

Gratitude and faith: An Islamic perspective

Happy Thanksgiving! I enjoy the holiday seasons, Thanksgiving has a beautiful meaning. Prayers of thanks and special thanksgiving ceremonies are common among most religions after harvests and at other times of the year. We thank God and remember the Almighty who bestowed us with all the blessings we marvel at.

Gratitude, (*shukr*), is fundamental in Islamic belief. Gratitude profoundly shapes the relationship between the believer and the Creator. In a world often marked by trials (tests) and blessings, remaining thankful is a testament to a person’s faith and reliance on Allah (Allah is the name of God in Aramaic and Arabic). The two main sources of teaching in Islam, The Quran and hadith (the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him), repeatedly emphasize the importance of gratitude as a means to attain divine favor, inner peace, and connection with the creator. This article explores the concept of gratitude in Islam, its manifestations in daily life, and its role in strengthening one’s faith.

The Quran emphasizes the significance of appreciation as a fundamental act of worship. Allah (pronounced: Al-Lah, with both L’s as in “ALL”) commands believers to express thankfulness, linking it to increased blessings and **divine mercy. The Quran says “If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe”**

[Quran 14: 7]. This verse highlights gratitude (being grateful or thankful) as a condition for receiving further blessings, illustrating a reciprocal relationship between human acknowledgment and divine generosity. It also serves as a reminder of the consequences of ingratitude. The Quran also says, **“Remember Me; I will remember you. And thank Me, and never be ungrateful.”** [Quran 2: 152]. The Quran also says, **“No soul can ever die without Allah’s Will at the destined time. Those who desire worldly gain, We will let them have it, and those who desire heavenly reward, We will grant it to them. And We will reward those who are grateful.”** [Quran 3: 145]

Gratitude is not merely a verbal expression but a state of the heart reflected in one’s actions and attitudes. This acknowledgment nurtures humility, as the believers understand they depend on God’s mercy and provision. Such recognition is fundamental to the Islamic faith, as it deepens the believer’s awareness of God’s attributes, including His kindness, generosity, and wisdom.

The life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provides a profound example of gratitude. Despite enduring immense trials, the Prophet consistently expressed thankfulness to God. One well-known incident exemplifies this: Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) once asked the Prophet why he prayed extensively at night, even though his past and future



Guest Column

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sins had been forgiven. He replied, *“Should I not be a grateful servant?”* This response encapsulates the essence of gratitude—not as a reaction to blessings but as a constant state of worship and devotion.

The Prophet’s gratitude extended to his interactions with others. He encouraged his companions to express appreciation not only to God but also to fellow human beings. The Prophet said, *“Whoever does not thank people has not thanked God.”* This teaching strengthens the principle that gratitude is a comprehensive virtue encompassing divine and human relationships.

Stories of various prophets who exemplified gratitude were narrated in the Quran. One such example is Prophet Suleiman (Solomon, pbuh), who, upon receiving the ability to understand the language of animals, said, **“My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to do righteousness of which You approve”** [Quran 27: 19]. This supplication reflects a profound awareness of the responsibility that comes with blessings, as gratitude is coupled with a commitment to righteous deeds.

Another example is Prophet Nuh (Noah), described in the Quran as a grateful servant: **“Indeed, he was a grateful servant”** [Quran 17: 3]. Despite his prolonged struggle to call his people to monotheism, Nuh’s gratitude remained unwavering, demonstrating that being grateful is not contingent on favorable circumstances but is a consistent expression of true faith.

Gratitude in Islam is expressed through three dimensions: the heart, the tongue, and the hands (actions). The gratitude of the heart involves an inner acknowledgment of God’s blessings and a sense of contentment. This internal state protects the believer from envy and dissatisfaction, fostering a peaceful and trusting relationship with God.

Gratitude of the tongue is verbalized through prayers, supplications, and phrases like *Alhamdulillah* (All praise is due to Allah). Regularly uttering these words reinforces a conscious awareness of God’s blessings and serves as a reminder to remain thankful in all circumstances.

