

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
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**Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Trinity, November 19, 2023**

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

Hymns: 19, 238:1, 437, 424, 54.

Lessons: Hebrews 4:9-13, John 9:1-7.

Sermon Text: Psalm 75:1-7.

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

Fellow Redeemed in Christ:

During the time when Hezekiah was king of Judah, Sennacherib the king of Assyria was attacking the cities of Judah. The king of Assyria sent a message to King Hezekiah and told him that it wouldn't do him any good to trust in the Lord for protection. Trusting in the Lord would not prevent Jerusalem from being destroyed, Sennacherib said.

When this terrible disaster threatened, Hezekiah prayed: *"O Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God."* (Isaiah 37:20, NIV84) Then the Lord sent a message to King Hezekiah through Isaiah the prophet and promised that the great Assyrian army would not enter Jerusalem. That promise came true in a most marvelous way when the Lord saved Jerusalem by a miracle. We are told: *"the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there."* (Isaiah 37:36-37, NIV84)

This is thought to be the historical background for the song of praise in our text. As the ancient church sang this song in their worship, so we should also learn to praise the Lord. The confidence of the believers of old in what the Lord could do for them is the kind of confidence we also need in evil days. Let us consider with the Holy Spirit's guidance:

**THE CONFIDENCE OF BELIEVERS IN THE LORD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT IN EVIL DAYS.**

- 1. Believers thank the Lord for His Word and promises;**
- 2. Believers trust that at His appointed time the Lord will bring down the arrogant and exalt the humble.**

The psalmist writes: *"We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks, for your Name is near; men tell of your wonderful deeds."* Giving thanks to the Lord for His blessings is a fruit of faith in Christ. So the apostle Paul exhorts the believers to *"give thanks in all circumstances."* (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV84) In quite a number of different passages we find these words which are familiar to us: *"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."* (1 Chronicles 16:34, NIV84) Every morning we should give thanks in our morning prayer for God's protection during the night. Every evening we should give thanks for all the blessings of body and soul we have received from the Lord. All our blessings we should receive with thanksgiving also for this reason: that in this way we acknowledge that all these blessings come from the Lord, and that in this way we show that we are humbly dependent upon the Lord. Thus we should always be ready to say with the psalmist: *"O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever."* (Psalm 30:12, NIV84)

Our text mentions a very special blessing for which to give thanks. The psalmist says: *"For your Name is near."* By God's name is meant God's Word. As our Catechism explains: "God's name is everything that He has made known of Himself in His Word." What the Lord has made known about Himself is told us in the words the Lord spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The Book of Exodus says that the Lord *"stood there with him and*

*proclaimed his name, the Lord. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished.'*" (Exodus 34:5–7, NIV84)

In particular our text speaks of giving thanks to the Lord for the promises of His faithfulness and help, for His promise of protection and deliverance from earthly enemies, and for spiritual deliverance in the promised Savior. For example, in the days of Isaiah the prophet when Ahaz was king of Judah, Jerusalem was threatened by the king of Syria in alliance with the northern kingdom of Israel. Through Isaiah this was the comforting word of the Lord: ***"Be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid."*** (Isaiah 7:4, NIV84) Though the enemy threatened to invade Judah and tear it apart, Isaiah told them: ***"Yet this is what the Sovereign Lord says: 'It will not take place, it will not happen.'"*** (Isaiah 7:7, NIV84) More important was the promise of deliverance from sin and death through the coming Messiah, the virgin's Son. It was Isaiah who wrote: ***"the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."*** (Isaiah 7:14, NIV84) It is Isaiah who wrote what the Lord would do through the virgin's Son: ***"the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."*** (Isaiah 53:6, NIV84) We know how Isaiah prophesied: ***"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities."*** Again: ***"He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken."*** (Isaiah 53:8, NIV84)

As the psalmist in our text wrote, ***"your Name is near,"*** so we too have God's Word near. He has graciously given us His Word. We can read it and study it. By God's grace we hear it proclaimed in our worship services and taught in our meetings and instruction classes. Just as the psalmist wrote: ***"men tell of your wonderful deeds,"*** so we too have heard all that the Lord has done for His people of all ages. Indeed the Lord's deeds have been wonderful! Think of all the miracles God performed when He delivered Israel from Egypt and inflicted the 10 plagues on the Egyptians; how He delivered Israel from Pharaoh's army by opening a dry path in the Red Sea for 2 million people to walk on. Think of how the Lord provided food and water and all the necessities for 40 years in the desert on the way to Canaan. Think of how the waters of the Jordan River were heaped up during flood stage and ceased to flow so that the Israelites could walk through on dry ground into the promised land. Think of how the walls of Jericho fell down miraculously, and God conquered all of Israel's enemies so that they might inherit the land. These are but a few of the wonderful deeds the people of God could proclaim to their children and children's children. And we today still tell of all these wonderful deeds.

