

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 2020**

✝ ✝ ✝

(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 36, 568, 569, 570, 567.

Lessons: Lamentation 3: 22-26, Philippians 4: 6-20, Luke 17: 11-19.

Sermon Text: Deuteronomy 8: 10-20.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

When people's stomachs are full, it is really easy to forget the Lord God. Today we are reminded of the warning NOT to forget the Lord our God when our stomachs are full. We also hear a warning against forgetting where it is that we get these things. As we celebrate this special day of Thanksgiving, please remember:

**DON'T FORGET THE LORD WHEN YOUR STOMACH IS FULL**

1. **The Lord your God has certainly blessed you with 'daily bread'.**
2. **The Lord your God has certainly blessed you with food for your soul.**

**REMEMBER THE LORD YOUR GOD!**

On Thanksgiving Day we expect that we will have a good meal. But isn't that our normal every-day expectation? How many days don't we have at least one good meal?

Any good history lesson will teach us that at other times in history, plain everyday people like us ate very simply. It was the wealthy who had the feasts. We really don't stand in awe of those feasts we read about in the history books when the nobles had a huge meal of ham, poultry, beef and all sorts of food. Don't we eat like that often? Don't we take it for granted that at least several times in the year we will have monstrous feasts? Don't we also take it for granted that we will always have enough to eat?

Think for a moment about those times when we are able to feast on 'all we can eat'. Sometimes even meals in our own homes are served that have more than one meat or 'main dish'. Or we could think of those 'all you can eat' buffet meals, where you can get 2 or 3 or 4 or half a dozen meats or main dishes, and all the vegetables you could eat and all the desserts you could want. And many people can go get such a meal for maybe an hour's wages! We must remember that the Lord has provided these things for us and in so doing, the devil has provided a marvelous opportunity to forget the Lord.

When our stomachs are full, when we have everything we could want, when things are going well on earth, isn't there a GREAT opportunity to forget the Lord God? ***"When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you."*** God's chosen people will have spent 40 years in the desert wilderness subsisting on manna and quail day after day after day. Moses goes on: ***"Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God."***

Thanksgiving Day is a day set aside as a national holiday. The original purpose, we understand, was to be thankful to a Christian God who had preserved some of the early settlers in the United States of America.

As God's children we are thankful every day. When we consider 'What does it mean to be thankful?' we must think of what Luther taught us, as in the Fourth Petition where we pray "Give us this day our daily bread. What does this mean? God gives daily bread indeed without our asking, even to all the wicked; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to appreciate, and to receive with thanksgiving, our daily bread.

What, then, is meant by daily bread? Everything that we need for our bodily welfare, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious servants, pious and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, education, honor, faithful friends, good neighbors, and the like.”

The Lord provides goods, that is, things. And to do that He also provides all that I need to keep body and life. God speaking through Moses reminds us that ability to work with our hands and to work with our minds, to earn a living, is truly also a gift from God. ***“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.”***

That is how God goes about preserving our bodies. Our body lives until God wants to take us to heaven. Our body doesn’t die, at least not until God wants it to die.

Luther reminds us from the Word of God that God provides ALL that I need to keep my body and life. The Lord provides what he wants us to have. If he doesn’t provide it, do you think we really need it? There really is a difference between needs and wants. We WANT far more than we actually need. When it comes right down to it, how many sets of clothes do I need? I want lots of shirts. I want new clothes. I don’t want the same boring diet every day, but I want a varied diet. I want interesting food. I want different flavors and colors on my dining table. But in the history of mankind, think of what the average people ate each day. What did they eat? What was their diet all winter? Even a basic knowledge of what the ‘pioneers’ ate shows that their menu was, in most places, very simple. The fortunate among the pioneers usually had some variety of food laid up for the winter. In a great year they might have corn, squash, wheat, carrots, potatoes and other root vegetables set aside. But what about meat? Fresh pork or beef was a special treat. What about meat they hunted? You may have read enough of ‘Little House On The Prairie’ type of stories to know that a variety of meat, or sometimes even meat itself was a pretty exciting change in their diet.

