

“WHAT IS IT” THAT IS ON YOUR TABLE TODAY?

And He humbled you, and He caused to let you hunger, and He caused to feed you the Manna which you knew not, and your fathers knew not, thus man lives not upon bread alone, but upon all which proceeds from mouth of YHWH lives the man.¹

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

“What is it” that is going to be on your table today? Whatever it may be, it is going to be set before you because we have a gracious and loving God. As you sit down to today’s national Thanksgiving Day feast, you will bow your head, a sign of humility in our culture, and through prayer, sanctify, that is “declare holy,” all that is on your table. You are free to do so, not because of the laws of this land – for even laws that try to force people not to pray cannot control the heart-thoughts of the faithful. Rather, you give thanks to God because of all that He continues to do for you. That is true no matter how much – or how little – is on your table today. After all, God still says to His people:

And He humbled you, and He caused to let you hunger, and He caused to feed you the Manna which you knew not, and your fathers knew not, thus man lives not upon bread alone, but upon all which proceeds from mouth of YHWH lives the man.²

Since December 26, 1941, the fourth Thursday of November has been set aside in the United States as the national holiday called Thanksgiving Day.³ This is a civic holiday, established by Law, not a Church Holy Day. To a public which had been

¹ Deuteronomy 8:3.

² Deuteronomy 8:3.

³ <http://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/thanksgiving/>. “On October 6, 1941, the House passed a joint resolution declaring the last Thursday in November to be the legal Thanksgiving Day. The Senate, however, amended the resolution establishing the holiday as the fourth Thursday, which would take into account those years when November has five Thursdays. The House agreed to the amendment, and President Roosevelt signed the resolution on December 26, 1941, thus establishing the fourth Thursday in November as the Federal Thanksgiving Day holiday.”

kept out of a growing World War to that date, President Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed:

We are grateful to the Father of us all for the innumerable daily manifestations of His beneficent mercy in affairs both public and private, for the bounties of the harvest, for opportunities to labor and to serve, and for the continuance of those homely joys and satisfactions which enrich our lives.

Let us ask the Divine Blessing on our decision and determination to protect our way of life against the forces of evil and slavery which seek in these days to encompass us.

On month after those words were published, Japanese naval forces attacked Pearl Harbor, and a few days later, Germany and Italy declared war upon the United States of America. Each year, regularly since then, this day has been formally established by presidential proclamations, some more than others referring to God the Father as the One to whom we are called to give thanks to this day. Presidents are not prophets. Little did many of them know of the humbling events that often followed their calls for the nation to give thanks to the Beneficent One. How often have nations which claimed the God of Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael and the prophets been humbled before God on account of their sins? The times are too many to number.

Yet true believers should not be amazed at our times of humbling. God, as a loving Father, corrects His children, for their, our, benefit, when we have strayed too far from His Word. If He did not care, He would leave us alone. Had God ignored our forefathers in the Faith, I dare say that we would not be here today. Only by God's restraining the evil in this fallen creation, including the bad which still comes forth from the Old Adam which dwells in each of His people, the human race would long

ago have ended its own existence. That is why God reminds us, through His Word, on a regular basis if you attend to His Services to you. Faithfully hearing the proclaimed Truth, God recalls to our mind that, because He loves us, He corrects us, that we might live with Him now and in blessed eternity. God still says:

And He humbled you, and He caused to let you hunger, and He caused to feed you the Manna which you knew not, and your fathers knew not, thus man lives not upon bread alone, but upon all which proceeds from mouth of YHWH lives the man.⁴

From God's Word, given forth from His Mouth – through the Psalms, Prophets, and Scriptures – God gives you that which you truly need for this body and life. That means that you are free to pray, to give thanks to God, even when you, or our State or Nation, are being corrected on account of our sins. Every time you pray, you are free to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, in good times and in bad. To pray in the Faith is one of your duties as part of the “priesthood of all believers.” The Fourth Petition of the *Large Catechism* so clearly explains some of that which is involved as we pray giving thanks, even in that prayer which you and I sometimes so slovenly rush through, “Give us this day our daily bread...”

To put it briefly, this petition includes everything that belongs to our entire life in this world; only for its sake do we need daily bread. Now, our life requires not only food and clothing and other necessities for our body, but also peace and concord in our daily business and in associations of every description with the people among whom we live and move – in short, everything that pertains to the regulation of our domestic and our civil or political affairs. For where these two relations are interfered with and prevented from functioning properly, there the necessities of life are also interfered with, and life itself cannot be maintained for any length of time.⁵

⁴ Deuteronomy 8:3.

⁵ *The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (430). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

Thus, when you exercise your Christian right and duty to pray, you are covering a lot more “spiritual realities” than you might be thinking of at the time! And, when you fail to pray, you are leaving out much more than you might imagine. Thank God for the Word that calls us from such sins, and the Word which forgives us those trespasses, and the Word which allows us to rightly address our Father in Heaven, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.

This day, as you sit down to the household Feast, know that you have been freed by the atoning death of Jesus, to rightly give thanks to God for all His benefits to you. This day, as you look at that which has been set before you, remember not as primary the command that your father and mother may have given you – “You will eat everything on your plate and like it!” Rather, remember that what is on your table is all a gift of God, brought to you by those who labor in the fields, in industry, in the markets and even from your own labors – all the good work which God has given His people to do in this creation.

