

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Tomorrow most of us will gather with family and friends...loved ones who are very dear to us and we will give thanks for them and all the goodness that beholds our gatherings as well as the goodness that fills our tables and our stomachs. President Roosevelt in 1939 declared that the third Thursday of November be a Thanksgiving holiday. But do we see it just as a Thanksgiving holiday or do we consider it a *day* of Thanksgiving...a day to reflect and give thanks for all we have been blessed with?

This day is an American holiday and not a sacred holiday. Our Thanksgiving holiday is what we choose to make it, there are no strict Biblical mandates that regulate the day...it doesn't matter which NFL teams are scheduled to play, there are no dietary or menu regulations, just simply a Thanksgiving holiday that is marked by a very lavish turkey supper. But President Roosevelt's official proclamation calls for "a day of general thanksgiving." The church already has a day such as this, it's called Sunday, and we gather to give thanks and remember the grace and mercy we receive through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. This day too, is also marked with a feast...a feast that is not as physically opulent as our turkey dinners but much more magnificent and meaningful.

But all of that aside, tomorrow is not just Thanksgiving Day, it is a day of thanksgiving...a day set aside to give thanks for all we have been given or all that we have been blessed with. Ironically, we are on a tear to the markets and grocery stores to make sure we have a turkey and all that goes with it. But in our appointed Gospel we have Jesus telling us, do not worry about what you will eat or what you will drink. But on this day of thanksgiving...the meal is the focus...this is exactly what we do, we worry about the meal...certain sections and isles of the grocery store look like a war zone. Obviously, we do worry.

Jesus also asks tonight in this appointed lesson..."Is not life more than food?" Look...I am not complaining about the trappings of Thanksgiving. I love getting together with family and friends around a luxurious meal, but we never hear about the trappings of Thanksgiving like we hear at Christmas time and how the trappings of Christmas get in the way of that holiday. But for tonight in this prayer office, I just want to focus on the meaning of the day...a day of thanksgiving...a day to be thankful that we have the gift and the grace to be able to sit down with friends and family and be thankful for all we have been given...thankful for things such as the very next breath we take or the opulent meal that we gather around... and to give thanks for the ability to be doing this. Listen again to the end of our Gospel lesson:

<sup>31</sup>Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" ..... <sup>32b</sup>indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup>But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

In other words, all that will be in our midst tomorrow will be given to us from God, may we then tomorrow...be joyous and be thankful for the blessings given to us. May we give thanks to God for all we have been blessed with. Perhaps in a fleeting moment tomorrow we may remember not so much the words but the sentiment found in the Prayer of the Day for the Sixth Sunday of Easter:

O God, from whom all good things come: Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to think those things which are right, and by your goodness help us to do them; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

Our meal tomorrow will perish but we will not because we will gather again on Sunday around another meal of thanksgiving that will endure for all eternity and promises that we too will endure for all eternity in God's Glorious Kingdom.

So as we gather this night and tomorrow may we continue to rejoice in the Lord always not just in prayer and supplication for our loved ones but for all who like each one of us are in need of God's grace and mercy...and through Jesus Christ we are all assured of that promise of forgiveness and life made known in the Good News of the Gospel and in a humble feast of a simple piece of bread and sip of wine. As we give our thanks tomorrow, may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen*

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<sup>1</sup> *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House. 1978. Page 22.