We take it for granted that we can go to the store and regularly buy fresh meat, poultry, or fish. If we can’t get it fresh, we can get it frozen. Here, a thousand miles or so away from the ocean we can have fresh shrimp and other seafood. Here, a thousand miles or so away from where they grow in the winter, we can have fresh fruits and vegetables year round!

But we have been so abundantly blessed that we take such things for granted. It is so easy to complain about the quality of the tropical fruits we get, not realizing that not much more than a generation ago such food blessings were unknown! See how we take things for granted? We have full stomachs in more ways than just one. We are ‘satisfied’ the Bible says – ‘stuffed’ is another way to put it. We are fully satisfied in many earthly ways.

Because we are full in many ways and have far more than we absolutely NEED, the temptations are even greater to forget the Lord Our God who gives us all our blessings.

God had directly intervened and made it very clear that HE was the one who had helped his chosen people, Abraham’s descendants, through the wilderness into the great Promised Land. ***“He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you.”***

We don’t want to take the earthly gifts for granted. We want to thank our God – every day. If God were to stop his earthly, material blessings, we would die. The hymn-writer tells us: “On Thee each moment we depend; If Thou withdraw, we die. Oh May we ne’er that God offend Who is forever nigh!”

But more importantly, if God had not given us his spiritual blessings and if he does not continue to give them, we would die spiritually and then, as a result, die eternally.

Don’t you know people who are spiritually dead? How many have turned their backs on God and think that they have no need of God? How many have become their own gods?

The real point here is to be careful lest, when we are full, and have earthly blessings, we forget God. The earthly blessings are what we think of first.

For some people it takes a near-death experience to make them think of spiritual blessings. When a human is afraid of death, then he or she wonders about what is waiting after death. We need the spiritual gifts that God so graciously offers – gifts like the forgiveness of sins, and the hope of eternal life.

At the end of our text God gives this stern warning: ***“If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.”***

That is the threat of eternal damnation. That threat was an inheritance from Adam and Eve as a result of the original, inherited sin all men have received from their ancestors. The only way to be saved from eternal damnation is to obey God’s commands, his laws, his decrees PERFECTLY. But we can’t do that. We can’t even obey them ‘fairly well’.

But God loved sinful man whom he originally created sinless. He loved us enough to find a way out of that eternal damnation he threatens to everyone who disobeys him – to all men! He loved us enough to give us salvation. That is the greatest spiritual gift you have from God.

The most precious gift of God is the forgiveness of sins, the righteousness of Christ, by which we are justified before God. It is the most precious gift because without the forgiveness of sins we are lost and condemned creatures, but with it we have life and salvation.

The Devil has a remarkable way of making us forget what is important. He lays all the treasures of the world before us. But remember that he did that to Jesus, too. God is the one who really gives them to us, but the Devil wants us to think that they are the really important things, and that he can provide them to us.

When you really need comfort, what is the comfort that you are going to find? Isn’t it going to be comfort from God? You have the comfort that the Lord your God will make things better for you. That may not be in this world, but your Redeemer and Savior offers you eternal comfort.

It is a gift of God that you have the knowledge that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior.

It is a gift of God that you have the assurance of faith that you are justified before God through the works of Jesus Christ.

It is a gift of God that you have peace with God.

God gives us the hope of heaven.

God gives you confidence to pray.

God gives you comfort in all tribulation.

God has given you something more important than the things of this earth, something more important than all the treasures of the world. Sometimes that is hard to believe, for we sometimes don’t have the faith to believe it, but God wants us to believe it and He will give us the faith to believe it and trust Him.

***“When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God.***

**DON’T FORGET THE LORD WHEN YOUR STOMACH IS FULL**

**The Lord your God has certainly blessed you with ‘daily bread’.**

**The Lord your God has certainly blessed you with food for your soul.**

**REMEMBER THE LORD YOUR GOD!**

Amen.