

Thanksgiving Eve Message  
November 24, 2021

“Prayers of thanksgiving to God, our Savior!” (1 Timothy 2:3-6)  
LSB 555 vs. 1-3,5-7,10  
By Rev. Ed Weber

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

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,  
Today’s text for our Thanksgiving Eve service is from our Epistle reading, 1 Timothy 2:3-6.

**“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time”**

What is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior? What is it that God exhorts us to do? For this is not a suggestion but an exhortation, says Paul. In short, pray for all people. That’s what God’s apostle, Paul, writes in the first verse of our epistle.

**“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men...”**

I. Prayers for all men – both evil and good people  
God wants us to pray, pray, pray – specific petitions, general prayers, intercessions for others, and prayers of thanksgiving for all men - all people, that is. And why would God want us to pray for all people, even the deranged man who plowed into a crowd of people attending a parade in Wisconsin?

Well, the answer is quite clear in our text. First, God wants all men to be saved. Second, He sent His Son, Jesus, to be the One Mediator between God and all men. And third, Jesus’ payment of sins on the cross wasn’t just for some men. No! Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all!

Our text, is so clear about the universal atonement of Christ for all, that the Calvinists, Reformed, Presbyterians and the like who deny this truth, will have to

answer to God on the last day. Indeed, we need to pray, pray, pray for all erring Christians that they would come to a knowledge of the truth. For Paul says very clearly in our epistle in verse 8,

**“for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.”**

Paul is not lying. Thanks be to God! Jesus died for all people including you and me! That’s our chief prayer of thanksgiving tonight and always!

For if God only willed some to be saved as the Calvinists believed, if Christ was only a Mediator of some and not others, if Christ’s vicarious death was only meant for some and did not pay the ransom for others, then you and I have a big problem. For how do you know that you are part of the group that Jesus saved and not part of the group that Jesus predestined to hell as the Calvinists falsely believe and teach?

You can’t know. But because this is a lie that Jesus only died for some, and you know the truth that Jesus died for all men, you can lift up holy hands in thanksgiving tonight to our Triune God, the One true God that He saved me too.

That is why our text calls God, “God our Savior”. For that is the very nature of God to have compassion and save all fallen men. I can, you can, with all confidence call God, my Savior. For He desired to save also me. And His Holy will was carried out by sending His Son to be my One needed Mediator between God the Father and also me. And Jesus death has paid my ransom price for my sin also – completely.

We pray and give thanks to God for pastors, teachers, missionaries, God-fearing parents, grandparents, spouses, who have testified and continue to testify in due time of the saving truths of God’s word. We give thanks to God for each of you who have heard God’s truths and pray that all men would come to a knowledge of the truth.

On this Thanksgiving eve, for whom else do we pray and give God thanks for? God tells us. Especially, He wants us to pray for kings and all who are in authority. We pray for our government leaders, our President, Vice-president, Governors, judges, mayors, school superintendents, principals, and teachers. When was the last time you prayed for the President? Well, we often pray for President Biden in our general prayer. Why does God want us to pray for our leaders? So that we live

peaceful and quiet lives. What is a tranquil life? One that is not affected by corruption, violence or civil disturbance. Oh, do we have much to pray about! We need to pray often that our governors protect the peace and don't allow destruction of property, looting and intimidation like we witnessed in Kenosha and other places recently. What a travesty that was when the citizenry including a 17 year-old boy felt compelled to go protect the property of business owners because protection was lacking and businesses were burning.

I remember clearly how business owners in McAllen boarded up their windows because they thought the violence and looting would even begin down here by the so called "peaceful protesters". Oh, how we need to pray, pray, pray for our elected leaders to do what is right to protect their citizens. Yes, we pray, pray, pray, giving thanks for good leaders and especially interceding for evil ones, that God change their hearts and save their souls.

Oh, how we need to remember that God desires all men to be saved and gave His Son Jesus as a ransom for all! I too stand in need of forgiveness for my slowness to pray and lack of godliness in my life.

II. For my own soul

Yes, we pray for our own souls, especially, **"that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence."**

This was Zacharias' prayer in Luke 1:75-75.

**"grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life."**

Deliver me from evil, both human and spiritual evil we pray in the Lord's prayer.

We thank God that He has delivered you and me from sin, death and the devil through Jesus Christ. He has given me this knowledge of the truth in the Gospel. So says Paul in Philippians 3:8-10.

**"Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that**

**I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death”**

We thank God that He has given us a peaceable life. For where there is forgiveness and remission of sins, there is peace with God, our Savior who does not remember our sins and lawless deeds. We thank God for the freedom then in this country to gather to hear His word, and grow in our faith. What a blessing to have a saving faith! What a blessing to have a knowledge of the truth!

Yes, we can enjoy lots of turkey, pie, ice cream, and watch a football game, with our families. But the greatest joy is knowing that my soul and the souls of my loved ones have been redeemed by Christ the crucified! God did this so that our celebrations here on earth, as imperfect as they are, will be perfect in heaven. That in heaven, we will eat in splendor the most delicious of meals. And in heaven, our loved ones who have kept the faith and gone before will join us in the heavenly banquet. We thank God for giving the crown of life to those who have finished the race in Christ.

Yes, “to live is Christ” Paul says in Philippians 1:21. We live with thankful hearts that God, our Savior has united me with Christ, my Mediator, in faith.

We pray for all our fellowmen that they too may know this saving truth that God desires all men to be saved.

And when God would call me from this world, we give Him all thanks, that “to die is gain” – eternal gain. You can be sure of this. St. Paul speaks God’s word and doesn’t lie. A most blessed Thanksgiving to you in Christ! Amen

**The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**