

INI - SDG

Thanksgiving Day  
November 26, 2009  
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church  
Hecla, SD

**Text: Deuteronomy 8:10-18 - *When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, lest – when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the rock of flint; who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end – then you say in your heart, “My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.” And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.***

**Theme: REMEMBER THE LORD YOUR GOD!**

- Why we need to remember
- What we need to remember
- How we remember

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ Jesus,

A couple of years ago I was talking with someone who was new to the Christian faith. She was confused when I told her that our church has services on Thanksgiving Day. “Do you really need to have a special church service for Thanksgiving? Isn’t every day supposed to be a day of thanksgiving for a Christian?” That is a rather interesting thought. As Christians, do we really need to have a special day for giving thanks? Well, the answer, I suppose, is both yes and no. This young lady was right. Christians shouldn’t need a special day of thanksgiving. As children of the heavenly Father we know from whom every good and perfect gift comes. We know God has supplied for all of our spiritual and physical needs. Everyday of our life is to be Thanksgiving Day!

But how easily do we forget! Whether it be because of the abundance which we enjoy in this land or because of laziness and selfishness, we forget about giving our God the thanks due His name. So often we forget the giver of every good and perfect gift. We need to remember the LORD our God! So let us on this Thanksgiving Day consider why we need to remember, what we need to remember, and how we remember the LORD our God.

**WHY WE NEED TO REMEMBER**

Everyone here is forgetful in one way or another. We forget to do our homework, we

forget to take out the trash, we forget our anniversary, we forget where we left our keys. But some things we forget are more important than others. How often do you think we forget to thank our Creator God for the many blessings He has so graciously showered on us? Think back to this week or maybe even this morning as you sat down for breakfast. When you sat down for your meal, did you remember to give thanks to God for this food or did you, as Martin Luther says, go to the table as pigs to the trough without giving a thought to who the giver of this meal is? Or did you say your table prayers, but rattle through them without giving much thought or glory to God? When you laid your head down at night, did you thank your God for the blessings of the day? When you got up in the morning, did you thank your God for the rest He supplied your body that night? When you received your paycheck, did you first think to thank God for the job and the ability to do that job which He gave you? Why is it that we so easily fail to remember the LORD our God from whom all blessings flow?

As the Children of Israel stood on the banks of the Jordan River, about to enter the Promised Land, that land flowing with milk and honey, Moses worried about them. He worried that when they had settled down and settled into Canaan, that they would forget about the LORD their God. But the Holy Spirit through Moses is not just writing to the Children of Israel, he is writing to us too! Take a look at verses 12-13 in your bulletin and see how many apply to you. Have you eaten and are full? Have you built beautiful houses and dwell in them? Have your herds and your flocks multiplied? Has your silver and gold - your money - multiplied? Has all that you have multiplied? Then Moses is writing this word of warning to you!

Listen to these words of warning, ***“Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God...lest...when you heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God...then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’”*** It has been said that there is no such thing as an atheist in a foxhole. That is when adversity strikes, such as a soldier under attack, man naturally looks to the heavens for help. When the cupboards are bare, the bank account is dry, and our loved ones are ill or in danger, when times are difficult our eyes are focused on the LORD. We look to Him for our aid. We pray for His help. And the LORD wants His children to do this. He Himself says, ***“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”*** (Ps 50:15) And when He helps us, even in a little way, we are so grateful and thankful for that aid.

Isn't it interesting, then, that when the cupboards are overflowing, when everyone is healthy in the family, when the bank account is full - when we have an excess of everything we need for our daily lives - it is then that we begin to forget. We take our possessions and our meals for granted. Prosperity also leads to pride. We look at all we have and begin to think that our power and the might of our hands have gained these things. It's quite interesting isn't it. We think that success and prosperity are signs that God really loves us. And yet that same success and prosperity can be so dangerous to our faith and cause us to be forgetful. For this reason, Agur writes in Proverbs 30, ***“Give me neither poverty nor riches -- Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, And say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.”*** (Prov 30:8-9) How often in times of plenty do we fail to remember the LORD our God! This is why we need to remember the LORD our God!

#### WHAT WE NEED TO REMEMBER

One of the most frustrating feelings is knowing you were supposed to remember something, but you can't remember WHAT you were supposed to remember! What did I come

upstairs for? What did I go out to the car to get? What was I supposed to pick up at the grocery store again? We've seen WHY we need to remember the LORD our God - because of our lazy and sinful pride. But WHAT do we need to remember about the LORD our God?

