

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.

His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of gods.

His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

His love endures forever.

to him who alone does great wonders,

His love endures forever.

who by his understanding made the heavens,

His love endures forever.

who spread out the earth upon the waters,

His love endures forever.

who made the great lights—

His love endures forever.

the sun to govern the day,

His love endures forever.

the moon and stars to govern the night;

His love endures forever.

to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt

His love endures forever.

and brought Israel out from among them

His love endures forever.

with a mighty hand and outstretched arm;

His love endures forever.

to him who divided the Red Sea asunder

His love endures forever.

and brought Israel through the midst of it,

His love endures forever.

but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea;

His love endures forever.

to him who led his people through the desert,

His love endures forever.

who struck down great kings,

His love endures forever.

and killed mighty kings—

His love endures forever.

19 Sihon king of the Amorites

His love endures forever.

20 and Og king of Bashan—

His love endures forever.

21 and gave their land as an inheritance,

His love endures forever.

22 an inheritance to his servant Israel;

His love endures forever.

23 to the One who remembered us in our low estate

His love endures forever.

24 and freed us from our enemies,

His love endures forever.

25 and who gives food to every creature.

His love endures forever.

26 Give thanks to the God of heaven.

His love endures forever. (NIV84)

Theme: Give thanks to the Lord—his Love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his love endures forever. I'm sure you recognize the opening words of our text. Not only do these words show up in a number of other psalms, but also in a few other books of the Old Testament as well. And of course, in a modified version from the King James, these words make up the second of the common table prayers. It is traditionally said after a meal—thanking God for the food he just gave. Their fitting words for Thanksgiving aren't they. On a day when we eat a large feast, when we are to be thankful for everything in our lives, we as Christians first thank God. At least we should, but we often forget to do so. So today we recall just a few of the blessings God has given us. And we will not help but give thanks to the Lord—for his love does truly endure forever.

How many times have you said this prayer in your life? How often do you actually think about the words of this prayer? We know the words

so well we can say them without thinking. We don't have the give the words a second thought. And we usually don't. At best we think about God's goodness in the food that we eat. But is if often, as far as it goes.

And at times we fail to thank God completely. We often forget to pray at meals. We often forget to thank God in general. The things we own, the skills we possess—we see them as things that we earned, that we worked hard for. There is no reason to thank God, because we did it all. We fail to realize that **every good and perfect gift comes from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights**. Being thankful is not something that comes naturally for us—that is why we need a day of thanks to remind us that we should be thankful—as if being thankful on just one day is good enough. And when we are thankful, it typically is for unimportant things—or we often over look what is most important.

That is why the writer of this psalm gives a number of reasons why we are to give thanks to God. The first of which, is that he created the world. It was **by his understanding that he made the heavens**. God didn't haphazardly throw the world together. All he had to do was speak a few words and things were suddenly there. When God created the world he looked at everything and saw that **it was very good**. Did you ever consider how perfect God made the world? If we just a little bit closer to the sun, it would be too hot and we would die. To far away, and it would be too cold to live. Everything on the earth is exactly how it needs to be. If it's just a little off, we would not be able to survive. When God created the world, he knew what he was doing. It couldn't have happened just by chance.

And even though this world is corrupted by sin, it still goes on. That is because God not only created the world, he also preserves the world. He takes care of his creation. He sends the right amount of rain and snow, he provides the correct nutrients in the soil, and provides the right temperature. The years may come and go, but the seasons remain—year in and year out. After the flood God made this promise to Noah. **As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease**. God does this for us. We are the crown of his creation—the world was made for us. And he takes care of his world so that we may give him praises. His love for us certainly does last forever.

The next reason the psalmist has to give thanks to God is that he saved the Israelites from slavery and from their enemies. And he also gave them the Promised Land. To do this God sent the 10th and final plague—that of the killing of the firstborn in all of Egypt. When Pharaoh made the people leave at that time God saved his people from slavery. But soon Pharaoh had changed his mind and went after the Israelites. He and his army caught up to the Israelites at the Red Sea. God parted the waters of the sea and the Israelites walked through on dry ground. But the Egyptians got stuck in mud and soon the walls of water came crashing down on them. God took care of his children by killing the most powerful person in the world with the most powerful army.