Gratitude through actions is perhaps the most profound manifestation. This involves using the blessings God has given—whether wealth, knowledge, or health—in ways that please Him. A person blessed with wealth demonstrates gratitude by giving charity, while someone with knowledge shows gratitude by teaching others. The Prophet (pbuh) said, “The most beloved of people to

Allah are those who are most beneficial to others”. This teaching underscores that gratitude is not passive but actively transforms blessings into opportunities for good deeds.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Islamic teachings on gratitude is its relevance during hardships. While it is natural to feel grateful during times of ease and prosperity, Islam encourages believers to maintain gratitude even in adversity. This perspective is rooted in the belief that trials are a form of divine wisdom. The Quran states, “Perhaps you dislike a thing and it is good for you, and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not” [Quran 2: 216].

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) reinforced this idea, saying, “How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good. If something pleasing happens to him, he is grateful, and that is good for him. And if something harmful happens to him, he is patient, and that is good for him”. This hadith illustrates the complementary relationship between gratitude and patience.

Modern psychological research aligns with Islamic teachings on the benefits of gratitude. Studies have shown that practicing gratitude enhances mental well-being by reducing stress, improving mood, and fostering resilience. By focusing on God’s blessings rather than life’s difficulties, believers develop a sense of contentment and

optimism. Moreover, gratitude strengthens the believer’s trust in God’s plan. When one recognizes that every blessing and trial serves a divine purpose, they are better equipped to navigate life’s uncertainties with hope and confidence. This trust reinforces their connection with God (Allah), deepening their faith and reliance on Him.

The beautiful reward behind being grateful is that gratitude is not only a means of enhancing faith but also a path to eternal success. The Quran promises great rewards for those who are grateful: **“Why should Allah punish you if you have thanked [Him] and have believed in Him?”** [Quran 4: 147]. This verse links gratitude with divine forgiveness and protection, highlighting its role in achieving salvation.

Additionally, the people of Jannah (Paradise) are described as those who expressed gratitude in their earthly lives. Their reward is eternal bliss, a manifestation of God’s promise to increase His blessings for the grateful.

Finally, gratitude in Islam is a profound and multifaceted concept, encompassing inner reflection, verbal expression, and righteous action. It is a powerful tool for strengthening faith, fostering a deeper connection with God, and navigating life’s challenges with resilience and hope. As the Quran says, **“And few of My servants are grateful”** [Quran 34: 13].

Cardinal’s Love for the Homeless provides Thanksgiving meal; accepts donations of all kinds

By John Chaffin
For the News Press

Cardinal’s Love for the Homeless fed about 23 people on Tuesday, Nov. 26 as an early Thanksgiving dinner. Cardinal’s Love was officially recognized by the Oklahoma Office of the Secretary of State on Jan. 17 of this year. Although the nonprofit has only been officially in existence since then, its ministry began much earlier. Speaking of how the ministry

began, founder Stephanie Gallion said, “I saw the need. I was homeless once myself. I am now a 10-year recovering addict, and know what it is like. We began passing out meals to the homeless in Strickland Park. When the cold weather set in, we started passing out blankets, hand and foot warmers.”

Because of her passion for the service, it has continued through spring, summer and fall and attempts to minister to the whole

person as well as provide food and warmth.

Donnie testified, “Cardinal’s Love has been a life saver for me. With their help, I am now 38 days clean!”

Sherry (not her real name) said, “I put my life out there.” Now Sherry is getting help to put her life back together.

One of Cardinal’s other community partners has been Central Oklahoma Community Action Agency . Mandi, COCAA’s Payne

County director, has been assisting Cardinal’s Love. When things turned cold this week, Mandi asked the Christian Missionary Alliance Church to house Tuesday’s luncheon so that the group would have a warm place to eat. The church gladly agreed.

