

An Order of Worship for the Home

November 26, 2020

Thanksgiving Day

This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak and declare God's grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can worship with you by phone.

There is an "offering prayer" included in this outline. As we shelter in place, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit www.calvaryslz.org to give online.

Invocation

Reader 1: Oh give thanks to the Lord!
Reader 2: For he is good. For his mercy endures forever!
Reader 1: We gather in his name this Thanksgiving Day.
Reader 2: We gather in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Together: Amen.

Psalm 95: 1-7a

Reader 1: ¹ May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,
² that your way may be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.
Reader 2: ³ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!
Reader 1: ⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.
Reader 2: ⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!
Reader 1: ⁶ The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, shall bless us.
Reader 2: ⁷ God shall bless us;
let all the ends of the earth fear him!

Confession & Absolution

Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in faith. Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered. (From the order of Compline, Lutheran Service Book p.254)

Christian Confessing: I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed by my fault, by my own fault, by my own most grievous fault; wherefore I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

Christian Responding: The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins.

Together: Amen

Deuteronomy 8:1-10

¹ The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers. ² And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. ³ And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. ⁴ Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. ⁵ Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you. ⁶ So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. ⁷ For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, ⁹ a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰ And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Luke 17:11-19

¹¹ On the way to Jerusalem [Jesus] was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance ¹³ and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." ¹⁴ When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶ and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸ Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"¹⁹ And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Message

Humble Enough to Give Thanks

Our reading from Deuteronomy closed with this line, "you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you." Blessing God means giving thanks. Our prayers of thanks are the only blessing we can offer to our God, who gives us all good things. Here's the question I'd like to ask:

What does it take to give thanks?

We teach our children to give thanks. When someone gives a gift at a birthday, or Christmas, or any other time, we encourage our children to say thank you. Sometimes we instruct them to write it out. I remember my parents made me write thank you notes to everyone who gave me a gift at confirmation. That was torture for a 14-year-old.

Even seminarians are taught to say thank you. At the St. Louis seminary students could receive groceries at a food pantry on our campus. The pantry received donations from individuals and churches across the country. When students would shop, the “check-out” involved taking 3 slips of paper with names and addresses on them. You were expected to write thank you notes in exchange for the groceries you received.

Is this what it takes? Does somebody have to tell us when to say thank you? Is that why we set aside a day and label it Thanksgiving? For that matter, is giving thanks simply a matter of good manners, or being polite? Or, is it something else?

What does it take to give thanks?

Deuteronomy 8 points to an experience. Moses recounts what God had done for Israel, and how God formed them through their experiences. Then, he looks ahead to what was promised.

God had *disciplined* his people.

the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you (Deuteronomy 8:2)

Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you. (Deuteronomy 8:5)

Discipline is not punishment. Discipline looks forward. Discipline is intended to shape, and form, and grow a person. God disciplined his people so they would grow and mature. Israel was intended to be a certain type of people. Instead of a people shaped by their own desires, or a nation molded to look like others around them, Israel would become something else. God’s discipline was growing them in the image of their heavenly Father.

First, we notice Moses pointing to the *discipline* of God. Next, pay attention to how God impressed on Israel their *dependence* on him.

And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 8:3)

These words are not about distinguishing manna from common bread. The point is the source. Whether manna, or San Francisco sourdough, God is the provider of food. His word created, and his word sustains, and his word provides all that we need. God provided food for his people in a miraculous way so that they would trust him to provide more than food. Israel was *unlearning* the belief that they needed to rely on themselves.

Moses looked at 40 years in the wilderness and asked Israel to see God's loving *discipline*, and to remember their *dependence* on him. Then, he looked ahead to an *abundance* which was promised to them.

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. (Deuteronomy 8:7-9)

They would be blown away by the land God was providing! The gift God had in store for them was amazing. The land where they were headed was an excellent land, filled with everything they would need.

How would Israel respond to this gift? That's the final verse of our reading – the place we began this message.