He then led them through the desert. He protected them from their enemies. He gave them plenty of food to eat and water to drink. When enemy kings tried to attack them, God quickly destroyed them. And when the Israelites crossed the Jordan, God gave them victory after victory. He settled his children in the Land of Canaan. The same land he promised to Abraham and his descendants. All of this was certainly good reason for the Israelites to give thanks to the Lord. And for us to.

We give thanks to God for a similar reason. He promises to always guard and protect us. The Psalmist says in verses 23 and 24 that we give thanks **to the One who remembered us in our low estate and freed us from our enemies**. The low estate we were in was caused by sin. We weren't always that way. Remember that when God created us we were very good—perfect, without sin. But Adam and Eve fell into sin when they were deceived by our enemy, the devil. Ever since then we were born as children of the devil. We were enemies of God, who hated him and wanted nothing to do with him. We could do nothing but sin against God and fail to obey his commands. We were **dead in our transgressions and sins**. We were on our way to eternal punishment.

But as Paul says in Romans, **God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us**. And he rescued us from our low estate. He took away our sins through his death on the cross. He reconciled us to God. We are no longer his enemies but we are his children through faith. We are no longer on our way to eternal damnation. But because of the work of Christ we

are on our way to eternal life. Our low estate has been lifted high. For we have been given the righteousness of Christ.

It was through his life, death, and resurrection that Jesus saved us from our enemies. Our spiritual enemies, that is. When Christ rose he destroyed sin, death, and Satan. Back in the garden of Eden directly after everything that was made perfect was lost into sin God came to Adam and Eve. And he made them this promise, **I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.** This first gospel promise was fulfilled in Christ. When he died Satan thought he had finally won. But he only bruised Jesus' heel. For Christ rose from the dead and crushed Satan's head. And he gives us his victory. If that was the only thing that God did for us, that would be enough reason for give him thanks eternally. For it is the height of God's love. The ultimate expression of his eternal love.

Of course there are other reasons why we give thanks to God. The Psalmist lists a few more. From the height of Jesus' love to perhaps one of the most practical expressions of God's love. From the depths of the universe to the table of a Christian family at supper time. He gives us food to eat. We give thanks **to the one who gives food to every creature.** Three meals a day. Snacks anytime you want. Any drink you desire. God certainly richly and daily provides for us. Tomorrow we'll sit down to a large feast with turkey, corn, potatoes and gravy, bread, pie, cranberries, and whatever else you so desire. We will eat to our hearts content, and then eat some more. Chances are, you won't be able to eat all the leftovers. And you will throw some out when it gets bad. God gives more than enough food to all his creation. And for that we give thanks.

The Psalmist wraps up this psalm with words similar to the beginning. **Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever.** From his perfect creation. To his perfect new creation. God's love goes full circle. And so does our love for him. His love endures forever, because he endures forever. And through the work of his Son, we will too. For soon Christ will return and all who believe in him will live forever with him in heaven. We will be raised perfect, just as we were created. Only this time it will be forever.

God will give this to us, not because of who we are or what we have done. But rather it is his grace that has moved him to love us so. And for that we give thanks. His love endures forever. And because of that, we will too.

As you are sitting at your dinner table tomorrow and say this prayer, don't just think about the glorious food that was placed before you. There is so much more. From from glorious creation to his protecting hand. From sending his son suffer and die to sending the Son on the Last Day. God has given us many wondrous gifts. Gifts to wonderful to explain. Gifts to numerous to count. Above all, God saved us. He brought us from our lowly state of sin and death, to the heights of forgiveness and eternal love in heaven. So think of all of that tomorrow as you pray—and every time you say it. **Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his love endures forever.** Amen.