

Thanksgiving 2016



O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

-Psalm 107.1

There may be many reasons we celebrate thanksgiving as a nation or as individuals. We celebrate our heritage as a pilgrim people who sought religious freedom. We celebrate the strength and joy of family. We celebrate the liberty of our republic, still so vibrant – even as evidenced in political disagreement and conflict. We celebrate our core values of “liberty and justice for all.”

We may even celebrate simply because it is a holiday – a day away from work – a day of family, friends, feasting, and football. We may celebrate because it traditionally signals for us the beginning of the “holiday season” and inside our minds and hearts we remember the simple joys of childhood – parades and lights, snowfall and sled rides, trees and trains, and the hopes and dreams of just the right gift from Santa in less than a month.

Yes, there may be countless more reasons we celebrate thanksgiving as a nation or as individuals...but there is only one reason we celebrate as a people of faith: because we have known the goodness and steadfast love of the Lord. But how is it we have come to know this goodness, and more importantly, this *steadfast love* of the Lord?

Is it because we have read about it in the scriptures? No, not really. Is it because someone has told us of their own experience of God’s goodness and steadfast love. No, this is not likely how we have truly come to know it either. We have come to know the steadfast love of the Lord as the response to our own cries in times of trouble. In other words, only because we have been through some crisis, some great emptiness, some trauma or despair and in that experience cried out to God from the depth of our need and the meagerness of our faith that we have also experienced the deliverance of the Lord.

The declaration of Psalm 107.1 (and other similar psalms) became an important way in which the Israelites came to understand their relationship with God after returning from half a century of exile in Babylon. Throughout that long period of displacement – both geographical and spiritual – they came to understand that God’s goodness and steadfast love were not dependent upon their immediate circumstances. God’s goodness and steadfast love had been with them even in the hardest and emptiest times. The declaration, “O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever” became the way in which they could understand God’s deliverance of them after such a long-delayed time as was their exile.

The reason these ancient people of faith celebrated their own thanks-giving time and again was simply because of the nature of God: "...good...his steadfast love endures forever." God's goodness and love for his people is unchanging.

Therefore, as a people of faith, we give thanks to the LORD, because we have experienced God's deliverance in Jesus Christ and we know that in Jesus the goodness and steadfast love of God is with us every day.

"O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever."

I hope you have a blessed Thanksgiving and are able to join in our community Thanksgiving Service on Tuesday, November 22, 2016 at 7:00 PM at the Christian Missionary Alliance Church (yes, the day has been changed for this year).

By His Grace,

Pastor Tom

Pastor Tom Carr