

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

The portion of Scripture before us today is found in the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy the eighth chapter beginning at the tenth verse:

"When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. ¹¹ "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, ¹² "lest-- when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; ¹³ "and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; ¹⁴ "when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; ¹⁵ "who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty

land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; ¹⁶ "who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end-- ¹⁷ "then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.' ¹⁸ "And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

And now may the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be pleasing and acceptable to You, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

Being thankful is not an easy thing to do. Take the example given to us in the Gospel message. Christ had just healed ten lepers and only one of them returned to thank God, and he was a Samaritan at that. Ten men had been cleansed from a debilitating and socially destroying

disease, but only one had the integrity to turn around and to thank God for the cure and the blessing that he received.

And I think a similar thing is prevalent on Thanksgiving Day. I mean, we watch movies and we see that on Thanksgiving Day, just like Christmas, it is an ordeal to spend the day with family. There are fights, yelling, crying children, broken toys, bad food... you name it and it probably has or will go wrong during a Thanksgiving Day for you.

And in today's society we no longer get the "day" to celebrate with our families. After spending a couple of hours with the family, after the fights and food, and after saying how thankful we are for everything that we have... then we go shopping, because we need more stuff. We go shopping on the "ONE DAY" where we are supposed to be thankful for having enough and for having what we have... we're so thankful, we go shopping.

And then there's the other thing that has always baffled me, as a Christian and if we're going to

claim this holiday as a Christian holiday, why is this the only day that we are thankful? Does not our Bible teach us to continually thank and praise God for all things that He places in our life? Both blessing and trial we are to thank God for them... but we don't. Again, I tell you, being thankful is a difficult thing to do.

However, as we gather together this evening, in God's house, I pray that we can put the world on pause and focus solely on Him and on His good will and on His Son. Dear friends in Christ, ***Bless the Lord your God.***

We have so many things in this life to be thankful for: a quiet and peaceable country, a church where we can worship as we wish with no intervention, a house that we can home and call our own, a family both near and far that love us. So many things that God has provided for us and I wonder how often we take these things for granted?

We are surrounded by our family and yet how often do we just want time away from them? We have children and yet there are times when we just want to send them to grandma and

grandpa for some quiet and peaceful time. We have spouses that we would be okay with if they left the house for hours just so I could be alone without and nagging.

We have been given so many blessings and yet we so often treat them like dirt. We walk all over them, we step on them to get a little bit higher ourselves, we kick them around whenever we need to let some anger out... we have been blessed with people in our lives and so often they are simply taken for granted by us.

We have so many things in our lives that we begin to take them for granted too. We have cars that have maintenance schedules that most of us don't keep because we're too busy to care. We have phones that we treat as completely disposable because we don't want the hassle of having to take care of it. We have a house that is in shambles because we just don't want to spend on the upkeep anymore.

We have so many possessions of our own that we are not always thankful for them. We have a

church... but we haven't told anyone about its location yet. We have a building but I try to spend the bare minimum amount of time in it as is necessary. We have with our 35 members what most churches of 100+ members dream of... and so often we take it for granted.

Thanksgiving is a day on which we are supposed to be thankful... but we've just discovered that we are not always thankful for our families nor are we thankful for our things. So then just what are we celebrating on Thanksgiving?

Oh, I know... we are celebrating all that God has done for us that day and year, right? That is a day that we take a give total devotion and love to God. That is a day where we recount not only that our birth is a blessing of God, that our salvation is completely the work of God, that our living, breathing, and moving is all a gift from God, but we also thank Him for the blessing of heaven which His Son has already won for us.

Wait... we don't do that on this day either? Sure we might offer up the obligatory prayer before eating, but I can't be asked to spend anymore time with God than that. I mean God knows I'm thankful. God knows I appreciate all the things that He has given to me... well, okay, maybe I don't praise Him every day and maybe I don't thank Him for every thing but He knows... I think.

And that is exactly the point of the text before us today. God is warning the Israelites, and us, that we should not begin to think that God just knows that we are thankful. We should not just go through our lives paying lip service to God, while truly ogling all the "great things" of this world. We should not be pretending when it comes to God: acting like we are thankful when in reality, we're not. This is not the way that we should be treating God.

God has given us everything that we need in this life... and it can be difficult to be thankful. God gave the land of Israel to His favored nation and before He did so He gave them the warning of our text. It could read, "Do not be

proud, do not be arrogant... rather, be thankful." God gave us our family and for that we should truly be thankful. God gave us our possessions and for that we should truly be thankful. God gave us His church and for that we should be thankful.

But above all else, God gave us His Son and for this we should be overabundantly thankful. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into this world to live a perfect life of thanks and praise to God. Just think of all the times that Jesus is seen praying to God and thanking Him for everything in His life, even the hard times. And as Jesus was going through just a hard time, as He hung on the cross, He called out to His Father "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit." Jesus gave up everything to His Father... and then Jesus died. He was buried in a sinner's tomb. However, three days later He rose from the dead. He rose to glorify His Father and to assure all of His faithful children that His life and death was sufficient for all of our sins also.

And as our text mentions, God has given us everything that He might humble us and test us. Humble us in the sense that we need to remember and realize that it is not with our might or smarts that we obtained our family, friends, possessions, and faith... but rather all of these are a gift of God that we can truly be thankful for on this Thanksgiving Day.

As Johann Gerhard says, “What are such marvelous blessings other than avenues of divine Wisdom through which God the Lord actually allows us to be gently drawn to Him? ... For just as God the Lord has above all others shown these blessings to you, He also wants to remind you that you also are above all others to thank Him for them and be obedient to Him.”

God has given us so much, in fact, God has given us everything and He deserves our very best in return. We should be spending everyday in thanks and praise to Him for all that He has done for us. But when we don't, when we do fall and stumble... well then we can thank Him that He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for that sin also.

Dear friends in Christ, pertaining to this text one commentator noted that the reason we say grace before each meal is because of the first verse of our text today, “When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you,” and I can see that. When we have eaten and are full, when we realize that all things come from above from our heavenly Father, when we realize that it is not our own merit or worth that gets us into heaven... then we shall bless the Lord because He has given us everything and has done everything so that we may have a blessed life on this side of heaven and a perfect and eternal life on His side of heaven.

Thank God that he has provided everything that I need. Thank God that He is watching over me and protecting me. Thank God that He has given me my family, friends, possessions, church, my faith, and my salvation.

Thanks be to God. Amen.