

Sermon October 9, 2016 – Thanksgiving

Let There Be Thanksgiving

Selected Verses



Dear loved ones in Christ.
Happy Thanksgiving!!

I'm glad you are in Church today, joining others as the Lord brings us to the Mountain top experience, as he gathers us for worship. And as part of the mountain top experience hear God's word through the sermon. However today, it would not be your typical Thanksgiving sermon. You know, a

teaching that you and I are to express thanksgiving to God for all his gifts. Thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth: food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers . . . and the list goes on, as Luther draws it out in his explanation of the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread."

And as the economy is in our province and certainly in our city, we are just grateful that we do have something to eat. Of course a typical Thanksgiving includes the work and labor of farmers and all those involved in farming. But today I would like to draw you attention to something else.

Jesus says in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 4 and verse 4, "But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

On this day too, we are to give thanks above all for God's words, words of forgiveness and of a new life. Words of peace and restoration!

Words that tell us of the provision God gives through Jesus Christ, who suffered, died, and rose for you and me. But on this day we also give thanks because His word has reached us even through the midst of uncertainty.

Do you ever wonder how did God's word reached to us even today? How the Church continues even despite uncertainty?

This morning I would like to show you a clip from a video report of the work of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, which is where we come from.

Lets watch...

I know this is a long video which in encourage you to watch it all, in the sermon outline for today you will find the link that takes you to the video (<https://vimeo.com/158539106>). But as we watched and heard the beginning of the Lutheran Church in America, we do give thanks to God, although humble and yet tumultuous beginning, the Lord prospered the work of the Church so that the Gospel in its purity can reach us, after all man should not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

It is exciting to be part of a heritage, of God’s work, of His kingdom. Isn’t it, and most importantly we are so thankful that God’s word has come to us. And as a way of Thanksgiving God wants that his words continue from this point on, that the message of forgiveness, of salvation and of light be preached to those who are in darkness, those who are lost.

It was the effort and dedication of the church in responding to the call of the Holy Spirit that church grow and reached even to us today, venturing and sailing through great storms for sure. And for that we need to be thankful to God. Let’s see what the Church did.... (video)

Wow, in thanksgiving God’s people did not give up even when the church begun to decline back then, even when people didn’t feel the church had a future, they trusted God for their future and believed that God restored them to a new life. And in thanksgiving followed God’s calling to be a voice to the rest of the world. Now, what about us here today? Are we trusting that God will direct us in Thanksgiving to be his voice?

Or, are growing complacent and taking faith, heritage, God’s for granted?

On facebook, there was the conversation of two friends who were asked if they were Lutherans.

“We’re Lutheran,” said Anderson.

Being Lutheran rocks” said Hansen, “because you get to drink and smoke and still stay out of Hell.”

"You can have sex before marriage," said Anderson, "still go drink wine, pillage, plunder. It's great. Being Lutheran is awesome. It's part of our Norwegian heritage. All is forgiven."

Asked if there's anything Lutherans can't do, Anderson said, "That's a good question, because I've been testing that for a long time." (Deadliest Catch's Sig Hansen and Jake Anderson)

What? Is that what being Lutheran means? Of course not, or at least in principle, but in practice is something else. But that’s not new. Did you hear what the apostle Paul said in today’s epistle reading?

He points out that good works do not make you clean; only the good work by the Father in and through Jesus did and does this. Bad works, however, can undermine your faith in Jesus. You can lose your faith in Jesus!

Hear again what he says: “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. ⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

Unclean actions such as sexual immorality, impurity, crude joking, and so on not only undermines our spirituality but kills thanksgiving in our hearts, and more, prevents us from being God’s voice of light in our world of darkness.

So, are we guilty of “filthiness,” of speech, “foolish talk,” “crude joking” (v 4a)? Are we guilty of sexual immorality? Here is the good news. First, let us remember that we are God’s children, baptized and bearing His name. We have been freed from sins and death, let us therefore not go back to what we were before.

And second, if you are guilty, come to Christ. He will forgive your sins, he will restore you, he will declare you clean, by the works of Christ, by the blood of Christ that washes away your sins. You haven’t known Christ? Today is the day, not only he is the one who provides you with food, clothing and all you need to sustain your physical body, but and most importantly he provides you with His word that saves you.

And when you are saved, when you see what God does in your life, Paul says give thanks. “But instead let there be thanksgiving!” (v 4b)

Are you thankful on this day? Are you thankful not only for food, but most importantly for God’s word that comes to free us? You know both are in hand with one another. Sadly many realize it. It is God through Christ who provides all for our sustenance, beginning with the forgiveness of our sins, and showing us the path to a good life, encouraging us to worship God instead of the things of the world.

But even on this Thanksgiving Day we do have good news. Not only because once again our farmers report a good crop, but because our sins are forgiven.

Because we are reminded once again of the true Gospel that in Christ we have the forgiveness of our sins, that in Christ we are made new

people, people full of thanksgiving, hope and action, ready to be involved in the work of the church as priest of the most Haigh, as his servants.

For what we receive to sustain our bodies thanks be to God. For His life giving Gospel thanks be to God.

In his name, amen.