

DEVOTION for PENTECOST 20

THANKSGIVING

Psalm 65

Praise awaits you O God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled.

O you who hear prayer, to you all humanity will come.

When we were overwhelmed by sins, you atoned for our transgressions.

Blessed is the one you choose and bring near to live in your courts!

We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple. You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Saviour, the hope of the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.

Who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength,

Who stilled the roaring seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations!

Those living far away fear your wonders;

where morning dawns and evening fades you call forth songs of joy.

You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly.

The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it.

You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops.

You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance.

The grasslands of the desert overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness.

The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout and sing for joy.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Hebrews 3:1-18

Jesus' Faithfulness

What are the most important differences between Jesus and Moses?

Why is sin so deceitful?

What is the connection between disobedience and unbelief?

Mark 10:17-22

The Treasure of Greatest value?

What one thing did the rich young man lack?

What do people do to inherit anything?

If eternal life was so important, why did he walk away from Jesus?

“GIVE THANKS”

Each year ancient Israel observed a harvest festival. At the harvest festival the faithful in Israel remembered the Lord as the Creator of the heavens, the earth; and that it is He who gives the blessing of seed time and harvest. In the Spirit of Psalm 145 they sang: *“The eyes of all look to you and you giveth them their food in due season. You open thy hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.”* Most importantly, they remembered the Lord gave these things as a gift out of the bounty of His loving heart.

For the faithful in Israel, harvest was a time to reflect upon the life of their nation and their own personal lives. Harvest was time to consider what they had received from the hand of the Lord during the past year and give thanks. They gave thanks as we do for blessings of food, clothing, family and friends. But the most important thing Israel gave thanks for at the harvest festival, was the relationship they had with God through the covenant of His love. In the Spirit of Psalm 103 they sang, *“He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our transgressions, as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”*

In Proverbs chapter thirty, a man named Agur prays, saying: *“Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God.”* What is of greatest value to us? Agur treasured his relationship with God and considered it most valuable. All he wanted was enough to live. He feared having too much or too little, not for the sake of those things, but for the sake of his relationship with God. When a person sees her or his relationship with God in this way, there always is enough and always something for which to give thanks.

We give thanks to God for His many gifts of body and spirit. For the blessings of food, clothing, family, friends and most of all for His love in Christ Jesus. During time of famine and great need, the prophet Habakkuk rejoiced that he still possessed the greatest treasure, God His Saviour. He wrote: *“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there be no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour.”* God bless us all with thankful hearts for the sake of Christ Jesus.

“NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD”

(Public Domain)

**Now thank we all our God, With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, In whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mother’s arms has blessed us on our way,
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.**

**O may this bounteous God, through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts, And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in his grace, And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills, In this world and the next.**

**All praise and thanks to God, The Father now be given,
The Son and Him who reigns, with them in highest heaven;
The one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;
For thus it was is now, And shall be ever more!**

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, for your many gifts of body and of spirit. For food, clothing, family and friends. Thank you most of all for the riches of your mercy in forgiveness, spiritual healing and eternal life in Christ Jesus. Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen

THE CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

BENEDICTION Psalm 67:1-2;6-7

“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations...The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear Him!

Bible Knowledge Quiz

What did Daniel and his three friends request to eat instead of the meat and wine of the Babylonians?

How long did Esther receive beauty treatments before the royal beauty pageant?

What did the Babylonian royalty drink out of that finally brought God’s wrath on Babylon and ended their empire?

Answers to Last Week’s Quiz

The fool says “There is no God” (Psalm 14:1).

God said, “Thou fool tonight your soul is required of you” (Luke 12:20).

In Christ Jesus “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3).