

Thanksgiving 2019
November 27, 2019
Selected Texts

In Christ Jesus, for whom we are ever thankful people, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Do you know where the English word “thank” comes from? It comes from the Latin word “tongere.” The root “tong” means “to think.” Loosely translated “tongere” means “I will remember what you have done for me.” So when someone gives you something or does something for you and you say “thanks” in return: you are literally saying “I remember what you have done for me.” You really need to think before you can thank. “Thanks” is really a very marvelous word. In the definition itself is the very reason why we give thanks.

Probably one of the best words to describe thanks is the word **happy!** A thankful person is a happy person. Isn't that what we are saying when someone does something for us or gives something to us? It gladdens our heart; it makes us feel good; we smile and say “thanks”—“I'm happy you did that or happy you gave me that.” It shows on our face and in our hearts. Very rarely do you see someone frown and pout and say “thank you.”

I'm sure some of you know some pretty pessimistic people. Rarely are they ever happy and more often than not; also not very thankful. When one expects the worst, looks for the worst; very often he only sees the worst. Therefore the many blessings and good things are passed over, neglected and forgotten in unthankfulness and as a result there is no happiness. Happiness and thankfulness go hand in hand.

But there are other words that help to describe this word; **thank.** From the Greek we learn that the word thank comes from the word **grace—undeserved love, undeserved kindness.** The feeling of gratitude is a **grace-filled** feeling. A heart filled with grace is a thankful heart.

Another word for thank is **to rejoice or praise, to give glory.**

And finally another definition is **to be pleasing, agreeable.** A thankful person is an agreeable, pleased person.

But again all of these definitions or words from which the word **thanks** is derived or described point to a happy heart! Without a happy heart there can be no real thanksgiving. Therefore I think a good definition of thanks is this: **A happy remembrance of past gracious blessings!**

Now a Christian fully knows that one cannot have real happiness, be truly thankful without the LORD! Therefore when someone asks us to list the many reasons for which we are thankful—everyone of them includes our God! In a devotional book, I read this about Thanksgiving: *“Someone has said, ‘A Christian is one who doesn't have to consult his bank account to see how rich he is.’ How true! Every beat of my heart and every breath I take, the water I drink and the food I eat, the home I live in and the loved ones I hold dear, the freedoms I have and the country in which I live—all comes from God.*

The Bible I read and the prayers I offer, the church I attend and the pure Word I hear, the never ending supply of forgiveness for my sins and the always powerful help against temptation, the days He grants me to learn more about Jesus and the graves He will open because of Jesus—all this and more comes from God.

Yes, even the sickness that hits me and the pains that don't go away, the bad weather that damages and the crops that aren't quite right, a paycheck that doesn't quite stretch and the friends that don't last—all this and more has come from God. They serve my good or God would not allow them. This thanksgiving, as I check my account, am I ready to say, ‘I'm rich! Thank God!’”

So this evening we began our service with these words:

I WILL GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD WITH MY WHOLE HEART.

Tonight we will be reading passages that give us

REASONS FOR THANKSGIVING!

1: REASONS FOR BEING THANKFUL PEOPLE

There are literally thousands of reasons for being thankful people and every new day brings hundreds of more reasons. God's Word tells us that all thanksgiving, all full happiness stems from

Christ and from the knowledge that we are saved through Jesus. Let us all join in reading together the following passages:

Ephesians 5:19-20: **SPEAK TO ONE ANOTHER IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, SINGING AND MAKING MELODY IN YOUR HEART TO THE LORD, GIVING THANKS ALWAYS FOR ALL THINGS TO GOD THE FATHER IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,**

Colossians 3:15-17: **AND LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, TO WHICH ALSO YOU WERE CALLED IN ONE BODY; AND BE THANKFUL. LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY IN ALL WISDOM, TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, SINGING WITH GRACE IN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD. AND *WHATEVER* YOU DO IN WORD OR DEED, *DO* ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, GIVING THANKS TO GOD THE FATHER THROUGH HIM.**

I Cor. 15:55-58: **"O DEATH, WHERE *IS* YOUR STING? O HADES, WHERE *IS* YOUR VICTORY?" THE STING OF DEATH *IS* SIN, AND THE STRENGTH OF SIN *IS* THE LAW. 57 BUT THANKS *BE* TO GOD, WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. THEREFORE, MY BELOVED BRETHREN, BE STEADFAST, IMMOVABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD, KNOWING THAT YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD.**

II Cor. 9:15: **THANKS *BE* TO GOD FOR HIS INDESCRIBABLE GIFT!**

Hymn 625

REASONS FOR THANKSGIVING!

2: REASONS FOR BEING THANKFUL PARENTS

The greatest joy and happiness Christian parents can have is to know that their children know Jesus as their Lord and Savior in their hearts. Indeed we are proud and happy when our children do well in school—when they have a good education and get good grades; when they do well in sports activities or musical events; when they have friends and are well behaved; when they get a job, get married and eventually raise a family. But what real joy can there be if all of this is accomplished without the knowledge of Christ in their hearts. Jesus said it: **FOR WHAT PROFIT IS IT TO A MAN IF HE GAINS THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSES HIS OWN SOUL?**

What greater joy can a parent have than to see his children bow their heads in humble prayer; than to see their children sing their praises of love to their Savior from their hearts, than to see them brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord in His Word; than to see their children serve their Lord throughout their lives as sons and daughters of God.