This is why the psalmist says: ***"We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks."*** So we also today have ample reason to remember all that the Lord has done for us, especially that we still have the pure Word, the teachings that are according to the Scriptures, and the true Gospel message of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Shall we, then, not also give thanks? Oh let us be quick and eager to use our tongues and say: ***"We give thanks to you, O God."***

With such a thankful attitude, the believer should also have confidence in the Lord's righteous judgment in evil days. According to our text we learn that believers trust that at His appointed time the Lord will bring down the arrogant and exalt the humble.

## 2.

The psalmist addressed the Lord, saying: ***"You say, 'I choose the appointed time; it is I who judge uprightly. When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm.'"*** The Lord here speaks of evil days: when all people are discouraged, when everything seems to be wrong, when people experience injustice, when there is violence everywhere because of the wicked. The Israelites must have felt like giving up when they were oppressed in Egypt, when they had to work so hard as slaves, when their boy babies were killed to keep the nation from increasing in number. Four hundred years passed before the Lord's ***"appointed time"*** came and He by His righteous judgment delivered them. Luther must have thought that everything was coming apart when the people were being taught that they could buy forgiveness of sins, when John Tetzel went through the country selling indulgences, when the Lord's Supper was changed into a sacrifice, and the message of the Gospel was lost. But at His ***"appointed time"*** the Lord by His righteous judgement brought deliverance and through His servant Martin Luther and the work of the Reformation restored the Gospel to the Church. What should we say about today? Things are about as bad as they can get, or at least that's the way we often feel. Among the churches,

false teachings are running rampant. Pastors have forsaken the true Gospel of Christ in order to preach a message that attempts to deal with economic problems and the many troubles of our nation and the world. Many in the larger churches are more interested in politics than in Bible teachings. What a sad state of affairs in this world in which we live! Many nations are at war; terrorists kidnap people and hijack airplanes and kill many innocent people; in a vain effort to drown their sorrows people turn to alcohol and all sorts of drugs. In a vain effort to feel good (get high) people turn to drugs and end up ruining their lives; sexual immorality has become an acceptable way of life for so very many people; everyone talks about so much stress in their lives, and teenage suicide is becoming more common.

We, therefore, long for the Lord's "***appointed time***" when our Lord Jesus will come to take us and all believers in Christ to our heavenly home, when the Lord Jesus will have all nations before Him, and will judge righteously. In the Book of Revelation, Jesus testifies: "***Yes, I am coming soon.***" And we as believers reply "***Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.***" (Revelation 22:20, NIV84)

But while the earth still stands, and we are experiencing all our earthly troubles, we need confidence in the Lord. We need to hear as the psalmist records these words of the Lord: . "***When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm.***" We need to hear and believe and have this confidence that the Lord rules the nations. He is in charge. He knows what is going on. Paul says our Lord Jesus rules at God's right hand over all things for the welfare of the believers in Christ. He writes: "***God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,***" (Ephesians 1:22, NIV84) Therefore, we need not fear.

The troubles we have in this life all come as a result of sin, because God's Word is haughtily defied by proud sinners. The Lord speaks to such in our text: "***To the arrogant I say, 'Boast no more,' and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horns. Do not lift your horns against heaven; do not speak with outstretched neck.'***" Then the psalmist says: "***No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man. But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another.***" The Lord is saying to the arrogant that they should not boast so proudly and oppress the godly. And the Lord is assuring us that there is no power on earth that can bring oppression or bring deliverance without God's express will or permission. The Lord rules! He is, as Paul writes: "***the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords.***" (1 Timothy 6:15, NIV84) Let all the proud of this earth hear this: "***everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.***" (Luke 18:14, NIV84)

Let us as believers in Christ continue to put our confidence in the Lord and believe that He will judge righteously. In all the troubles of life in this chaotic generation, let these words of the Lord be our confidence: "***Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed.***" (Isaiah 54:10, NIV84)

This is our confidence in Christ our Savior. Amen.

Revised from a Ministry By Mail sermon for September 29, 1985.