah, Arizona, Iowa, Kentucky, and Mississippi.

Old man winter is just around the corner for many of us. The warm weather states get to watch us look good in our new winter wonderland outfits and breakout our sleek new shovels (Smile).

Just trying to make the frowns regretting the winter season turn into smiles. There's plenty to do in the cold weather. There's ice skating, building a snowman, having a snowball fight (please be careful), going winter camping, building a bonfire, play football (in lots of snow), and my favorite growing up, sledding.

The fall and winter seasons keep most people fairly busy. Some individuals are more socializing in the colder climate than they are during the summer season. I guess it depends on where you live and your hearts desire on which season you love best.

Many of you have already figured out your travel plans for this week. Have you changed anything regarding Thanksgiving this week? Some are still guiding their plans behind Covid fears. With inflation squeezing our wallets and purses, we may have to think about downsizing some things. Some of you remember the sermon I recently wrote about holidays, and how Christians should approach them.

How will your smorgasbord look this Thanksgiving? It looks like many turkeys may not be dawning their tuxedos as guest of many dinners this week. Turkeys love it when the price of their invitation rises in America. It’s been said we are living in inflationary times.

Items on goods and services have definitely risen. When people (leaders) don't manage the household finances correctly, everyone is affected. Financial incompetence breeds instabilities in families trying to make ends meet.

But today, I'm trying to look at everything from a Jovial perspective. If turkeys could mentally reason what effects this economy has on them, how would they feel about the leaders we have today? For example, 🦃 turkeys love high gas prices. It causes families to rethink their financial priorities. They love high hunting equipment prices. Some turkey hunters may scale back a little this year and next year. For them, this Thanksgiving is truly a blessing for those who cannot afford to purchase a turkey.

So, how will you approach your family feast this week? How will you approach your visiting plans? Does Covid still play a part in your scheduling plans? If you’re not going to have turkey as your main course, what will be the star of your Thanksgiving dish?

Will it be ham? Will it be beef? Will it be pork? How about something really different, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches! I only mentioned those two items because, growing up, I loved peanut butter and jelly any time and day of the year.

It's probably why I don't eat them today as an adult. So, exactly what will your feast look like? Some individuals are so trapped in the commercialization of Thanksgiving that they will trap themselves in overbearing debt. I mean, how much would you be willing to spend on a turkey?

Even if you are somewhat well off, is there a limit to how much you'll pay for one holiday? I'm not here today to beat down Thanksgiving, but rather the opposite. I love what Thanksgiving truly stands for. There will be many Sunday sermons on being thankful.

But what does it mean? Many people have their own definitions of what is being thankful means.

But the star of the afternoon or evening is still the food, right? Yes, it’s great to see loved ones you haven't seen in a while, but that well prepared food is always the star attraction. Growing up in Thanksgiving was fun but excruciating. It was excruciating because all those wonderful smells of baking and cooking left you wanting to sneak downstairs and grab a butter filled soft role. I kept waiting to hear that loving familiar voice say, "Hey you kids, come downstairs, dinner is ready!"

Of course on this day, your eyes were always bigger than your stomach. This Thanksgiving for many may resemble a quick out the door before work snack. But I'm here to encourage you today, that all is not lost. If your Thanksgiving is going to drastically change this year, let not your heart be troubled.

The key to having a successful Thanksgiving is to look beyond what's on the dinner table. Some of you remember the classic Peanut characters Charlie Brown and Linus having their deep conversation about how to have Thanksgiving for friends.

Linus suggests to a perplexed Charlie Brown that he could have two Thanksgiving dinners. The first Thanksgiving feast can be for himself, Sally, Peppermint Patty, and the others, while the second one can be at his grandparents’ house for his family.

Linus recruits Snoopy and Woodstock to help. Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Woodstock and Linus prepare a feast of toast with margarine, pan-fried popcorn, pretzel sticks and jellybeans.

The guests arrive and make their way to the backyard for the Thanksgiving feast. Linus leads the group in prayer that details the first Thanksgiving, and then Snoopy serves up the feast.

You see my friends, Thanksgiving is more than having a five star chef catering service come to your home and prepare a special Thanksgiving dinner for you and your family.

The feast your hoping to have can be enjoyed every day of the year. But let's first look at the simple meaning of what a feast is. A feast (Greek; heortē) is simply a festival. It’s a feast holyday. It’s a feast day. The Hebrew word “feasts” (moadim) from the Old Testament literally means "appointed times." God carefully planned and orchestrated the timing and sequence of each of these seven feasts to reveal to us a special story.

If you have your Bibles, let's see what God's word says about feast and the connection to Thanksgiving. In the book of John, chapter five verse one, we read about the feast of the Jews.

There were Three festivals (or “holy days”) required all Jewish males to come to Jerusalem: 1) the Festival of Passover and Unleavened Bread, 2) the Festival of Harvest (also called Pentecost or the Festival of Weeks), and 3) the Festival of Shelters.