King David learned the following words of Proverbs the hard way: **A FOOLISH SON *IS* A GRIEF TO HIS FATHER,... AND THE FATHER OF A FOOL HAS NO JOY.** David loved his son Absalom, even when he rebelled against David and against God. But Absalom died in his foolish pride and sinful rebellion. When David heard about his son's death the most bitter, anguished, heart wrenching words ever spoken by a grieving father were uttered: **"O MY SON ABSALOM -- MY SON, MY SON ABSALOM -- IF ONLY I HAD DIED IN YOUR PLACE! O ABSALOM MY SON, MY SON!"**

What a terrible thing for a believing father to experience—the death of his foolish, unbelieving child. What greater tragedy can there be for a Christian parent.

But we as Christian parents have great reason for happiness and thanksgiving. God has blessed us with His gifts of children and also blessed our children with His Word of salvation. May we not take for granted this great blessing of Christian children who walk in the way of the Lord.

Let us join in reading the following passages found printed in our bulletin this evening.

Psalm 127:3-5: **BEHOLD, CHILDREN ARE A HERITAGE FROM THE LORD, THE FRUIT OF THE WOMB IS A REWARD. LIKE ARROWS IN THE HAND OF A WARRIOR, SO ARE THE CHILDREN OF ONE'S YOUTH. HAPPY IS THE MAN WHO HAS HIS QUIVER FULL OF THEM; THEY SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED, BUT SHALL SPEAK WITH THEIR ENEMIES IN THE GATE.**

Proverbs 23:24-25: **THE FATHER OF THE RIGHTEOUS WILL GREATLY REJOICE, AND HE WHO BEGETS A WISE CHILD WILL DELIGHT IN HIM. LET YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER BE GLAD, AND LET HER WHO BORE YOU REJOICE.**

3 John 4 **I HAVE NO GREATER JOY THAN TO HEAR THAT MY CHILDREN WALK IN TRUTH.**

Thanksgiving Antiphon, pg. 41 W.S.

REASONS FOR THANKSGIVING!

3: REASONS FOR BEING A THANKFUL PASTOR

Finally this evening we come to reasons for being a thankful pastor. Many of those reasons are sitting right out there looking back at me this evening. You are many of the reasons for my joy and happiness. The greatest joy a pastor has is when the Word of God works in the hearts of the people he has been called to serve. The Apostle Paul in most every one of his letters to the congregations of Asia Minor gives thanks to his Lord for those whom the Lord brought to faith through His Word, some by Paul's preaching and teaching. What greater joy can there be than knowing that soul's are being plucked out of a certain eternal death with Satan and gathered into the loving arms of their Savior for everlasting life in heaven.

Being a fireman, a policeman, a soldier are very important callings; for saving a life is one of the greatest gifts someone can bestow on someone else. To bring the Word of God, the Good News of our Savior's perfect life, death and resurrection to spiritually dead hearts and see that powerful Gospel bring that heart to life and then strengthen that individual in that saving faith unto eternal life is the greatest blessing a pastor could ever desire. Paul put it so beautifully in his greetings which I will read.

Romans 1:8: **FIRST, I THANK MY GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU ALL, THAT YOUR FAITH IS SPOKEN OF THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD.**

1 Cor. 1:4: **I THANK MY GOD ALWAYS CONCERNING YOU FOR THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH WAS GIVEN TO YOU BY CHRIST JESUS,**

Eph. 1:16: **I DO NOT CEASE TO GIVE THANKS FOR YOU, MAKING MENTION OF YOU IN MY PRAYERS:**

Phil. 1:3: **I THANK MY GOD UPON EVERY REMEMBRANCE OF YOU,**

1 Thess. 1:2; 2:13: **WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD ALWAYS FOR YOU ALL, MAKING MENTION OF YOU IN OUR PRAYERS,... BUT WE ARE BOUND TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD ALWAYS FOR YOU, BRETHREN BELOVED BY THE LORD, BECAUSE GOD FROM THE BEGINNING CHOSE YOU FOR SALVATION THROUGH SANCTIFICATION BY THE SPIRIT AND BELIEF IN THE TRUTH,**

As a pastor, as your pastor, I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, because of the grace which He has bestowed on each of you; because of the faithful response His Word has created in your hearts; because of your words and actions in proclaiming the Word of God to others; because of the love, care and concern you have shown to me and Ruth; and also because you too have

received the Word—not as my words, not as the words of men, but as it is the Word of your loving God.

So what is the reason for all of us people to give thanks with our whole heart? There are many, many reasons, but one trumps them all—we who were dead in trespasses and sins have been made alive through Christ Jesus. We have been called into the unity of the body of Christ. We are one with our Lord Jesus and therefore one with each other. A blessed union in Christ.

May our thanksgiving this evening consist of speaking to one another in Psalms; singing and making music in our hearts to God, giving thanks always to our God for all that He has done for us in our Savior's name. Death has been destroyed and swallowed up in victory! Our sins have been removed! Satan has been conquered! Eternal life in Heaven is ours!

COME, YE THANKFUL PEOPLE COME! GIVE THANKS TO GOD. AMEN.

Rise and Pray