

Title: **A PSALM OF THANKSGIVING**

Text: Psalm 103:1-22

Subject: *Thanksgiving*

Date: Tuesday Evening — November 20, 2007

Tape # Z-42a

Readings: *Bob Poncer and Larry Brown*

Introduction:

It is my custom to bring a message on Thanksgiving on the Sunday or Tuesday before our National Day of Thanksgiving. Because Bro. Todd Nibert preached to you about Thanksgiving last Tuesday, I made up my mind to forego my custom this year; but I believe the Lord has led otherwise. I haven't yet had opportunity to hear Bro. Nibert's message. So I hope I will not be too repetitious in dealing with the same subject tonight; but I have a message by which the Lord has graciously spoken to my own heart, a message I have greatly needed in the past few days. I trust that God the Holy Spirit will bless it to your souls for Christ's sake. It is my heart's desire "*That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works*" (Psalm 26:7). The title of my message tonight is **A PSALM OF THANKSGIVING**. My text will be Psalm 103. Before we look at that psalm, let's look at couple other passages of Scripture as an introduction to my message.

1 CHRONICLES 16

"Give thanks unto the LORD" (v. 8). — Thanksgiving is always in season. Every child of Adam living upon

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this earth ought to lift his heart to God in heaven, giving thanks to him for his great mercy.

“Call upon his name” (v. 8). — The word “call” simply means “worship.” There is no thanksgiving to God until God is worshipped as God.

“Make known his deeds among the people” (v. 8). — Creation — Providence — Grace.

“Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him” (v. 9). — There is no better way to move our hearts to thanksgiving than by lifting our voices in songs of thanksgiving. — *“Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing”* (Psalm 100:2). Let our mouths be filled with laughter and our tongues with singing, that the heathen may say, *“The LORD hath done great things for them”* (Psalm 126:2).

“Talk ye of all his wondrous works” (v. 9). — Our songs should ever be filled with praise to our God for his wondrous works, *“teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* (Colossians 3:16). — When we speak of any event, any act, any blessing, any judgment, any promise, any joy, or any sorrow we are speaking of God’s works. We ought ever to be conscious of that fact, and acknowledge it with humble praise.

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“Glory ye in his holy name” (v. 10).

(Jeremiah 9:23-24) “Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: 24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.”

(1 Corinthians 1:30-31) But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

“Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD” (v. 10).

(Philippians 4:4-7) “Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

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Now look at verse 34. “**O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever**” (v. 34). — Our God is good. In fact, the very name “God” is an abbreviation of the word “good.” Our God is good in all his character, in all his Being and in all his works.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18 AV)

We have great cause to ever give thanks to God. If we trust Christ, in proportion to their faith in our Savior, we are content with him and with his wise and good his providence. And if we are truly content, we are thankful, thankful for all things and in all things (Ephesians 5:20; Philippians 4:6), knowing that “*all things are of God*” (2 Corinthians 4:18; Romans 11:36). Here, the Spirit of God specifically tells us that everything we experience, whatever we are experiencing at this present time, is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us; and the will of God (whatever it may be) is best.

“*In everything give thanks*” to God,
And celebrate His praise!

COLOSSIANS 1

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Thanksgiving is always in season. Every child of Adam living upon this earth ought to lift his heart to God in heaven, giving thanks to him for his great mercy. Thanksgiving is always in season for all men; but **if you and I are partakers of Christ, saved by the grace of God, and heirs of eternal life, our hearts should be filled with thanksgiving to our God continually. We ought to constantly give thanks to him, in all things and for all things.** — “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:20). In Colossians 1:12-14 the Holy Spirit gives us several specific reasons for thanksgiving.

(Colossians 1:12-14) “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: (13) Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: (14) In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins.”

Paul picks up this same subject again in chapter 3.

Colossians 3

(Colossians 3:15) “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

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Paul admonishes us to be thankful because thanksgiving is the will of God, because thanksgiving is the secret to living in peace in this world, and because thanksgiving is an act of faith that is most honoring to God. The natural man may express thanksgiving for what he has in his hand; but the believer is thankful for what he has in his heart and what he has in Christ, even if he has nothing in his hand. For all the blessings of grace freely bestowed upon us in Christ we should always be thankful to God.

