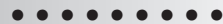


His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.



This coming Thursday is THANKSGIVING DAY! What does God's Word say about giving thanks? In 1st Thessalonians 5:18 the Apostle Paul writes: "...give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." But is that possible? Can we really give thanks in ALL circumstances? It's hard to feel thankful when men, women and children are killed in Iraq every day! It's hard to feel thankful when you lose your job just before Thanksgiving and Christmas! It's hard to feel thankful when

your parents are getting a divorce! It's hard to feel thankful when you're diagnosed with terminal cancer! It's hard to feel thankful when a loved one dies! Why does God expect us to give thanks during such times?

What we need to understand is that God is not obligated to give us any good things. So often we hear people in our society say: "Why do bad things happen to good people?" But that's an evil question! Why? The reason is that Holy Scripture clearly teaches that we are ALL sinners who deserve nothing but God's present and eternal punishment. God doesn't owe us anything!

Therefore, the question Holy Scripture would have us ask is this: "Why do good things happen to bad people?" Think about it! Even though we are ALL sinners who deserve nothing good from God, the fact is that God gives us countless physical and spiritual blessings as

undeserved gifts of His grace. Sadly, we sinners often assume that God owes us good things and then we blame Him when He gives us bad things. Instead, we should remember the words of Job: "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." (Job 2:21)

The fact is, God gives us many more pleasant things in life than painful. If we count the days of our lives I'm sure most of us in America would have to confess that we have been given many more days of prosperity (food, clothing, shelter, health, etc.) than days of trial (hunger, nakedness, homelessness, sickness, etc.). But even when God does allow us to suffer He only does this to humble us so that we might recognize that we need far more than physical blessings from God. God wants us to understand that our greatest need is to receive the forgiveness of our sins and the hope of eternal life in God's love!

In 1st Corinthians 15:56-57

the Apostle Paul writes: "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." What is Paul saying? First, we die because we are sinners! (See Romans 6:23a) We rebel against God in desire, thought, word and deed – by the evil we do and the good we leave undone. Second, the power of sin is the LAW! In other words, God's 10 Commandments expose the fact that we sinners don't want to submit to God's will (see Romans 3:19-20 and 8:7-8). However, the GOOD NEWS is that the Lord Jesus Christ has given us the victory! (See Romans 6:23b)

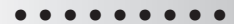
The eternal Son of God came into this world to save sinners (see Romans 3:21-26 and 1st Timothy 1:12-16). Jesus died on the cross in our place of damnation, and then He conquered death for us that we might live now and forever as God's dearly loved children (see Romans 6:3-4, Titus 2:11-

14 and 1st Peter 2:23-25). The ultimate reason we give thanks to God is that He has provided for our greatest need through the person and work of Jesus the Christ! God loved you so much that He damned His own Son for your sin that you might be His child forever! Now that's a reason to be thankful!

Sadly, not all people are thankful for God's gift of salvation through Jesus. We are tempted to focus our desires on all the wrong things. That's why Jesus said: "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits His soul?" Simply put, you can satisfy every desire you have in life. You can have all the wealth, health, power and popularity you want. But if you don't repent of your sin and trust in Jesus you will lose it all when you die.

On the other hand, it doesn't matter if you're poor, sick, weak and persecuted unjustly. If you trust in Jesus

as your Savior from sin and death, then you have EVERYTHING! There is nothing that can separate you from God's love in Christ Jesus (see Romans 8:28-39). Therefore, don't only thank God for all the undeserved physical blessings He has given you. Even more, give thanks to God for the forgiveness of sin and eternal life that is yours through faith in Jesus!



Please read the next "His Word Is Truth" on Monday, Dec. 18th! Pastor Eckstein will discuss what God's Word teaches about the true meaning of Christmas.

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's webpage: www.concordiajt.org

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