Jesus also attended the feast in (John 7:1-24). Jesus came with the greatest gift ever offered, "himself." Looking at the seven feast, they all involve Jesus. From the Old Testament to the New Testament, the prophetic significance of each of the seven Levitical feasts revolve around Jesus.

☆ Here are the seven feast:

1) Passover (Leviticus 23:5) – Pointed to the Messiah as our Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7).

2) Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6) – Pointed to the Messiah's sinless life (as leaven is a picture of sin in the Bible), making Him the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

3) First Fruits (Leviticus 23:10) – Pointed to the Messiah's resurrection as the first fruits of the righteous (1 Corinthians 15:20).

4) Weeks or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:16) – Occurred fifty days after the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and pointed to the great harvest of souls and the gift of the Holy Spirit for both Jew and Gentile (Acts 2:1-47). None of this occurrence happens without Jesus (John 15:26,27).

5) Trumpets (Leviticus 23:24) – The first of the fall feasts. The trumpet is also associated with the rapture of the Church when the Messiah Jesus will appear in the heavens as He comes for his bride, the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:52).

6) Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27) – Many believe this prophetically points to the day of the second coming of Jesus (Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:1-6, 25-36).

7) Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:34) – This feast day points to the Lord's promise that he will once again “tabernacle” with his people when he returns to reign over all the world (Micah 4:1-7). ☆

What is my view on this study of the feast? That Jesus is involved in every aspect of holy days and feast, and how God created us to worship, honor, glorify, and invite his presence into all feast and celebrations.

Should Christians literally celebrate all the biblical feast? Whether or not a Christian celebrates the Jewish feast days would be a matter of conscience for the individual Christian (Colossians 2:16-17).

Christians are not bound to observe the Jewish feasts the way an Old Testament Jew was, but we should not criticize another believer who does or does not observe these special days and feasts (Romans 14:5).

The key is inviting Jesus into everyday living. Jesus is not beneath any secular or commercialized holiday season. The feast are a symbol of things that took place later. But the reality is, Jesus is at the core of it.

My message today revolves around inviting Jesus into your holidays this year. Christians should put Jesus in the center of all their holidays celebrations. Why? Because without Jesus, the true significance of every holiday is shallow, empty, and unfulfilled.

Did you know Jesus offered himself as a feast (meal)? "Really, you ask?" Some of you may be thinking, "like cannibalism?" "Well, not really." Look with me at (John 6:5). Many have heard of the miracle Jesus performed with five loaves and two fish to feed five thousand men besides women and children John 6:11-14).

What an amazing miracle! I still get excited to know that God can take our little and turn it into much. This also happened in the Old Testament with a widow and the prophet Elijah. The widow not onlymade Elijah a cake, but she made a cake for her **and** her son.  She was able to make many meals for all of them because the flour and oil didn't run out (1 Kings 17:9-16).

What an amazing God everyone should know. God even used ravens to feed Elijah prior to him receiving food from the widow (1 Kings 17:4-6). God often gives help from places we least expect it. He provides for us in ways that go beyond our narrow definitions or expectations.

Ok, let's return to (John 6:24). After the miracle of loaves and fish, Jesus went to Capernaum. Some of the people were looking for Jesus, but for the wrong reasons (John 6:26,27). They only followed Jesus to have their bellies filled again. They were only interested in the physical and temporal benefits he offered.

Today, people still use religion and holidays for the wrong reasons. But truth be told, they are usually self-centered motives. Before I run out time, (thank Jesus, I'm on his time) let's look at how the conversation turned from the food they had earlier to Jesus being the main course himself.

Earlier Jesus had told them don't labor for the food that eventually will perish, but labor for that food that Jesus offers. Jesus is that food (manna) just like the Israelites received in the Old Testament, but would never perish (John 6:32,33).

When Jesus testified that he was the bread of life come down from heaven, the people interpreted that he would feed them this earthly bread forever (John 6:35-41). But things really got crazy when Jesus offered himself as a meal.

Before you close your Bible or turn off your app, let's look a little closer at what Jesus was saying to those unfilled individuals. Jesus again repeats he is the bread of life in verse 48. He explained that their ancestors ate manna and still died. The manna had no power to cause them to live forever.

As good as turkey taste on Thanksgiving (I prefer dark meat), digesting it will not cause me to live forever (John 6:49,50). But here's where Jesus starts to lose everyone, even some of those that were his distancing disciples had problems understanding it (Please read aloud to yourself John 6:50-58).

[This was a shocking message—to eat flesh and drink blood sounded cannibalistic. The idea of drinking any blood, let alone human blood, was repugnant to the religious leaders because the law forbade it (Leviticus 17:10-11). Jesus was not talking about literal blood, of course. He was saying that his life had to become their own (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).]

That's the whole point of today's message. Jesus wants to be the main course of your Thanksgiving celebration. He wants to sit at the table of your entire family. Not only that, he deserves to sit at the head of the table. But it’s a spiritual sitting at the heart of you and your family.