*“Be ye thankful” for **God’s electing love**. — “Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praise unto his name, for it is pleasant. For the LORD hath chosen (you!) unto himself, and for his peculiar treasure” (Psalm 135:3-4). Election is cause for thanksgiving (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).*

*“Be ye thankful” for **your redemption** by the precious blood of Christ (Psalm 103:1-4). — “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people” (Luke 1:68). Our redemption is to be a matter of great, unceasing thanksgiving because it is special, particular and distinguishing (Revelation 5:9-10), effectual (Galatians 3:13), plenteous (Psalm 130:7) and eternal (Hebrews 9:12).*

*“Be ye thankful” for **the pardon and forgiveness of your sin** (Isaiah 43:25). To be redeemed is to be forgiven. God, through the blood of Christ, freely,*

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completely, constantly and eternally forgives all the sins of all who trust his dear Son.

“*Be ye thankful*” for **God’s adopting grace**. — “*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God*” (1 John 3:1).

“*Be ye thankful*” for **the Spirit’s effectual, irresistible regenerating grace**. — “*Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth*” (James 1:18). The new birth is the Spirit’s work. He gives us light, life and faith in Christ.

“*Be ye thankful*” for **the blessed victory that is ours through grace**. — “*Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Corinthians 15:57). In Christ we shall triumph over all our enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil. If we belong to God, we shall not fail to win this warfare. We shall persevere because we are preserved by grace. We shall be delivered from this body of death. And our very bodies shall be delivered from the grave. “*Be ye thankful!*”

As we gather with our families around our tables Thursday, let us lift up our hearts with gratitude, praise and thanksgiving to the Lord our God for all his blessings of grace and providence so freely, bountifully and relentlessly bestowed upon us in Christ. Perhaps, as you lead your family in worship, you might want to read

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Psalm 103. Let's look at this blessed, sweet psalm of thanksgiving together. In my opinion, this psalm of thanksgiving and praise is without rival in the literature of the world. This is the language of a man whose soul has been stirred to praise by his contemplation of God's goodness to him and his people.

PROPOSITION: In these twenty-two verses David teaches us to count our blessings day by day and bless the Lord for all the benefits of his mercy, love, and grace that are ours in Christ Jesus.

DIVISIONS:

David tells us that with thankful hearts...

1. We ought to eulogize God's holy name (v. 1).
2. We should recall the benefits of grace personally experienced (vv. 2-5).
3. We should extol our God for his works of mercy and grace bestowed upon his church collectively (vv. 6-18).
4. We ought to bless God for his glorious sovereignty and his universal providence (v. 19).
5. We ought to show forth God's praise in our lives as well as with our lips (vv. 20-22).

EULOGIZE GOD

We ought to eulogize God's holy name. — *“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy*

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name” (v. 1). — This is where thanksgiving must begin. God’s name represents who he is, his attributes. **Someone said**, “Before we can thank God for his blessings, we must thank him for his Being; and this is what the psalmist commands us to do.” — It is the Lord God himself who is to be well-spoken of, eulogized, praised and blessed. (Ephesians 1:3).

“*His holy name*” embraces every attribute of God’s person and nature. We are to bless God for who he is — the Lord God Almighty, full of grace and truth (Psalms 113:1-6; 115:1, 3; 117:1, 2; 118:1, 136:1-3; 138:1-2; 139:1-24.)

(Psalms 113:1-6) “Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD. (2) Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. (3) From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord’s name *is* to be praised. (4) The LORD *is* high above all nations, *and* his glory above the heavens. (5) Who *is* like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, (6) Who humbleth *himself* to behold *the things that are* in heaven, and in the earth!”

(Psalms 115:1) “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth’s sake.”

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(Psalms 117) “O Praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. (2) For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever. Praise ye the LORD.”

(Psalms 118:1) “O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*: because his mercy *endureth* for ever.”

(Psalms 136:1-3) “O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*: for his mercy *endureth* for ever. (2) O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy *endureth* for ever. (3) O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.”

(Psalms 138:1-2) “I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. (2) I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.”

It is with my soul that I must bless, eulogize, praise and speak well of the Lord my God — “*Bless the Lord, O my Soul!*”

True thanksgiving and praise is a heart work. David stirs up his soul to bless God. Praise arises not from our lips, nor from our brains, but from our souls, our hearts, our inmost beings. — “*God is Spirit; and they who worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24).

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RECALL HIS BENEFITS

In order to stir up our souls to bless the Lord, **we should recall all he benefits of his grace which we have personally experienced** (vv. 2-5).