And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. (Deuteronomy 8:10)

Thanks comes at the end of this reading, but it takes the rest of Moses' story to get there. I asked earlier, what does it take to give thanks? In the context of these verses, it takes discipline and it takes dependence. Israel had to be humble enough to give thanks for God's abundance.

What does it take? Humility. Moses told Israel, God has good things in store for you. If you remember what you've learned these 40 years, you'll be humble enough to give thanks.

So, how about you?

Are you humble enough to give thanks?

Have you learned *discipline* from your God? Can you look to past hardships, and even present challenges, and learn limits? Remember, discipline is not punishment, discipline is instruction. What does God's word tell you in the midst of challenges you face? What has he taught you? What is he teaching you now?

If our difficulties were all we had, we would only know God as a punishing overlord. But we have God's word which reveals his grace, and his patience, and the fact that he suffered too. We have his instruction which transforms the crush of punishing circumstance into a discipline which brings forth patience, endurance, character, and hope.

...we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (Romans 5:3-5)

Are you humble enough to give thanks?

We are prepared for thanksgiving by God's *discipline*. We are also prepared as we come to terms with our *dependence* on him.

We don't like to think about our dependence on anyone or anything. We're Westerners. We're Americans. We love to remind ourselves of our independence. We celebrate the self-made woman or man. Culturally, we've defined freedom as the removal of all rules and boundaries.

But that's not freedom at all. Removing all external definitions only means we're forced to define ourselves, and our world. We have to prove our worth. We have to prove our ability. We have to supply for our own needs. What happens when we fall short? If I'm the master of my own destiny, what does it say about me when my chosen destiny collapses?

Every bit as much as Israel, you and I are dependent on God. Anything and everything we have is an undeserved gift from him.

You do not live on bread alone, but on every word which comes from the Lord your God. I could also say, you do not live on career alone. You do not live on retirement planning alone. You do not live on home equity alone. You do not live on your successes... or your failures. Instead, you live *dependent* on God alone.

Are you humble enough to give thanks?

For Israel, the affirmative answer was the result of *discipline*, *dependence* and *abundance*. Along with the discipline and dependence, God promised abundant blessing in the land to which he would lead them. God has promised abundant blessing for you too. Jesus is the key to that *abundance*.

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
(John 10:10)

In Jesus, you receive this promise of abundant life. Jesus did not require the discipline that you and I need to grow and mature. Yet, he became a human being and subjected himself to this discipline. He took on the limits of a human life and made himself dependent on his Father. He allowed death to overtake him, relying to the very end on the goodness of his Father's will. He cried out "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" yet remained dependent on his Father's decisions and action.

As he rose from the dead, his new life was revealed. This is the abundant life which he offers to you. This is a life with no end. This is a life of true freedom – a freedom which finds definition in its full dependence on God. You depend on God to be what you were meant to be. This is the life to which all of God's discipline points.

This is the life you will have eternally. It's a life which has begun in you already.

Are you humble enough to give thanks? Yes, you are!

You give thanks following the pattern Moses laid out for Israel. You give thanks following that same model, because the model is not based on Israel. The pattern comes from your God.

Your heavenly Father disciplines you in his love.

You depend on him for all things.

The abundant life of Christ is your life now – and for eternity.

So, yes, you give thanks.

You give thanks as one *disciplined*.

You give thanks as one *dependent*.

You give thanks as one *abundantly blessed*.

In Christ, you are humble enough to give thanks.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever... so does his abundant blessing for you in Christ! Amen.

Offering Prayer

If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.
Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.
Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.
Reader 2: Receive our offerings.
Together: Receive us as your own.

Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord's Prayer together.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.
Amen.

Blessing (Psalm 107:1 [NKJV] and Numbers 6:24-26)

Reader 1: The Lord bless you and keep you.
Reader 2: The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
Reader 1: The Lord look upon you with favor...
Reader 2: And give you peace.
Together: Amen.

Reader 1: Oh give thanks to the Lord!
Reader 2: For he is good. For his mercy endures forever!
Reader 1: We go with grateful hearts this Thanksgiving Day!
Reader 2: We give thanks to our God!

As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at www.calvaryslz.org. We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.