

## GOD'S STEADFAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS

MCC Thanksgiving Service, Sunday Evening, November 20, 2016

### I. Psalm 138:1-8

**A. Psalm 138:1-8 (ESV) is our Thanksgiving Prayer. Listen to David make very clear to *Whom* he is thankful and for what he is thankful for: 1 I give You thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing Your praise; (Before the gods: before angelic beings or before kings or before deities or the idols they serve...) 2 I bow down toward Your holy temple and give thanks to Your name for Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness, for You have exalted above all things Your name and Your word. (On the top of David's thanksgiving list is being grateful to God for His steadfast love and faithfulness. So what else is David thankful for?) 3 On the day I called, You answered me; my strength of soul You increased. (NIV: "You made me bold and stouthearted.") 4 All the kings of the earth shall give You thanks, O Lord, for they have heard the words of Your mouth, 5 and they shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord. (Now the psalmist shifts horizontal. He turns from praying to preaching.) 6 For though the Lord is high, He regards the lowly, but the haughty He knows from afar. (Back to praying.) 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You preserve my life, You stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand delivers me. (David has walked through trials and faced fierce enemies but God has preserved him and he can't conceal his gratitude.) 8 The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of Your hands.**

**B. So what about God's steadfast love and faithfulness. We certainly know God as all knowing, all powerful, and all present. He's the Maker of all things seen and unseen. But when it comes to us, what kind of God is He? What more does the Bible say about His steadfast love and faithfulness?**

**C. Exodus 34:4-8 (ESV) Moses before God Almighty: 4 So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first. And he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand two tablets of stone. 5 The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. 6 The Lord passed before him and (He God) proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." 8 And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.**

**D. Lamentations 3:22-23 (ESV) has long been one of our songs here at MCC: 22 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.**

**E. Psalm 25:6-7 (ESV) is one of my favorite Psalms; listen to David: 6 Remember Your mercy, O Lord, and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. (They've always been and always will be!) 7 Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to Your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of Your goodness, O Lord!**

**F. Psalm 57:9-11 & Psalm 108:3-5 (ESV) are identical. David prays: 3 I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to You among the nations. 4 For Your steadfast love is great above the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. 5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let Your glory be over all the earth!**

**G. Psalm 36:5-10 (ESV) David takes us further: 5 Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the clouds. 6 Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast You save, O Lord. 7 How precious is Your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. (How safe is it in the shadow of His wings?!) 8 They feast on the abundance of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your delights. 9 For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light do we see light. 10 Oh, continue Your steadfast love to those who know You, and Your righteousness to the upright of heart! (How many of you are thankful for God's steadfast love and faithfulness?)**

**H. God shows His steadfast love and faithfulness throughout the Scriptures in countless ways. He has shown the same to each of us over and over. But the greatest manifestation of His steadfast love and faithfulness is through His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, who went to the cross to die for our sins. "God so loved the world (you) that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." (Jn 3:16) "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) "But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved." (Eph 2:4-5) "This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." (1 Jn 4:10)**

**I. We have much to be thankful for, every moment of every day. But by far the greatest thing we have to be thankful for is God--His steadfast love and faithfulness--demonstrated most vividly and beautifully in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. The cross reminds us of God's steadfast love and faithfulness...**

\* Close with Prayer...

## Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

### Psalm 138:1-8 (ESV)

**1** I give You thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing Your praise; **2** I bow down toward Your holy temple and give thanks to Your name for Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness, for You have exalted above all things Your name and Your word. **3** On the day I called, You answered me; my strength of soul You increased. **4** All the kings of the earth shall give You thanks, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth, **5** and they shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord. **6** For though the Lord is high, He regards the lowly, but the haughty He knows from afar. **7** Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You preserve my life, You stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand delivers me. **8** The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of Your hands.

### Exodus 24:4-8 (ESV)

**4** So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first. And he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand two tablets of stone. **5** The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. **6** The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, **7** keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." **8** And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.

### Lamentations 3:22-23 (ESV)

**22** The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; **23** they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

### Psalm 25:6-7 (ESV)

**6** Remember Your mercy, O Lord, and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. **7** Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to Your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of Your goodness, O Lord!

### Psalm 57:9-11 (ESV)

**9** I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to You among the nations. **10** For Your steadfast love is great to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the clouds. **11** Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let Your glory be over all the earth!

### Psalm 108:3-5 (ESV)

**3** I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to You among the nations. **4** For Your steadfast love is great above the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. **5** Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let Your glory be over all the earth!

### Psalm 36:5-10 (ESV)

**5** Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the clouds. **6** Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast You save, O Lord. **7** How precious is Your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. **8** They feast on the abundance of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your delights. **9** For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light do we see light. **10** Oh, continue Your steadfast love to those who know You, and Your righteousness to the upright of heart!

## Film Clips & Other Links

"Now Thank We All Our God"

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2\\_JLqOjNY&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2_JLqOjNY&feature=related)

Give Thanks (Hyper Pixels Media)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRaTSveqknw&NR=1>

Thanksgiving Medley

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3dXCL34aEA>

Thanksgiving--God's Goodness by The Skit Guys (Hilarious!)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfEZC8eG1\\_Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfEZC8eG1_Y)

**Thanksgiving 1863 - Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nU8yOHQKhQ>

**Bonus Stuff**

**The Mayflower Compact**

*"In the Name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord, King James, by the Grace of God, of England, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c. Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia; do by these presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid; And by Virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the General good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In Witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape Cod the eleventh of November, in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord, King James of England, France and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini, 1620"*

- William Bradford's "Of Plymouth Plantation" written from 1630-1650.