Cardinal’s Love continues to accept donations such as such as: Raincoats, socks, tarps, candles, camping gear, EZ open pop-top can soups, meat packages (tuna, chicken, etc.) fruit cups, pudding

cups, crackers, cookies, chips, water, hygiene products, wipes. And remember the emotional support-Dog food, coats and booties. A’Lissa has particularly been helpful in helping with animals. You can support Cardinal’s Love for the Homeless by contacting Stephenie at 405-883-0133.

COCAA is also dependent upon gifts and grants to help those in need. You can also support COCAA by contacting Mandi at 405-780-1170.

Worship at the church of your choice this week

In that day you will say:

“Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted.”



Isaiah 12:4

Stillwater Bible

Proclaiming Christ, Training Believers
JB Bond, Senior Pastor

Sundays

Worship Service.....8:30 a.m.
C.R.O.W. Groups.....9:45 a.m.
Worship Service.....11:00 a.m.
Kids' Church.....11:20 a.m.

Tuesdays

Cornerstone @ The Union (RM 297).....7:30 p.m.

Wednesdays

Stillwater Bible Institute.....6:30 p.m.
Impact Youth.....6:30 p.m.
Bible Kids.....6:30 p.m.

7617 W. 6th Ave.
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Crosspointe

CHURCH

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Sunday AM Worship - 10:30
Sunday PM Family Service - 6:00
Wed PM Bible Study - 7:00

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Bible Study • 9:30am
Worship Service • 11:00am
WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES
Begin at 6:00pm
Watch our worship service on Facebook
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METHODIST CHURCH

www.fumcstw.org

400 W. 7th • 372-5854

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Worship.....8:30am & 11:10am
Sunday School.....10:00am
Closer Walk.....10 am Family Life Center

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

BAPTIST CHURCH

4th & Knoblock • 372-2744

Sunday School
9 am
Worship Service
8 am & 10:30 am

GRACE BAPTIST

CHURCH

Independent Baptist
Expository Preaching

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday10:30am
Thursday7:30pm

723 E. 17th

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

524 S. Duncan • 405-372-5580
www.stillwaterfpc.org

Sunday Worship

9:45 a.m. - Sunday School
11:00 a.m. - in person, online
On KSPI radio AM 780 & FM 94.3
and the Stillwater FPC Facebook page

SUNNYBROOK

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

421 E. Richmond Rd. | sunnybrookcc.org

SUNDAY SERVICES
8:15 AM | 9:45 AM | 11:15 AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL KIDS
9:45 AM - Student, CHURCH
College & Adult All Services

WEDNESDAY NIGHT CHURCH
6:30 PM - Kids, Students & Adult Studies

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Church of Christ

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SUNDAY
Meeting Times
Bible Study.....9:30 AM
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Bible Study.....5:00 PM
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821 N. DUCK • 372-7439

Southside Baptist

Church of Stillwater

1223 S. Perkins Rd.
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SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM
SUNDAY WORSHIP 11 AM + 6 PM
WEDNESDAY
YOUTH & ADULT BIBLE STUDY 6:30
Paul Hutchison - Pastor
Address - 1223 S. Perkins. Rd.
Phone: 405-372-2411
Email: southsidestillwater@gmail.com

The Islamic

Society of Stillwater

616 N. Washington St.

Friday (Weekly) Prayers
1:40 PM - 2:10 PM
For Daily Prayer Times
www.icstillwater.org

St. Francis Xavier

Catholic Church

711 N. Country Club Rd.

Sunday Mass
8:30 | 11:15 a.m.
1 p.m. (en español)
Tue & Thu Mass
12:10 p.m.
Wednesday Mass
12:10 p.m.
6 p.m. (en español)

Friday Mass
12:10 p.m.
Saturday Mass
9 a.m. | 5 p.m. (Vigil Mass)
Confessions
Tues-Fri | 11:30-12 p.m.
Wednesday | 5 p.m.
Saturday | 9:45-11 a.m.

405-372-6886 www.sfxstillwater.org

Zion Lutheran

Church - LCMS

Sunday - 8:00, 10:30 AM

www.zionlutheranstw.org

John E. Wackler, Pastor
504 S. Knoblock • 372-3703