(Psalms 103:2-5) “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: (3) Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; (4) Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; (5) Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

One of the evidences of our depravity is our horrible tendency of forgetting blessings experienced. Whether in times of failure or success, we tend to overlook the blessings our God has lavished upon us. Therefore, the psalmist writes, “*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.*”

Illustration: *The Remembrance Room* (Isaiah 51:1)

(Isaiah 51:1) “Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock *whence* ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit *whence* ye are digged.”

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William Law, in his “*Serious Call To a Devout and Holy Life*” writes, “Would you know who is the greatest saint in the world? It is not he who prays most or fasts most; it is not he who gives most alms, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice, but he who is always thankful to God, who wills everything that God willeth, who receives everything as an instance of God’s goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it.” — (Ephesians 5:18-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

(Ephesians 5:18-20) “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; (19) Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; (20) Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) “Rejoice evermore. (17) Pray without ceasing. (18) In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

In verses 3, 4 and 5, David mentions **five blessings** of grace to his own soul, which he had personally experienced. By recalling these benefits he stirs up his soul to bless God.

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1. “**Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.**”

- Our God is a God of forgiveness. (Psalm 130:4).
- God forgives me of all my sins!
- God’s forgiveness of our sins is a continual, perpetual act of grace through the blood of Christ.

Can you say with David, — “*Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered! Blessed is the man whom the Lord will not impute sin*” (Romans 4:8). If you can, then you have great reason to bless the Lord this day, “*who forgiveth all thine iniquities.*” — Past! — Present! — Future! — Sins of Thought! — Sins of Heart! — Sins of Deed!

2. “**Who healeth all thy diseases.**”

That person who is blessed of God with good health, or who has been healed of sickness, is truly blessed of God; but this text does not refer to physical health. None of us will be healed of all our physical diseases until we enter into our heavenly inheritance.

Here David is talking about spiritual health. Those who are forgiven of all sin are also healed in their souls of all their diseases and restored to spiritual life. (1 John 1:9). We are forgiven in the court of heaven and cleansed in our souls by the blood of Christ and the grace of God. (2 Corinthians 5:17).

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Matthew Henry wrote, “The corruption of nature is the sickness of the soul; it is its disorder, and threatens death. This is cured in sanctification; when sin is mortified, the disease is healed.”

3. **“Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.”**

Our redemption by Christ is the cause of our forgiveness and our regeneration. But redemption is not known until healing grace is experienced. Here it is placed after healing because it is experienced in that order.

- Christ redeemed us at Calvary (Galatians 3:13).
- He obtained eternal redemption for us when he entered once into the holy place with his own blood (Hebrews 9:12).
- This redemption is applied to us by the Holy Spirit in the new birth through faith (Hebrews 9:14).
- And the power of redemption is experienced continually in the soul (Psalm 40:1, 2; Psalm 130: 1, 8).

(Psalms 40:1-2) “I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. (2) He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.”

(Psalms 130:1) “Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.”

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(Psalms 130:8) “And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

4. “**Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercy.**”

Christ has made us kings and priests unto God; and he has crowned us as kings with God’s constant favor — Lovingkindness and Tender Mercy! — “*Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life!*” This is the honor God gives to all his saints. This is the crown of glory which we shall wear forever!

5. “**Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles.**”

Nothing but the gracious favor of God in Christ can satisfy the soul. Only Christ can satisfy the needs of my soul. Only Christ can satisfy the desires of my soul. Christ who satisfies my soul continually promises to renew my youth like the eagle’s.

This is a promise of long life — Eternal, Heavenly Life! The eagle may live to be more than 100 years old; and the old bird soars gracefully in the heavens where she is at home. Here, we are as babes in the womb. Life for the believer begins at death! When I die — Then I will live!

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This is also a promise of constant renewal. As God replenishes the eagle's feathers, making them new every year at the time of molting, so he recovers his saints from their decays, and fills them with new life and joy (Isaiah 40:31; Job 33:24-28).

(Job 33:24-28) "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. (25) His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: (26) He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness. (27) He looketh upon men, and *if any* say, I have sinned, and perverted *that which was* right, and it profited me not; (28) He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light."

(Isaiah 40:31) "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint."

Even in old age, grace renews! — Caleb!

"My soul, hast thou sinned? God in Christ pardons thy sins. — Art thou diseased in body and soul, by reason of sin? God in Christ healeth all thy diseases. — Art thou ruined and undone

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in all the circumstances of nature, by reason of the fall? It is God, in Christ, that redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with all that is needful for thee in grace. — Art thou feeling decays, and is the event of mortality hastening upon thee? God in Christ will renew thee, as the eagle is renewed in old age. — Precious, precious salvation! And all eternally secured, and made certain, from a God in Christ.” — *Robert Hawker*

BLESSINGS UPON OTHERS

As we recall God’s benefits of grace personally experienced, **we ought to extol our God for his works of mercy and grace bestowed upon his church collectively** (vv. 6-18).

