

Every Day's A Holiday

Annie's Thanksgiving

Scripture: Luke 17:11-19; I Thessalonians 5:18; Psalm 100:4

Memory Verse: Psalm 100:4 - *"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."*

Show flash card pictures with each section of the story.

INTRODUCTION: Too often we take for granted what we have and what the Lord has done for us. We forget to thank Him for the wonderful blessings He has given us. He does not have to bless us, but He does. When Jesus lived on the earth, there were ten men who came to Him with the disease of leprosy. It was a terrible disease from which they would eventually die. There was no cure and they were not even allowed into the city to see friends and family. They saw Jesus and begged Him to heal them. He instantly healed them. Out of the ten men, only one was considerate enough, and grateful enough, to go back and thank Jesus for what He had done. We, like those other nine men, get so absorbed in ourselves that we forget to give thanks to the One Who is responsible for all the good we have in our lives. When we put ourselves last and learn to be thankful for what we already have, God blesses us even more. Listen to what happened to a girl named Annie one Thanksgiving.



1. *"Twenty-five! You twenty-five wonderful dollars,"* Annie cooed as she patted the stack of money in her hand. Her heart beat with pure joy to think that Saturday the second-hand bike now in Mr. Cain's bicycle shop would be her very own!

2. Annie had wanted a bike for ever so long. But somehow there was never enough money left over from Dad's pay to get one - not even a used one. The *"left over"* money always went to help some needy family in her preacher-dad's little church. So, Annie had decided to earn money herself and buy one. It had been her decision ever since Mr. Cain had explained that he always had good second-hand bikes onsale. He had explained they were cheaper than new ones. *"They are not as good looking as the new ones, Annie,"* he said, *"But they ride as well. I could get you one for \$25.00."*



Annie sighed as she recalled how long it had taken her to save the money, almost a whole year. She had done errands, washed dishes, shoveled snow, even walked Mrs. Mack's dog. She had saved her birthday and Christmas money, too. It had been hard to save. Often she had been tempted to spend the money for pop and candy. Then, she would shut her eyes and pretend she could see herself riding on a bike. That made her forget about buying the goodies. Now with Saturday only four days away, she knew it was worth the effort.

3. She sang for sheer joy as she bounced down the steps to breakfast. As soon as she saw her parents she knew something was wrong. They were too serious. *"Has something happened?"* Annie asked as she looked first to her Dad, then to her Mom. *"In a way,"* her mother replied. *"We'll tell you as soon as we've said 'Thank You' to the Lord for breakfast."* When the prayer was over, Annie cried, *"Now tell me."*

4. "Annie," said Dad, clearing his voice, *"we can't have a thanksgiving dinner,"* "Oh, Daddy! Thanksgiving without a dinner? Why it just wouldn't seem like Thanksgiving."

"We'll have something, dear," her mother assured her, *"but not the usual things."* *"You mean no turkey or cranberries? But why? You said you had enough money for a real special dinner this year."*

"I know, Annie, but Daddy needed the money for something else," Mother said quietly. Annie knew what that something was. Dad had discovered another needy family.

"It's hard to take, Annie," said her Dad in an understanding tone. *"But let's look at it like this: we gave away our Thanksgiving dinner as an offering unto the Lord. We do have so many things. God has been good to us."*

"I'll try," Annie promised. The Bible says, *"In everything give thanks. . ."* (1 Thessalonians 5:18) But it was sure going to be hard to give thanks in this situation. Why Thanksgiving was flat without a turkey, without a good special dinner. She looked at her Dad, then her Mom. Suddenly she realized it was hard for them, too. They would miss the turkey and fixings, too.

