

God's Goodness is Real – Psalm 92:1-4

On this Thanksgiving Sunday, our meditation is from Psalm 92:1-4. Let us hear these verses: **“It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; ²to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, ³to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. ⁴For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.”** Here ends the text for meditation.

Let us pray: *Dear Jesus, You are the Way of joy and gladness whereby we are led to heaven. You are the Truth of the universe, revealing Yourself to us with selfless sacrifice. You are the Life—in that You make life worth living here in time and hereafter in eternity. Dear Lord, may we never take You for granted! Amen*

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Dear Friends in Christ, and fellow redeemed:

Many years ago, as the story is told, a devout king was disturbed by the ingratitude of his royal court. He prepared a large banquet for them. When the king and his royal guests were seated, by prearrangement, a beggar walked in, sat down at the king's table, and gorged himself with food. Without saying a word, he then left the room.

The guests were furious and asked permission to seize the tramp and tear him limb from limb for his ingratitude. The king replied, "That beggar has done only once to an earthly king what each of you does three times each day to God. You sit there at the table and eat until you are satisfied. Then you walk away without recognizing God, or expressing one word of thanks to Him."

Webster's Dictionary defines ungratefulness as making a poor return, or showing no gratitude, and also thankless. In today's fast-paced world, most people seem to not have time for thankfulness especially to our Lord God. Work, traffic, family, soccer practice, doctor appointments, and countless other things are their main priorities. They seem to have no time to thank.

In the book of Genesis 40:23 it says **“Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.”** You may recall that the chief butler had offended the Pharaoh. He was put in prison, the same dungeon where Joseph was. Now Joseph was a Hebrew, accused of a crime he did not commit. But because the Lord was with him, the keeper of the prison had put all the prisoners under Joseph’s supervision.

On his first night in prison the Egyptian butler had a dream. He asked Joseph what it meant. Joseph said he would explain the dream with the help of God. Then Joseph interpreted the butler’s dream, telling him he would be released and restored by Pharaoh. The butler promised to mention Joseph’s innocence to the Pharaoh if he was released. Three days later Joseph’s interpretation of the dream came true, and the chief butler was released and restored to his place in the Pharaoh’s court.

Joseph was now sure that he had a friend in the court who would speak to the Pharaoh, and tell him of his innocence. But weeks passed into months, and there was no word from the chief butler. The butler could not have completely forgotten Joseph. But he was doubtlessly afraid to appeal his case to Pharaoh. It might anger Pharaoh and get him put back in prison. Or maybe there was another reason.

In any case the chief butler forgot Joseph. If Joseph had harmed the butler the man would not have forgotten him. But because Joseph had helped him, he quickly forgot. **“Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.”** (Genesis 40:23).

What a picture of ingratitude! How common it is for many to be unthankful! The butler was a man who forgot to be thankful. And in our first story the royal guests walk away at each meal without recognizing God, or expressing one word of thanks to Him."

That is an increasing characteristic of people in these days. Many peoples in the world acts foolishly. They forgot their benefactor, and neglect to give God thanks. They take their gifts for granted, and some of them is an inconvenience to use these gifts toward others.

What is really sad about these two stories is the fact that they describe all too clearly the way things often are today. Many people, including many Christians, have long forgotten the source of all the good things we enjoy in the world. We may not be struggling for our daily bread, and we may have comforts and possessions that the people in other countries would envy. But the truth is that our existence is empty and futile. Even if we have it all in this world, there are things we cannot avoid.

We cannot avoid the reality of death—and with physical death also comes the more terrible reality of eternal death, where there is emptiness and desolation greater than anything this world has ever known. Try as hard as we want, we cannot change the inevitable, for our hearts are desolate too, because of the sin that is so much a part of us. But someone comes among us who can make a difference.

In Jesus Christ, God has come to live among us, and to know the bitterness of our lives. He sees our struggles. He sees the emptiness of sin. And He is determined to change our wretched condition. It will take more than a few possessions, and food and cloth. It will require the very life of the Lord who comes to us. Jesus gives His life on a cross for us. He dies to take away our sin, and He rises to usher in the new life He has prepared for us.

But He also blesses us with every other blessing in life, too. The book of James 1:17 says “*Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*” And Paul says in Romans 8:32 “*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will He not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*”

Friends, we have every reason to give thanks today, for our God has blessed us. He is good to us. He has given us life as His people, and He provides for our lives day by day. He is our benefactor, who, as Luther said “*daily and richly provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.*” We are surrounded by the goodness of God. We have life, including eternal life as His gift to us.

That is why we should say, as did the psalmist: “**It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; ²to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, ³to the**

music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. ⁴For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.”
Oh, there are times when thanks flows from us.

When we experience God's miraculous grace, perhaps through healing after surgery or in some deliverance from earthly trouble, we will shout our thanks to our God. But are there not also times when we take God and His goodness for granted? We enjoy our daily bread, but never stop before our meals to acknowledge the goodness of the One who provides that bread each day.

We have the blessings of forgiveness, but we go on sinning, forgetful of God's power at work in us. We can fall into the temptation of worshipping only when it is convenient, or we get so caught up in the things of life that we let them become more important to us than the giver of all good and perfect gifts. We may complain that we want more than the good gifts that God has already chosen to give us, in accordance with His perfect wisdom and love.

In His Word, God makes it clear again and again just how much He loves us, and how much He wants to bless us. He wants to forgive us, no matter what we have done. He wants to give us life in its fullness, both now and eternally. But He also does not want us to take Him for granted.

It is not that He needs our thanks to boost His ego. It is just that when we take Him for granted, when we forget Him, we are in danger of thinking we can do without Him. But we cannot live without Him. Our very existence—including every beat of our hearts and every breath we take, happens only by His grace. Without Him, we are nothing.

The psalmist realized that God's goodness was worthy of ongoing praise and thanks. His works make us glad. His blessings give us life. He deserves our praise, morning, noon and night—and not just on Thanksgiving Sunday.

God wants to bless us. He has, and He will bless us, even beyond our ability to thank Him. In fact, we can never repay the debt of gratitude we owe. But we can remember Him and thank Him as we live in the blessings of the life He gives, and show through

our lives that we know and remember the source of all our blessings is from our Saviour and our God. Amen.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord, and Savior. Happy Thanksgiving to all. Amen.