

**Deuteronomy 8:10-18**

<sup>10</sup> When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, <sup>13</sup> and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup> then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." <sup>18</sup> But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today. (NIV84)

**Prayer of the Day:**

Almighty God our Father, your generous goodness comes to us new every day. By the work of your Spirit lead us to acknowledge your goodness, give thanks for your benefits, and serve you in willing obedience; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Verse of the Day:**

Alleluia. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever. Alleluia. (Psalm 136:1)

**Sermon Text:**

What did you forget? Do you have everything that you need for the Thanksgiving feast? Is the bird thawing, the ingredients bought, the house prepared? Thanksgiving can be a bunch of work. What about the day after? Do you have the line up all ready? Which stores have the best deals and which ones need to be hit first, second, third? Football games, who is playing who and when so that you can watch all the games that interest you the most, got it all figured out? Life: maybe that's why we put some much effort into the other stuff, because this one is hard. Education, Career paths, Marriage, Kids, Finances, Insurance, Health, Retirement, Happiness it's a bunch to think about and prepare for, what did you forget? Now that we are in full tilt panic mode, I have intentionally left something out of our list today. Let's listen to the Old Testament lesson once more this evening/morning.

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*ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today. (Deuteronomy 8:10-11 NIV84)*

Now obviously this is a very Israel specific list at some points. We were not slaves in Egypt, wanderers in a waterless wasteland for forty years. We are not eye witness of the manna and quail or the water gushing forth from the rock, but it could be argued that the rest is very applicable living in a land wealthier than most, in a country fatter than most, with a list of necessities that is far longer than most. In that setting, God's warning is quite clear. *Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God.*

Ah, but what does Israel do? After Moses, Joshua leads the people into the promised land. A series of military campaigns that are not without the need to remind Israel that they should listen to the Lord who had performed miracles before and was actually performing them regularly on the battlefields of this land flowing with milk and honey. Then comes the book of Judges in chapter two Joshua dies and the verse after he is buried reads, *After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel* (Judges 2:10). The people forgot! The people who had witnessed the plagues and the exodus of Egypt, who had seen and tasted the manna and the quail, who had promised to follow, obey, believe every law and decree that God had given at Sinai apparently didn't care enough to pass it on to their children and God disappeared from the families, replaced by the Baals and Ashtoreths of land around them. They even sold themselves off to their enemies for protection. When you read Judges 2:10-15 it makes you want to cry.

But I must admit, my eyes don't really water for Israel. They well up in the realization of what is happening in our world today. I dare say our forefathers would be shocked to behold what has become of us. No, I'm not talking about the world around us, or the proud nation of America, although it is just as true. I'm talking about the church today. She has sold out. Doctrines fall like dominoes because the world would label them unloving. Churches across our country and across denominational lines see dropping attendance, (The WELS is actually slower than most, which odd as it sounds, means we are doing well) and instead of engaging the next generation with the truth of the Word, it is indulged. Increasingly we change everything we can to accommodate it. Instead of offering the very things which will change them. Truth be told that's been going on for some time and chasing the world around us hasn't seen an uptick in attendance, in fact to some it just looks desperate.

Of course, while we sit in the comfort of our pew and contemplate our regular attendance patterns in worship or whatever, realize that a generation of people didn't walk away from God because the previous generation was so good at holding Him out. The generation following Joshua abdicated their role in the home, in their community, in their churches to be the real raisers of the next generation. Whether by their words or by their actions, when they ate and were satisfied instead of praising God for His goodness, they displayed what they were really thinking, *"My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."*

As modern-day Christians this ought to make us squirm a bit in the pew. It certainly does me. I know full well that materialism and the love of stuff has set up shop in the storefronts of my heart and I look at generations gone by and the people the Gospel produced, and I realize fully that I don't stack up. But then that's what the law always does. It strips away the thought that I can do anything for myself that I may sit as the beggar before the cross, remembering what God has done.

Before, I said this listing was pretty Israel specific but then again perhaps, it's not. Perhaps, I have not been eyewitness to the miracles described in Deuteronomy, but I have beheld even greater miracles. Trapped in the bondage of sin, God sent a deliver greater than Moses to rescue me.

Parched in the wastelands and deserts of my own sinful nature, God produced the living water of my Savior Jesus to quench my thirst. Hungry for truth, the living bread of Christ has filled me up. Though I often forget the laws and decrees of God, He does not. Instead Jesus keeps them perfectly in a world that pressured Him to give up and enjoy life, against Satan who offered Him the world instead of pain. He didn't chase fad or attempt to compromise the truth to be more palatable to the world around Him. And when that snake Satan slithered away from Him that he might instead strike us, Jesus allowed Himself to be lifted up on the pole, on the cross, that our sins might be forgiven that the poison of the Devil, the World, our own sinful flesh might not claim our life. In His work, His hands give us real wealth, a real home, and an eternity with Him in heaven. And while I might not have the strength or the ability to change the world around me or even defeat the gods which rage within my own heart. The God who once went to war with Egypt, who regularly called Israel back to Him, lovingly can call us back as well. His Word, His Will, His love, is as powerful today as it has always been. It is exactly as God says it in our lesson, ***REMEMBER THE LORD YOUR GOD, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.***

What have you forgotten? Thanksgiving can be about so many things: family, food, fun and the frenzy of the days to come. As we rejoice in all of those blessings may we always find time to pause and ***REMEMBER THE LORD YOUR GOD*** who has given them all, who has given us Himself, that we might be with him forever. Amen.