She jumped up, kissing them. *"Go ahead, use the money for the 'something else.' Give it as our thanks offering. I might not have a turkey dinner, but I've saved the \$25.00."*

It was on the way home from school at lunch time that Annie

first got the idea of giving her bike money to buy a turkey and the “trimmings” to go along with it. It was the hardest decision she had ever made. She took the long way home so she could think things out. She wanted the bike so very much. But she could not get away from the feeling that she should give the money to her parents. They served the Lord faithfully. They were always doing without to give to others - even to her. She knew Thanksgiving meant a lot to them because they loved the Lord so much. They always made it a day of praise and Thanksgiving to the Lord, besides having a dinner. But it was extra special this year because it was their wedding anniversary.

5. The memory verse from Sunday school kept repeating itself in her head, *“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.”* (Psalm 100:4) She did have so much already to be thankful for, let’s see: she had the best parents in the whole world; a warm home; enough to eat; nice things to wear. Best of all, the Lord Jesus was her Saviour. God answered her prayers and helped her in school. Annie knew she had a lot to be thankful for and she did not really NEED a bike. She could save again. The more she thought, the more she knew what she ought to do. All during lunch, Annie was very thoughtful. She did not even seem to know what she was eating. Mom and Dad seemed to understand when she said she had a decision to make. They did not ask questions when she asked to be excused.

6. Once upstairs, Annie stuffed her bike money in a white envelope. She hurried out of the house and headed for the church. Her Uncle Dan was the janitor of the church and she knew he would help her. She hurried into the building and explained to Uncle Dan about her parents giving their Thanksgiving dinner money as a thanks offering unto the Lord. *“I want to give my bike money to Dad and Mom so they can have a Thanksgiving dinner. It’s my thanks offering to the Lord for such a wonderful Dad and Mom.”*

“That’s a pretty big sacrifice, little lady. Are you sure it is what you want?” Annie swallowed hard, *“Yes, Uncle Dan, dead sure. Just hurry and print on the envelope: to Bro. and Mrs. Drill for their Thanksgiving dinner.”* *“And, Uncle Dan,”* Annie added as she turned to hurry off to school, *“be sure Mom gets it right away so she can go to the store.”*

Annie never knew an afternoon could be so long. But she was

glad at least there was no more struggling inside. On the way home from school she walked past the bicycle shop. She took one last look at the bike that was to have been hers. *"But, Lord, I'm glad I gave my money. It's a thanks offering to You for all the good things You have given me and done for me."* As Annie walked she decided she would not tell her parents until Thanksgiving that she was not buying a bike. Otherwise, they would not use the money.

7. Annie's parents met her at the door. *"Surprise, Annie!"* they cried as they flung the door wide open. Annie's eyes nearly jumped out of her head. There in the hall stood a bike, *"Where - how?"* she sputtered.

Her dad pulled her in saying, *"It's a gift from the folks I gave our Thanksgiving offering to. It belonged to their daughter who died. They had forgotten it was in the cellar."* *"They wanted to do something for us,"* Mother continued, *"So they asked Dad if you had a bike."* *"So you get your bike after all,"* Dad said softly. Annie looked at her mom whose face was beaming. She saw the pleased expression on her dad's face. *"You knew all the time? Knew about. . ."* she asked suspiciously.

8. *"Yes, we questioned where our Thanksgiving turkey came from."* Suddenly Annie felt like she would float away. All the heaviness was gone. Inside there was nothing but lightness. She laughed happily as she wheeled her bike outside to try it out. Her heart was a song of Thanksgiving to her Lord. She was glad she hadn't bought the bike. It was much nicer when the Lord provided one. *"Thank you, Lord, for the way You used my Thanksgiving offering,"* she prayed, *"and thank You for showing me how to give thanks in all things even though I may not understand at the time. I know You love me and will always take care of me."*

*How often do you thank the Lord for what He has given you? Do you ever thank Him? He wants you to. Do you take for granted the home you live in, the Mom and Dad you have, the food you eat, the church you can go to, the Bible you read from. . .?

TEACHERS: Emphasize giving thanks for everything (even the hard times) and especially for God's greatest Gift, Jesus. Explain salvation more fully at this time.