**Thanksgiving 1621 - Edward Winslow**

Our corn [i.e. wheat] did prove well, and God be praised, we had a good increase of Indian corn, and our barley indifferent good, but our peas not worth the gathering, for we feared they were too late sown. They came up very well, and blossomed, but the sun parched them in the blossom. Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week. At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.

- Letter by Edward Winslow, written December 12, 1621

**Thanksgiving 1621 - William Bradford**

They began now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fit up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health and strength and had all things in good plenty. For as some were thus employed in affairs abroad, others were exercising in fishing, about cod and bass and other fish, of which they took good store, of which every family had their portion. All the summer there was no want; and now began to come in store of fowl, as winter approached, of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besides waterfowl there was great store of wild turkeys, of which they took many, besides venison, etc. Besides they had about a peck of meal a week to a person, or now since harvest, Indian corn to that proportion. Which made many afterwards write so largely of their plenty here to their friends in England, which were not feigned but true reports.

- William Bradford, History of Plymouth Plantation, 1954

**Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Thanksgiving Proclamation**

**October 3, 1863**

**By the President of the United States, A Proclamation:**

The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God.

In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign states to invite and provoke their aggressions, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere, except in the theater of military conflict; while that theater has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, and the

country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised, nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American people. I do, therefore, invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that, while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation, and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-eighth. - *Abraham Lincoln*

### **Now Thank We All Our God**

By Dr. Harold Pease

This is the season to be grateful and to acknowledge our many blessings, even in the midst of extreme difficult times for so many of our neighbors and friends. Even our own circumstances may have brought us beneath what we think we can endure. During such times it is sometimes hard to find things to be grateful for or to find the hand of God in anything. Finding someone whose life circumstances are much worse sometimes helps a little. One such was Martin Rinckart. He authored the beloved Christian hymnal "Now Thank We All Our God" which has given fellow Christians strength in their trials for almost 400 years.

In 1637 the Swedes and Germans were in the midst of The Thirty-Year War (Catholics vs. Protestants) and refugees from that encounter were flooding into Eilenburg, Saxony where Martin Rinckart was serving as Archdeacon of his native German town. A horrible plague gripped the area leaving some 8,000 persons dead in a single year. Rinckart had to assist "at the beds of the sick and dying." Although fortunately he maintained his own health during this time of death, he "had to read forty or fifty funeral services a day" including the services of two of his fellow clergymen. A fourth ran away, out of fear of getting sick, leaving him the lone church authority in this major crisis. He assisted in burying some 4,480 in all. In May of that year, his wife died. "By the end of the year, the refugees had to be buried in trenches without services."

This horror was followed by a famine "so extreme that thirty or forty persons might be seen fighting in the streets for a dead cat or crow." As the head of the church in his area "his door was surrounded by a crowd of poor starving wretches, who found it their only refuge." He shared everything he had reserving "the barest rations for his own family."

Next the Swedes returned demanding a tribute of \$30,000 from the town. Such money was not available. After failing to entreat the invading general for mercy, Rinckart turned to those following him and, in the general's presence, said "Come, my children, we can find no hearing, no mercy with men, let us take refuge with God." He then "fell on his knees and prayed with such touching earnestness that the Swedish general relented, and lowered his demand at last to 2,000 florins."

Apparently the words of his hymn were originally written as a grace to be said before meals but given his circumstances it became a song of strength in adversity. Listen to them. "Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices, Who wondrous things hath done, In whom his earth rejoices; Who, from our mothers' arms, Hath blessed us on our way With countless gifts of love, And still is ours today." The first verse of this Lutheran hymnal is certainly a message of thanksgiving; the second, one of protection and guidance. "Oh, may our bounteous God Through all our life be near us, With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us, And keep us in his love, And guide us day and night, And free us from all ills, Protect us by his might."

Perhaps his life and song can make us stronger as well. At the very least it should give us a few extra things for which to be thankful. None of us are fighting over a dead cat or crow to eat. Despite our obstacles, deep inside we know that God still has our best interests in mind. When we next sing this song we will probably do it with more gratitude reflecting, at least for a moment, on our great blessings, as he did, rather than our trials.

*Dr. Harold Pease is an expert on the United States Constitution. He has dedicated his career to studying the writings of the Founding Fathers and applying that knowledge to current events. He has taught history and political science from this perspective for over 25 years at Taft College. To read more of his weekly articles, please visit [www.LibertyUnderFire.org](http://www.LibertyUnderFire.org). Article written - November 26, 2011.*

### **"Now Thank We All Our God"**

by Martin Rinckart, 1586-1649

Translated by Catherine Winkworth, 1829-1878

1. Now thank we all our God  
With heart and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things hath done,  
In whom His world rejoices;  
Who from our mother's arms  
Hath blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
And still is ours today.

2. Oh, 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.

3. 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 evermore.

- THE HANDBOOK TO THE LUTHERAN HYMNAL (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942) p. 31