Ask yourself as the Israelites did so long ago, “What is it?” that is truly set before you. Behold in the bounty of this land that God truly does care for you, in this body and life. Then, reflect on the “What is it?” that He offers to you from His Table.

Here, He offers you forgiveness and strengthening to life everlasting. Here He comes to you through earthly means – simple bread and wine. Here He touches you with His Real Presence, the “What is it?” that is defined by His Word. Then, turn to enjoy your meals, your family and friends about the table, and know that they too

are God's gifts to you.

These things and much more are yours for which you may give thanks to God. They are His gifts to you – not fully perfect – but declared holy by the Word of God and prayer. Rejoice in this season as you await God's fulfillment of His eternal Promise – your place at His heavenly banquet. And give thanks that He loves you enough to humble you in this life, that you might treasure His Word. This you are freed to do in Christ, Who gave the ultimate thanks to God for you, offering Himself up into death as the perfect sacrifice in your stead. "What is it" that is on your table today? It is the blessings of God the Father in Christ Jesus for now and forever.

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Day of National Thanksgiving (*LSB* One-year series)

Daniel 8:1-10; Philippians 4:6-20; Luke 17:11-19

November 28, 2013

Pastor Michael H. Morhouse

Soli Deo Gloria

TRANSLATION, SECOND DRAFT

All the commandments which I command you this day you shall be careful to do, for you all live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which YHWH swore to your fathers.⁶

And you all will remember all the way which YHWH your Elohe has caused to show you thus forty years in wilderness, to humble you, to test you, to know the thing which (is) in your heart whether you would keep His commandments or not.⁷

And He humbled you, and He caused to let you hunger, and He caused to feed you the Manna which you knew not, and your fathers knew not, thus man lives not upon bread alone, thus upon all which proceeds from face of YHWH lives the man.⁸

Your clothing not wore out upon you, and your feed (did) not swell these forty years.⁹

And know in your heart, thus for which disciplines man the son, YHWH your Elohe disciplines you.¹⁰

And you shall keep the commandments YHWH your Elohe, to be walking in His ways and by fearing Him.¹¹

Thus YHWH your Elohe causes to bring you upon good land of brooks of waters, fountains, and springs flowing forth in valleys and hills.¹²

Land of wheat, and barley, vines and fig trees, and pomegranates, land of olive trees and honey.¹³

Land which is not in scarcity to eat in it, bread not you will lack all in it which, land which its stones (are) iron, and out of whose hills you will dig copper.¹⁴

And you will eat and be full, and you shall bless YHWH your Elohe upon the land, the good one, which He gifts to you.¹⁵

⁶ Deuteronomy 8:1.

⁷ Deuteronomy 8:2.

⁸ Deuteronomy 8:3.

⁹ Deuteronomy 8:4.

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 8:5.

¹¹ Deuteronomy 8:6.

¹² Deuteronomy 8:7.

¹³ Deuteronomy 8:8.

¹⁴ Deuteronomy 8:9.

¹⁵ Deuteronomy 8:10.

To be sure, God provides daily bread, even to the wicked, without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that God may make us aware of his gifts and enable us to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.¹⁶

THE FOURTH PETITION

"Give us this day our daily bread."

What does this mean?

Answer: To be sure, God provides daily bread, even to the wicked, without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that God may make us aware of his gifts and enable us to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread?

Answer: Everything required to satisfy our bodily needs, such as food and clothing, house and home, fields and flocks, money and property; a pious spouse and good children, trustworthy servants, godly and faithful rulers, good government; seasonable weather, peace and health, order and honor; true friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.¹⁷



FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

XXXII President of the United States: 1933-1945

125 - Proclamation 2522 - Thanksgiving Day
November 8, 1941

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

I, Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate and set aside Thursday, the twentieth day of November, 1941, as a day to be observed in giving thanks to the Heavenly Source of our earthly blessings.

Our beloved country is free and strong. Our moral and physical defenses against the forces of threatened aggression are mounting daily in magnitude and effectiveness.

In the interest of our own future, we are sending succor at increasing pace to those peoples abroad who are bravely defending their homes and their precious liberties against annihilation.

We have not lost our faith in the spiritual dignity of man, our proud belief in the right of all people to live out

¹⁶Tappert, T. G. 2000, c1959. *The book of concord : The confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church.* Fortress Press: Philadelphia

¹⁷*The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* 1959 (T. G. Tappert, Ed.) (347). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

their lives in freedom and with equal treatment. The love of democracy still burns brightly in our hearts.

We are grateful to the Father of us all for the innumerable daily manifestations of His beneficent mercy in affairs both public and private, for the bounties of the harvest, for opportunities to labor and to serve, and for the continuance of those homely joys and satisfactions which enrich our lives.

Let us ask the Divine Blessing on our decision and determination to protect our way of life against the forces of evil and slavery which seek in these days to encompass us.

On the day appointed for this purpose, let us reflect at our homes or places of worship on the goodness of God and, in giving thanks, let us pray for a speedy end to strife and the establishment on earth of freedom, brotherhood, and justice for enduring time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Franklin D. Roosevelt". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

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<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16039>