

**Thanksgiving Service**  
November 20, 2011  
Amazing Grace Lutheran Church - Pastor Chip Wilke

Psalm 118:1

***“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.” (NIV)***

Where are the other nine? ***“Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?” (Luke 17).*** To me these words of Jesus are some of the saddest words in the Scriptures. They are also some of the most condemning words. For I’ve wondered how many times our God has said these words as He looked at worship on a Sunday morning. Where are the other nine? Do you think the God who provides us with all we have and all that we need each day is ever disappointed at night with how few return to Him in prayer with thanksgiving? Where are the other nine? I consider my own prayer life and all the times I ask for the Lord to “*give me, give me,*” but wonder how many times after I have received what I asked for I have failed to go back to Him with a “*thank you, thank you.*” Where are the other nine? Can you picture the Savior who shed His own blood and gave up His own life on the cross that we might be forgiven and saved from eternal death ever being saddened by what He sees in His redeemed people? How many days go by in which we walk in His grace and mercy, enjoy His gifts of love and forgiveness, bask in His peace without giving a thought to what Jesus has done for us or a single word of gratitude and praise? Where are the other nine?

Let me ask this: when someone gives us a gift what is the proper response? When someone does something wonderful for us what is the right thing to do? If our answer is to say and give thanks to them, then how much more dear friends are we to give thanks to our God who has made us who we are and has given us all we have! That’s why my prayer for all of us is that Thanksgiving means so much more to us than family, friends, food, and football. My prayer is Thanksgiving be a reminder to us that it is good and right for us to always give our God thanks and praise. My prayer is our hearts overflow with gratitude and our lips proclaim every day: ***“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.”***

These words, ***“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever,”*** begin and close Psalm 118, they are words scattered throughout the Psalms, and are in every verse of Psalm 136. They are words many families have used for years as part of a common table prayer. These are thirteen words that say a whole lot! They tell us first of all where we are to direct our thanks - to the Lord. The Lord is our God, the God of free and faithful love, the God who keeps all of His promises, the God who first of all is our Maker. As we consider what God our Creator and Father has done, we see many reasons to say thank you.

The children in confirmation class right now are memorizing the words of Luther’s first article. This article gives us some great reminders. God made us. He gives us our eyes, ears, our minds, and all our abilities. God also preserves us. He gives us our house, food, clothes, and all we need for our body and life. God also protects us by watching over us and working things out for our good. When was the last time we

thanked God for our ears or for the rain which God sends to make sure the crops grow? When was the last time we said thank you to God for our shoes or for His angels protecting care? ***“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.”***

These words tell us not only where to direct our thanks and praise, but also why we give thanks to the Lord. Simply put, He is good. God is good to you. God is good to me. He is good to us not because we have earned or deserved it, but only because He is a good and gracious God. God chose to have mercy on us. God’s ultimate goodness is seen not in the food we eat or the clothes we wear. Neither does God’s love shine brightest for us in the cars we drive or homes we live in. His best for us is not even the gifts of friends or family. God’s ultimate goodness and love is seen most clearly in the gift of His Son. This is God’s greatest gift to us - His Son conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. No where do we see God’s goodness to us more than in His Son who was crucified, died, and was buried. For Jesus did this to redeem us, lost and condemned creatures. Jesus purchased us with His holy precious blood, and won us from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

I would encourage you some time this week to read all of Psalm 118. There is a reason this Psalm is used on Easter Sunday. It is a Psalm that points to the Messiah through and through. It is quoted at least four times in the New Testament. It is a Psalm that focuses on the mighty acts of God on behalf of His people with the primary emphasis on what God has done for us in Christ. It is kind of neat to think about - Psalms 115-118 were used at the close of the Passover meal. Most believe then that this Psalm, Psalm 118, would have been the last hymn that Jesus sung with His disciples before leaving the upper room for the Mount of Olives. Think about Jesus singing these words: ***“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever,”*** right before Jesus heads into the Garden knowing He will be arrested, then abused, then crucified, then killed. Jesus had a perfectly thankful and trusting heart. That is why when Jesus offered His life on the cross it truly was the righteous for the unrighteous - to bring us to God.

Jesus’ victory over the grave means this wonderful thing for us - His love endures forever. There is no end to God’s mercy. The Holy Spirit convinces us of these truths. He connects us to Jesus through our baptisms. He strengthens us on our way. He forgives us our sins and connects us all to one another in God’s Holy Christian Church. He has made known to us the path of life and fills us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. He keeps us in the Christian faith and will raise us up on the Last Day to live forever with the Lord. Yes, consider what the Lord our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has done for us! His love endures forever.

Think about this for just a moment: what if we woke up today with only the blessings we thanked God for last night? What if we woke up today with only the things we thanked God for yesterday? I say this not to shame us for how often we fail to say thanks for all we have, but I ask this because this question really makes us think. When I think about that question it makes me count my blessings. I would be up all night long if I were to list all the things God has given me and all the things God has done for me. This question also makes me think about God’s greatest blessings to me. What could I truly not do without today? That answer is pretty easy. I couldn’t do without my Savior. I need Jesus every day. I need His love and His forgiveness. I need His strength. I need His salvation. For Jesus has had mercy on me a sinner. Jesus was washed me clean with

His blood from a disease far worse than leprosy - He has healed me from sin and death. And Jesus has done the same for you.

That is why we want to praise Jesus not just one day a year but every day. That's why each day we want to fall on our knees and give Him thanks. This is why we pray God keep working in our hearts so that instead of hearing our God ask: "***Where are the other nine?***" we might hear Him say: "***Rise and go; your faith has made you well.***" Have a wonderful Thanksgiving my friends! My prayer truly is these words be in your hearts and on your lips as you consider all the Lord has done for you: "***Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.***" Amen.