

Thanksgiving Day

Text: Psalm 34:1-8

Theme: Taste and See that the Lord Is Good

Thanksgiving is a day when we recount the many blessings that God has given to us. We remember a lot of good things. We can really taste and see that the Lord is good when we taste and see the turkey, stuffing, cranberries, pumpkin pie, and all the other things that make our Thanksgiving Dinner special. We are thankful for family, friends, health, work, and all the bounty that God has giving to us, including the vacations we had in the past year, good food, and all the electronic gadgets that we love to play with.

We can all remember some good things in the past year, but not everything was good. For many people 2019 was a lousy year. There were deaths of loved ones, health problems, financial problems, family issues, and even trouble that we got ourselves into. There is good and bad in every person's life. In this Psalm David encourages us to always seek refuge in the Lord, and we will taste and see that the Lord is good.

I. Life does not always go smoothly, even for Christians.

That is not what we often hear today. The biggest false teaching in our day is something called the "Prosperity Gospel." It basically says that if you really trust in God and support a preacher who has the "favor of the Lord" your life will go great. You will not get sick, you will have plenty of money, you will have everything that you ever dreamed of. To show that they have the favor of the Lord, the pastors dress in expensive suits and drive fancy cars. If you have troubles it's because of your lack of faith in God and because you are not supporting a preacher who has the "favor of the Lord" as you should. It is the great lie and deception of our day. It leads many Christians to despair that God must be punishing them when they go through tough times, and it makes a few preachers very rich that they can afford million dollar homes, designer suits, and expensive cars.

But even the greatest of believers have gone through hard times. David went through some very hard times. He did have the favor of the Lord when God had the prophet Samuel anoint him to be the future king of Israel. David was blessed in many ways. He delivered God's people in his epic battle against Goliath. He became best friends with King Saul's son Jonathan. The king's daughter Michal fell in love with him, and they were married. But Saul became jealous of David. He tried to kill him in many ways. Saul would send David to battle against the Philistines, hoping that the Philistines would do him in. One day when David was playing his lyre for Saul, Saul hurled his spear at David twice, but David was able to evade him. Now Saul was pursuing David with his army, and David was on the run.

It was that way for all of the people of God in the Bible. Abraham waited for 25 years for God's promise of a son to be fulfilled. All of the prophets were persecuted. Several were killed. Paul was thrown out of cities, imprisoned, stoned, and eventually martyred. Mary, whom the angel said had found favor with God, watched her son die on a cross.

Every Christian has gone through hard times. There are times when we suffer because we are a Christian. There are people who want to make our lives as miserable as possible because of our connection with Christ. Other times, bad things happen to us in this fallen world. There is not a single person who has a trouble-free life. Later on this Psalm even says, "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous.*" But then it also goes on to say, "*Be the Lord delivers him out of them all.*" (vs 19) It is important to realize that when you go through hard times it is not because God is angry with you, that you have sinned or that God has forgotten you. There are times when in his wisdom, God tests our faith in some very strong ways. As in the case of David and Bathsheba there are also some times when we do sin and get ourselves into needless trouble, but as with David God also rescues us from our sins.

II. There are some big temptations when we go through those difficult days.

We might be tempted to despair. We worry and fret as if there is no hope. Like Israel in the desert we might grumble and complain as soon as any trial comes. We might be tempted to think that God is punishing us. We might be tempted to doubt that God is watching over us or even that He loves us.

Like David and others in the Bible, we might be tempted to do some ungodly things in the hope that they will help. You might remember that Abraham and Sarah decided to help God by having a child through Sarah's maid. David ran to one of the Philistine kings to seek help. When he was there, he realized that he got himself into even more danger, so he pretended to go mad, so that the king drove him out. (1 Sa 21:10ff) It is so tempting to doubt God or think that it's all up to us.

III. But it is a blessing when we trust in the Lord.

Through all of the trials that he went through, and David had a lot of them, David learned that he could always trust in the Lord. Those trials only strengthened his trust that God is always near, and He is always faithful. When he sinned, he found peace in the forgiveness of his sins, that God had washed them all away by His grace. He learned how blessed it is to take refuge in the Lord. He had tasted and seen that the Lord is good. He fills our lives with many good things, forgives our sins, delivers us from many evils, and puts us on the path that leads to eternal life.

The same is true for us. We might have had some troubling times in this past year. There might be things that happened years ago that trouble you to this day. There are regrets that we all have. We have done things for which we are ashamed, and it's hard to let that guilt go. But David teaches us to find refuge in the Lord. Look to Christ and how He loved you so much that He shed His blood on that cross for the forgiveness of your sins. Think of how God got you through those troubling times. Thank Him that He was with you and helped you. Let that experience be a reminder to you that God will never leave you or forsake you, no matter what you are going through.

Thanksgiving is a day when we taste and see that the Lord is good. We have a lot of great things to eat. We thank God for the blessings that He has poured out in our lives. But also thank Him for the times when you could have despaired, but He was there for you. The afflictions of the righteous might be many, but God promises to deliver us from them all. Find refuge in Him when the regrets

and the trials of this life burden you, and you will taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is everyone who finds refuge in Him. Amen.

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Prayer of the Church

Thanksgiving Day

Heavenly Father, we come before you on this Thanksgiving day with grateful hearts for all of your goodness to us, for the forgiveness of our sins, for the bounty that you have given to us, for the promise of eternal life, and for the times when you have been a refuge in all kinds of trial, O taste and see that the Lord is good,

Blessed are all who find refuge in Him

We thank you for the good fruits of the earth by which we are fed and nourished, and for generosity, that we may share the bounty of your mercy with all those in need:
O taste and see that the Lord is good.,

Blessed are all who find refuge in Him

We thank you for the Church and all the people of God, and pray that we will live in the unity of the Spirit and love one another as our Savior has loved us

O taste and see that the Lord is good,

Blessed are all who find refuge in Him

We thank you for the homes in which your people dwell, and pray that they may be places of blessing and love where husbands and wives honor their vows of faithfulness to one another and nurture the children you have given to their care,

O taste and see that the Lord is good.,

Blessed are all who find refuge in Him

We remember the sick and injured [*especially* _____], the dying and those who mourn [*especially* _____], and for those in their last days, that the Lord may lead them through death to everlasting life [*especially* _____],

O taste and see that the Lord is good.,

Blessed are all who find refuge in Him

We pray for an end to wars and violence, for the service men and women who preserve the peace, for the government and those who lead us, and for the cause of justice among the nations and all those oppressed,

O taste and see that the Lord is good.,

Blessed are all who find refuge in Him

Into your hands, we commend...