

Giving Thanks to the Father

Thanksgiving Sermon
November 28, 2024

Giving thanks for all that Father has given to us

Psalm 145:15-16 15 The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season. 16 You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.

The more we have the more ungrateful we tend to be. A poor child who often must go hungry will be grateful for even a stale crust of bread. Those who have many blessings, whose bellies are full, will often get angry if they are presented with food they do not like. I remember complaining for hours when my mother tried to make me eat onion soup.

Like children, when God blesses us with much, we take it for granted. We assume that we deserve these gifts. When God gives us little or such things as we don't like, we get angry and claim that God has failed us.

What is God's response? Psalm 145 stresses that he gives to "every living thing." He gives to those that we call good or evil. He gives to those who thank him and those who curse him, believer and unbeliever. The Lord does not withhold his goodness from any living thing.

We have failed to be thankful for all that God has given to us. Like little children we often take his gifts for granted. Yet the Lord through Christ Jesus has forgiven our sinfulness and has blessed us with all the good things of this world.

Giving thanks for all the Father has done for us

Psalm 103:1-4 Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, 4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies

When we were children, our parents taught us to write thank you notes when our grandma sent us a gift, and to say thank you when our aunts or uncles buy us pizza or ice cream. This is good and right that we should learn to say thank you for things. Yet as we grow up what we really appreciate are not the things we receive but the services.

We appreciate it when our children do the dishes without being asked. We appreciate it when a husband surprises his wife with dinner. We appreciate it when a wife supports her husband, even if he is wrong. We appreciate it when a friend comes to sit with us in our grief or sickness. Such things are so much more valuable than toys, or tools or jewelry.

Psalm 103 reminds us of all that God has done for us. In our Gospel reading we heard how Jesus healed the lepers but more than that he cleansed them. He took those who were cast out and brought them into the presence of God, as he has done for us as well.

We have failed to be thankful for all that the Father has done for us, especially for his forgiveness. We know that the bible says that we are sinful human beings. We recite a confession of faith at the beginning of each service, but in our hearts, we do not really believe it. In our hearts we think of ourselves as not so bad. If we truly appreciated how sinful we were we would not ever complain about anyone else. Every time we criticize or complain about another person, we are claiming to be better than that person.

Because we fail to appreciate just how sinful we really are we also fail to appreciate just how much God has done for us. We fail to appreciate what it means that he loved us when we were still sinners. We fail to appreciate the fullness of what it means that he died for our sins.

Yet even though we fail to appreciate what he has done; he still did and still does it. "His mercies are new every morning." The Lord has not withheld his loving-kindness from us but sent his Son to die for us. He sent his Holy Spirit to strength us and His word to enlighten us.

Giving thanks for all the Father has been to us

Psalm 27:4 4 One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.

Love, affection, friendship might begin with presents and is strengthened through service, but hopefully we learn to be grateful not just for what they give us or what they do for us, but for the person themselves. You have heard it said, "It is the thought that counts." You could probably take it one step further and say, "It is the person behind the thought that counts."

Peter reminds us that our God is the "**Father of lights, in whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.**" David reminds us that God is our shepherd. Remember how the hearts of the Emmaus disciples burned with them as they walked with the Lord.

This is joy which Paul speaks about in Philippians. The joy of knowing the Lord, of walking with him, of knowing that he is our good father, and we are his children. This is the joy that caused Paul to sing hymns even while shackled in the prison.

This also the Lord has done for us. He has given back to us fellowship with himself and with one another, that we may walk in the peace of God. That his face may shine upon us. He has done this through His only Son Jesus Christ. Amen.