(Psalms 103:6-18) “The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. (7) He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. (8) The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. (9) He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever. (10) He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. (11) For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward them that fear him. (12) As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our

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transgressions from us. (13) Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the LORD pitieth them that fear him. (14) For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust. (15) *As for* man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. (16) For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. (17) But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; (18) To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."

In thanksgiving and praise God's saints do not act selfishly. **We are thankful for what the Lord has done for us personally; but we are thankful for God's blessings upon one another, upon our brothers and sisters in Christ, too.** — "*We are bound to give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord!*" We are all fed at the same table and share the same blessings.

Illustration: The Conversion of Other Sinners
The Conversion of Another's Child
God's blessings upon Another Church

"Truly, God is good to Israel!" — In verses 6-18, David tells us of God's goodness to his whole church. This is cause for thanksgiving!

- God protects and defends all his people. — "*The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed*"(v. 6).

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- The Lord has revealed himself to us by his servants. — *“He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel”* (v. 7). — The ways of his grace and providence. — The acts (designs) of his purpose.
- Truly, the Lord our God is a God of mercy, love and grace. — *“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy — He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us”* (vv. 8-14).

He is longsuffering and patient. He is great in mercy and full of pity, remembering that we are but dust!

Notice **whom he pities** — *“them that fear him”* — Notice **how he pities** — *“As a father pitieth his children.”*

- The ignorant he teaches!
- The weak he strengthens!
- The froward he corrects!
- The sick he comforts!
- The fallen he helps!
- The erring he forgives!
- The wronged he defends!

Notice **why he pities** — *“He knowest our frame. He remembereth that we are dust!”*

Though we are but sinful, withering flesh, God’s covenant mercy endures forever. (vv. 15-18).

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Illustration: David (2 Samuel 23:5)

SOVEREIGN PROVIDENCE

We never lack reasons for praise. — **We ought always to bless God for his glorious sovereignty and his universal providence** (v. 19).

(Psalms 103:19) “The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.”

The Lord has prepared, or established his throne. His throne is the throne of absolute sovereignty. And his throne is the throne of grace — the Mercy-seat! He has prepared his throne in the heavens — Out of Sight and Out of Reach! — “*His kingdom ruleth over all*” (Daniel 4:35-37)

THANKS-LIVING

If we would truly bless and praise our God, **we must show forth his praise in our lives as well as with our lips** (vv. 20-22). Thanksgiving is really thanks-living.

(Psalms 103:20-22) “Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. (21) Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye

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ministers of his, that do his pleasure. (22) Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.”

In these verses, David calls upon the angels of God, those heavenly ministers of his throne, to join him in praise to God. He even calls upon all the works of God to join in the holy, blessed work. In doing so, he shows us how to truly bless and praise God, how to truly give thanks to him.

- Like the angels of God, we must be obedient to his word (v. 20)
- Like those heavenly ministers, we must yield to and serve his will (v. 21; Romans 12:1-2).
- Like all his creation, we must serve the purpose of our spiritual creation, doing his works (v. 22).

This is the essence of Thanksgiving. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:8-10).

APPLICATION

Thanksgiving is more than the mouthing of words, or even the saying of prayers. It involves...

Eulogizing God’s Name.

Remembering God’s Grace.

Recognizing of God’s Goodness.

Acknowledging of God’s Dominion.

Devotion to God’s Will.

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If our thanksgiving is genuine, we will cry with David, “*Bless the Lord, O my soul,*” and we will go forth to obey his Word, do his will and perform his work.

Oh, my blessed Redeemer, my glorious God! Truly, you have redeemed our souls from death and healed all our iniquities. You have been, are, and forever shall be our salvation from all sin and woe. “*Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood!*” Your love, your mercy, your pity, your compassion are as infinitely higher than the pity of a father for his children, as the heavens are higher than the earth. Help us, O our gracious God, by the sweet constraining influences of your Spirit, to love you, to praise you, and to live unto and upon you forever! Let everything that has being praise God forever! Children of God, sinners saved by his grace, you who are the redeemed of the Lord, declare his praise with thanksgiving! Bless the Lord, O my soul!

Amen.

And Happy Thanksgiving to You All!