As Moses warns the Children of Israel not to forget, he reminds them of all that the LORD God had done for them over the past 40 years. It was the LORD their God who had brought them out of the house of bondage in Egypt through those miraculous signs and wonders. It was the LORD their God who had led them through the great and terrible wilderness for 40 years. It was the LORD their God who, when there was no water to drink, gave them water, out of all things, a rock! When there was no food to eat, it was the LORD their God who gave them manna. The bread-like substance called manna was available six mornings a week on the ground, for 40 years. All they had to do was step out of their tents and collect it. It was the LORD their God who had done all this for them. "Beware lest you forget!" Moses tells them.

Our circumstances are a bit different than the Children of Israel, aren't they. Or are they? Remember what the LORD your God has done for you! Everything the LORD did for the Children of Israel was a picture of what He was going to do for us through His Son, Jesus. The LORD our God has brought us out of the house of bondage. Jesus said, "***Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. ...Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.***" (Jn 8:34,36) The Son of God came to free us from the bondage of sin. He used His own blood, His very life on the cross, to purchase our freedom.

In this world there is nothing to quench our spiritual thirst. The world offers no answer for sin and no promise of life after death. But the LORD our God does. Once again we look to Jesus. He says, "***Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.***" (Jn 4:14) Jesus is the Water of Life. He alone quenches our thirst in this dry and thirsty land. He alone has the answer for our sin. He gave His life as a sacrifice for our sins on the cross. He overcame death by rising from it on the third day and He gives us that victory through faith in Him. He gives us peace with God, He has reconciled us unto God. Just as God brought water from a rock in the wilderness, so too God has given us the Water of Life from the Rock of our salvation, Jesus Christ.

Manna, the bread from heaven, also was a picture of Jesus. "***I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.***" (Jn 6:51) Jesus is the bread from heaven that feeds us. Through faith in Jesus Christ we feed on Him. Jesus gave up His life to give us eternal life. He had to die so that we might live.

What hasn't He done for us! It is He who gave His own Son Jesus Christ into death because of our sins and raised Him because of our justification. It is He who fearfully and wonderfully knit us together in our mother's wombs. It is He who when we were born in spiritual bondage, set us free by bringing us to faith in His Son Jesus Christ. "***You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth.***" It is He who has daily supplied for all of our needs, both body and soul! Remember, dear brothers and sisters, what great things the LORD our God has done for us!

## HOW WE REMEMBER

Finally, how are we to remember Him and all He has done for us? Moses writes in verse 11, "***Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments,***

***His judgments, and His statutes which I have commanded you today.***” One way in which we remember the LORD our God from whom all blessings flow, is by keeping His commandments. We fear, love, and trust in Him above all things. We gladly hear and learn His Word. We honor our father and our mother. We love our neighbor as ourselves. These are ways in which we remember the LORD our God in our day-to-day lives, not just on the last Thursday of November.

Moses also writes in the first verse of our text, ***“When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.”*** We remember the LORD our God by blessing and praising Him. When we sit down for a meal we remember the LORD by saying grace and giving thanks, because we remember that is God who gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater. It is God who has opened His hand and satisfied the desire of every living thing. It is God who cause the sun to shine and sent the rain to water the earth.

When we collect our paycheck we remember the LORD by giving Him thanks for the ability to do our work and giving us work to do. We give Him thanks by giving some back to Him through our thank offerings. This we do from the heart, because we know that ***“God loves a cheerful giver.”*** (2 Cor 9:7)

When we lay our head down at night we can remember the LORD and bless His name for the day which He gave us and the ability He gave us to carry out our work. When we rise up in the morning we can remember the LORD by blessing His name for the rest He gave our bodies that night and pray that we carry His name with us throughout the day.

This is what the Apostle Paul was talking about when he wrote to the Colossians, ***“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.”*** (Col 3:17) Let us remember the LORD your God!

So do Christians need a nation holiday called Thanksgiving? We shouldn't. After all the LORD our God has done for us, how could we not give God thanks every day of our lives for everything in our lives. And yet we forget and we take things for granted, don't we. Our hearts get lifted up and begin to think in our hearts that all we have has been gained by our own power and we take all the credit. Let us humbly repent of our sinful pride and let us remember the LORD our God in all things and in every way. Remembering especially our Savior from sin, His Son, Jesus Christ. With King David let us say, ***“Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits!”*** (Ps 103:1-2) Thanks be to God! Amen.