



“Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!” Psalm 118:1 (ESV).

November brings Thanksgiving as we praise God from whom all blessings flow. The tradition of our nation is a day set aside as a day of Thanksgiving which has been practiced since the early days of our nation on this continent. The day has been made an official holiday by our government and is a time for gathering of family and friends, spending time together and to reflect on the blessings that come to us by God's grace and mercy.

The natural response of believers is one of thanksgiving for the blessings that God has given, continues to give, and for the future blessings He abundantly bestows to us each day in Christ our Savior. The Psalmist teaches that our thankfulness comes from God's mercy and “steadfast love” which “endures forever!” Martin Luther's explanation to the Second Commandment teaches: “We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His Name, but call upon it in every trouble, **pray, praise, and give thanks.**” Regarding the Name of God, the Commandment teaches what we are not to do. The Commandment also teaches what we are to do as Luther's explanation makes clear. To pray, praise, and give thanks is the natural response from the heart of a believer that has repented of sin and desires only to serve God, to love God by not abusing God's Name in any way while at the same time continuing to love God with all of the heart, mind and soul. Love comes to us from God which then in turn loves God and our neighbor, giving thanks to God in every circumstance of life, even those that are not pleasant.

The Third Commandment also teaches us to thank and praise God. Liturgical worship follows the pattern of Christ speaking His Word, giving His Supper, and the Church in turn receives and answers in confession, thanksgiving, and petition. “In this way, the liturgy keeps us focused on Christ the giver of all good things by His death and resurrection.”

In November, on Thanksgiving Day, we are more focused on Thankfulness for all the blessings given to us. We are thankful for the blessings of the earth that we receive by which we make a living and also for the nourishment of our bodies and for our families. We are grateful and thankful for all the First Article gifts listed in the Catechism, “body and soul, eyes, ears and all of our members, reason and all senses, for which God continues to care for.” Luther continues by listing “clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all that I have.” We praise God from whom all blessings flow knowing that He provides all this through His Divine fatherly mercy and goodness without any merit or worthiness within us. “For all this, it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.” All this we learn in the Catechism and carry throughout our Christian lives.

Psalm 118:1 is a wonderful, brief summary of the goodness of the Lord to whom we are thankful for every blessing. Why? Because of the “steadfast love” that God has for us through Christ. We can see this from verse 22: **“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” Psalm 118:22.** The stone the builders rejected is the cornerstone; that is, Christ. Christ Himself is the foundation of the Church. He is the giver of all good gifts, especially salvation.

The reason for our thanksgiving; our thanks and praise to God is for a great deal more than just our physical and immediate needs. Our thanks and praise is for God's **“steadfast love that endures forever”** given in the person and work of Christ our Savior by His death and resurrection. **Psalm 118:1** is a call to give thanks for the everlasting love of God. The blessing of Christ our Savior is the chief blessing for He gives forgiveness of sins through Jesus who sacrificed Himself for us. In Christ, we are made God's dear children by Grace in Jesus.

As Christians celebrate Thanksgiving in November, we also give thanks every day of our lives in Christ our Savior. We give thanks for God's grace in Christ that gives to us the forgiveness of sins from the death and resurrection of Jesus. We thank and praise God for giving us the gift of faith from His grace and making us His own in Holy Baptism and nourishing us with His very body and blood in The Lord's Supper for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our faith in Him. Therefore, we thank and praise God as we join in the hymn:

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow: Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.”
LSB 805. “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow”

A Most Blessed Thanksgiving to you all.
In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt