

**Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.**

- <sup>2</sup> **Let Israel say:**  
    **“His love endures forever.”**
- <sup>3</sup> **Let the house of Aaron say:**  
    **“His love endures forever.”**
- <sup>4</sup> **Let those who fear the LORD say:**  
    **“His love endures forever.”**
- <sup>15</sup> **Shouts of joy and victory  
    resound in the tents of the righteous:**  
    **“The LORD’s right hand has done mighty things!**
- <sup>16</sup> **The LORD’s right hand is lifted high;  
    the LORD’s right hand has done mighty things!”**
- <sup>17</sup> **I will not die but live,  
    and will proclaim what the LORD has done.**
- <sup>18</sup> **The LORD has chastened me severely,  
    but he has not given me over to death.**
- <sup>22</sup> **The stone the builders rejected  
    has become the capstone;**
- <sup>23</sup> **the LORD has done this,  
    and it is marvelous in our eyes.**
- <sup>24</sup> **This is the day the LORD has made;  
    let us rejoice and be glad in it. (NIV 84)**

Theme: Give thanks to the Lord.

1. For he is Good.
2. His love endures forever.

As you sit down to eat with your family tomorrow, or whenever you have your Thanksgiving Feast there is a good chance that you’ll say the words of the first verse of Psalm 118. **Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his love endures forever.** Like many people you’ll use these words (which show up in a few other Psalms) at the end of your meal. They are words we use to thank God for the wonderful gift of food that he has just given us to for our enjoyment

and nourishment. But, and I think everyone here knows this, the Lord is good not just because of the food he gives us; but for all the other gifts he gives us—including his never-ending love and grace. And they are certainly fitting words for such an occasion, not just Thanksgiving. As the Psalmist writes, **this is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.** God has made this day for us and he has given this day for us to enjoy. And not just today, not just Thanksgiving, but each new day is a gift of his mercy. And each day he gives us many blessings. So we rejoice and give the Triune God thanks each and every day.

In our opening verse we give thanks to God for two over-arching reasons. The first is that he is good. We could talk for days about how good and great God is. But notice what the people shout in verse 15, **The Lord’s right hand has done mighty things. The Lord’s right hand is lifted high.** Since the right hand is the predominate hand for most people throughout the history of the world the right hand has been a symbol of power and might. Think of the “Arm and Hammer” logo—it’s drawing of a powerful right arm holding a hammer. And since we are talking about the figurative right arm of the almighty Lord, it doesn’t surprise us that it has done mighty things. That’s a no-brainer. But saying that God’s right hand has done mighty things is kind of like saying he is good. We could be much more specific and we can talk about his mighty things for hours on end.

So what mighty things has the right hand of the Lord done? On Thanksgiving many people think about this world—the world which he created by his power and might. We typically think of this this work as being done by God the Father. With just his word he created this world with all its complexities and intricacies. It is because of this act of creation and his preservation of this world that we are able to sit down with such great Thanksgiving Day feasts. It is his mighty hand that allows us to have clothes to wear and a warm place to sleep at night. His mighty hand gives us everything we need to live. Not to mention all the things that we have that we don’t need to live—things that make our lives easier and things that we enjoy, but that we don’t really need—things that many will concern themselves with on Black Friday.

And sadly, that where many people stop and focus for awhile. They are thankful for friends and family, for a good meal, they are thankful for a good year at work, or exciting benchmarks in their lives or the lives of their children. They are thankful for the good deals they are about to get for Christmas presents. Their focus is on the earthly gifts God blesses us with; and they miss out on all the other blessings. As the creator and caretaker of this world the Lord also guards and protects this world. He watches over and protects his entire creation. He guards and defends his people. In Psalm 121 we read, **The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life.** The Lord defends us against our enemies—against sin, death, and the devil. There are many blessings that we receive from God the Father that we don't even know about, because they are blessings that keep evil away from us.

Notice what the psalmist writes in verse 15, **Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous.** The righteous refers to the followers of God—true believers. And it is truly good that the Lord used his almighty power to make us righteous. Because that's not what we are by nature. No, by nature we are nothing but wicked and miserable sinners. By nature we can do nothing but sin against God. There is nothing good about us, not one little spark, every inclination of our hearts is only evil all the time. We don't know God and we want nothing to do with God.

Yet we are considered righteous through faith in him. That is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who brought us to faith through the gospel. He converted us from a child of the devil to a child of God; from a sinner to one who is considered righteous in God's sight. Make no mistake about it—that's not easy; we couldn't do it. It's no small thing when God the Holy Spirit brings someone to faith. And we know that since the Holy Spirit put so much work into bringing us to faith he will see to it that we are still in the faith at the end. Paul mentions this in Philippians one, **he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.**

That's the second reason of why we give thanks to God—**his love endures forever.** This word for love is often translated as

“lovingkindness.” It refers to the love and mercy that the Lord has on us. That **he is kind and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love.** You can kind of think of this word as the Old Testament equivalent of grace. That is, the undeserved love of God that he has for us sinners. What God gives us—whatever it is, but especially eternal life and the forgiveness of sins, is something that we don't deserve or earn. It's rather given to us as a free gift—given to us simply out of God's love for us sinners.

And this love, this lovingkindness or grace is forever. We enjoy it now. But we'll also enjoy it for eternity. God's love will never go away. It will never dissipate or fade. His love will lead him to show love to us for eternity.

How is it possible for him to do so? Because of God the Son, Jesus Christ. He is the stone that the builders rejected, which has become the capstone. He was rejected by men, and murdered on a cross. He was thrown away by men as something worthless. But he wasn't rejected by God. Instead God raised him from the dead, made him the capstone—or better yet, the cornerstone of the Church. It is on Christ that the Church is built—without him there is no Church.

Christ was rejected and murdered. But now he lives and he reigns over his entire creation and Church. **The Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.** It is the Lord who raised him from the dead so we rejoice and give him thanks. Because Christ's resurrection also means that we too will rise from the dead. That on the Last Day our bodies will be given a new life—a glorious and perfect life with our bodies in heaven forever.

So we can say along with Jesus, **I will not die, but I will live.** Well, we may one day. If Christ doesn't return before hand, all of us will die. Yet we don't have to be afraid of death. We will live. We will live in heaven forever. For our death—the end of life here on earth is the beginning of eternal life in heaven—which will become complete on the Last Day. We live even though we die.

That is the victory that resounds in the tents of the righteous. And really that term victory really means, salvation. So to put it another way, that is the salvation that echoes in the homes of all believers. Tomorrow and every day as you stare at the food placed before you, give thanks to God because he is good—not just because of the food you will or did eat. But because of all the other blessings he has given you, especially salvation. Don't just focus on all the earthly blessings

you enjoy, but let salvation echo in your dinning rooms each and every day. For his love is yours now and will be forever. Amen.