

Concordia Lutheran Conference

Daily Devotions

By Carl M. Zorn

for the

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Trinity

– Thursday –

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, because His mercy endureth forever.

—Psalm 118:1

Luther says in his explanation of the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer: "God gives daily bread, indeed, without our prayer, also to all the wicked; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to know it and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving." Although God, of His divine providence, grants *temporal* gifts and blessings even to the ungodly (Matthew 5:45), yet He desires that we, His children by faith in His Son, pray for these things in order that we may acknowledge that we receive them from His bountiful hand as His gracious benefits (Psalm 103:2), see in them His fatherly goodness toward us His children (v. 13), and render Him due thanks for the same (Ps. 73:28; 116:12; 26:7; 50:14; 95:2). Indeed, His good gifts are so many, blessings are poured down upon and round about us daily in such abundance, that we often take them for granted, do not realize that they do not "just happen," and forget that they are undeserved blessings of which we are not worthy (Genesis 32:10a). Alas, therefore, how little gratitude is rendered to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, even by us Christians! How many homes, how many hearts, as regards praise and thanks to God, are silent even on a special Day of Thanksgiving, when we, enabled by His grace, should "*offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name*" (Hebrews 13:15).

But by far the greatest blessings bestowed upon us by our good and merciful Lord are His *spiritual* blessings. Indeed, if we as Christians "*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*" (Matthew 6:33), the blessings that first should come to mind are those earned by Christ Jesus, granted to us for His sake, and received by faith in His merits. By His grace, we have God's Word in its truth and purity which testifies to His mercy toward fallen mankind in Christ Jesus; we have forgiveness of sins and imputed righteousness purchased and won by our Savior and granted objectively to all the world in Him; we have forgiveness, life and salvation as our very own by saving faith created by His Holy Spirit in our hearts by means of His glorious Gospel; and we have every good and perfect gift from above to His believing children as manifestations of the peace we have with Him. Even "*the sufferings of this present time*" (Romans 8:18), the "*chastening*" of the Lord (Hebrews 12:6-11), are tokens of God's love toward us, which He promises to work for our good and blessing (Romans 8:28; Hebrews 12:11). "*In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us*" (Romans 8:37). "*He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*" (v. 32). "*O [therefore] give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, because His mercy endureth forever!*"

Prayer — O Thou faithful Father in heaven, teach us to receive Thy gracious gifts with thanksgiving. For our Savior's sake Thou hast given us every good and perfect gift for both our temporal and spiritual welfare. What indeed shall we render unto Thee for all Thy benefits? Take our hearts, our lives, and all that we have and are as imperfect thank-offerings for all Thy mercies; and graciously keep us steadfast in Thy Word and faith unto our end, when in the mansions of heaven we shall render Thee proper thanks to all eternity for Thy love's sake. Amen.

All that for my soul is needful He with loving care provides, nor of that is He unheedful which my body needs besides. When my strength cannot avail me, when my powers can do no more, doth my God His strength outpour; in my need He doth not fail me. All things else have but their day; God's great love abides for aye. Hymn 25, 3

Scripture Reading: Psalm 145