Jesus came to be Lord. He came to be master, ruler, owner. He loves to see families gathered around the table enjoying a special meal. He did the same for Peter and the other disciples even after they left him alone and went fishing after Jesus was crucified (John 21:3,4, 12-14).

Jesus explained his words about eating his flesh in verse 63. 63} "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." 64} "But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him" (John 6:63-64 KJV).

When you sit down this Thanksgiving, remember that God made this meal possible for you. He is the creator of all life. But God wants to complete you by giving you new life in himself through his son Jesus (John 10:10; Ephesians 3:20).

[The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life; without the work of the Holy Spirit, we cannot even see our need for new life (John 14:17). All spiritual renewal begins and ends with God. He reveals truth to us, lives within us, and then enables us to respond to that truth.]

Sadly many people are unfulfilled during the holidays. Typically, loneliness, criminal activities, and suicides all go up during the holiday season. The commercialization and unrealistic reach many see on television cause people to wallow in depression and hopelessness.

This is what happened to those disciples after hearing Jesus tell them he was the internal life they needed. They wanted to keep Jesus as an ATM machine. They thought his words were too difficult to understand (John 6:65-66).

God will never invite himself to your Thanksgiving dinner and not be Lord of it. He gave his son so you could have that Thanksgiving feast. Jesus then turned to his twelve disciples and asked this question, "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" (John 6:67 KJV).

Imagine if everyone at your Thanksgiving table decided to grab their coats and leave your home because you had the wrong color napkins. That would kind of silly, wouldn't it? Peter understood that if though there were times when they didn't grasp all that Jesus said to them. It was a powerful statement when Peter answered Jesus this way, 68} "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69} And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:68-69 KJV).

Peter had seen the miracles and knew that Jesus was the only way to eternal life. He knew Jesus was infinitely more than the five loaves and two fish. He saw past his belly and appetite to the one who gives life eternal.

[Jesus offers no middle ground. They could either accept or reject him. Jesus was not trying to repel people with his teachings. He was simply telling the truth and giving them a choice. The more the people heard Jesus’ real message, the more they divided into two camps. The honest seekers who wanted to understand more and those who rejected Jesus because they didn’t like what they had heard.]

The Bible clearly gives instructions on how to achieve eternal life. You still have time to choose if you’re reading this sermon. True authentic believers will  follow Jesus simply because they know he is the way, the truth, and the only life that gives them new life.

🗣📢 Last words: Do you think it's possible to be selfish on Thanksgiving?
The Bible tells us to be thankful in all things (Colossians 3:15-17). Paul explains that we must resolve conflicting issues by using the rule of peace.

When you gather together this Thanksgiving, stay away from topics that generate confusion and arguments. Set a good amount of time to fellowship, but don't overstay the time limit you set. Be kind and respectful when listening to other viewpoints.

There are many topics that people say shouldn't be discussed around the holidays. Don't walk on eggshells or muzzle yourself because what's important to you may cause an uproar at the Thanksgiving table.

If your words seem that abrasive to the hostess or other guest, they probably were not happy about you attending in the first place. If you are not allow to talk about Jesus concerning a topic that might need his words to be expressed, then it may be time to leave (Matthew 10:12-14).

There will much to talk about during the Thanksgiving feast. Some of you will undoubtedly talk about how good the food is, and immediately falling asleep after the meal is the evidence. Some will watch the football games. Some will tell stories to the children. Some will hang out in the kitchen and swap recipes.

But there also will be prayer and the presence of God (for those who except his company). There will be those who express their love for him. Some will speak his words for a moment. Like (Philippians 4:6,7; and 1 Timothy 4:3,4; Psalm 34:8).

Remember, God created us to be together. Heaven has no divided sections within its boundaries. All will sit down at the marriage supper with Jesus the King. Follow Jesus during the holidays. He's the reason you have them.

🎵 Everybody ought to know, Everybody ought to know, Everybody ought to know, who Jesus is. Everybody ought to tell, Everybody ought to tell, Everybody ought to tell, who Jesus is.

He's the lily of the valley, he's the brightest morning star, he's the fairest of ten thousand, Everybody ought to know.

On the cross he died for sinners and his blood makes white as snow loving, living, coming Savior he's the one you ought to know. Everybody ought to know who Jesus is. 🎵

📕 filled up yet? Here’s some more food for thought: (Psalm 30:12; 100:4; Ephesians 5:4; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Hebrews 12:28; Romans 14:5-9; Revelation 11:16-18).

🛐 Here’s a prayer, just say "thank you." "Come on, it’s not that hard." "Heavenly Father, thank you for today's message to my heart. I praise you and I love being with those who truly care about me. Thank you for the sacrifice you made for me on the cross.

Thank you for helping my heart to rest in your presence. In a busy world of black Friday's and everything that shines outward, it is here that I find truth, grace, and mercy. My heart is overwhelmingly grateful.  As it overflows with gratitude, help me to be a blessing to others who are searching for the true love only you can give, in Jesus’ name, amen."

❤ If you would like to know Jesus as your Savior, please read the drop-down page entitled "How to know Jesus."