

“God is Good! His Love Endures”

Thanksgiving Day

1)

2)

November 26, 2020

God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Phil. 4:19-20)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Since 2006, Larry Smith, a magazine editor, has been challenging people to describe their lives in six words. He calls them “Six-Word Memoirs.” (Apparently this is a twist on a challenge issued to Ernest Hemmingway back in the day.) Here’s an example of six-word memoirs printed in the NY Times earlier this year:

<https://nyti.ms/3k8qSvi>

- Every day’s a bad hair day.
- Deserted crowded Manhattan, my own island ...
- I regret saying, “I hate school.”
- Cleaned Lysol container with Lysol wipe.

So, during this Thanksgiving week, I invite you to try it. In a year of pandemic, cancelled plans, racial reckoning, ugly politics, economic uncertainty, social distancing and more... describe what makes you grateful... using just six words.

Why just six words? Smith says, “The constraint of the six-word form helps us get to the essence of what matters most.” When I attempted this, I found it to be true. (adapted from dwelling114.org)

What makes me grateful... using just six words? Here are a few examples:

- Turkey, Turkey, and more turkey
- Jill, Hannah, Ellen, Levi, and Hope
- God is Good! His love endures

God is Good! His love endures. What does it mean to thank God? I was struck by how many short phrases, like the 6-word phrases I mentioned, can be found in this section of Scripture. Each of these phrases can be used to describe different ways in which we thank God, and, why we thank him.

Having young children in my house has reinforced the idea of why we have to learn to give thanks. It is because it doesn’t come natural to any of us. When my two year old asks for something, we

have to coach him to say thank you when he gets it. It is a process we have to repeat again and again.

Psalms 100 does a great job in encouraging believers to give thanks. It does so by telling us how to do it. The psalmist says, **“Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. ²Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.”** Here the psalmist gives us three ways of how to thank God. He tells us shout, worship and come. Let’s take a moment to look at each.

Why do people shout? When a parent shouts at the child too close to the road they want that child to hear them to avoid danger. When a young couple shouts out their love for one another they are proclaiming to the whole world the joy and happiness they are feeling. In the same way, we are to shout for joy to the Lord. We do so as we recognize all that he has blessed us with. And when we do that, we announce that he is the giver of all things and the center of our universe.

One place this is done can be seen in the next two ways of how we can thank God. They are to worship and come. Why do we come to church? Isn’t it to worship him? Whenever we step foot in church, Jesus comes to us through the gospel and reminds us of all he has done to save us. He reassures us we are forgiven. He comforts us with the truth that we are his.

In view of all that God has done, we respond with shouts of joy and thanksgiving. We offer up worship and praise to the one who has saved us from eternal death in hell. However, worship is so much more than just what we do in this building. The very word **worship** means to serve. Every aspect of our life of service is worship. Paul reminds us in Romans 12 – **Therefore, in view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship.**

The Apostle Paul describes worship using terms like living sacrifices. He tells us that our entire lives are to be an act of spiritual worship. That means whether we are sitting in these pews, on the couch at home, at a desk in school or at the office, thanksgiving and worship are a part of every aspect of our lives.

But why are we to thank God with shouting, praise and worship? The psalmist tells us why, **“It is he who made us, and we**

are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. ⁵ For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.” In the explanation to the first article, we confess our faith by stating, **“I believe that God created me and all that exists, and that he gave me my body and soul, eyes, ears and all my members, my mind and all my abilities.”** It is God who created us and has given us all things. Everything we are and have comes from him. Because of that, he deserves our thanks and praise.

Yet, how often haven't we forgotten to thank God for what he has given us? There are times when we don't even give it a second thought to stop and thank him for the countless blessings he has given. There are times when we look at all we have and think, I have earned them through years of hard work. How often don't we think or say, the possessions we have are mine and I will use them how I want? Living in a consumer driven society, we all have fallen victim to that sinful “me first” mentality and failed to recognize where our blessings come from.

Why do we “thank God”? Consider the words of verse 5 –

⁵ For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

The only cure for such sinful attitudes is found in the love of our Savior that endures forever. In his greatest act of love Jesus came to rescue sinners like us. He gave up everything so we could have it all. He took all our sins, including our ungrateful hearts, on himself and paid for them in full on the cross. This is what prompts us to thank and praise, shout and worship our God who gives us all we need for both body and soul.

Today, as we celebrate another Thanksgiving, we have so much to be thankful for! We have a loving and faithful God who has given us everything, and Jesus Christ is the ultimate proof. Thank God for him. Thank him by shouting it from the rooftops. Thank him by coming before him in worship with joy and praise on your lips. Thank him by living each day praising the one whose love endures forever. **God is Good! His love endures. Amen.**

Let's pray – Dear Heavenly Father, on this national day of Thanksgiving, we give thanks to you for every blessing. Help us to remember that it is so much more than just one day a year to give you

thanks. All year long – we give thanks to you for you are good, your love endures forever. Amen.

The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. (Phil.4:7)

- 1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.**
- 2 Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.**
- 3 Know that the LORD is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.**
- 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.**
- 5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.**