

# Thanksgiving

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[ 0 : 00 ] We may turn now together this evening to the Epistle to the Philippians, and in the first chapter continuing our studies in Philippians. And this evening, studying these verses, verses three to six, I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Now those of you who are present last Sabbath evening will remember how we noticed that the Epistle begins with the name of the sender or senders, and then it continues along the lines of most of the New Testament Epistles. By then making mention of those addressed, then there is the greetings which was always made up of a thanksgiving and a prayer, and then there was the body of the Epistle, and finally the benediction. And we noticed how in greeting the church at

Philippi, Paul began the greeting with these words, grace and peace be unto you. Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. He therein sought God's undeserving love for the church at Philippi, and sought that they would be conscious of this love indeed, in the sense in which they would be conscious of their reconciliation of their being reconciled, of their having peace with God, in other words, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, we also notice that the same salutation is found in most of the other epistles, in the Epistle to the Romans, for example, 1st and 2nd Corinthians also, Galatians, Ephesians, and the Epistle to the Romans. We have this apostolic or New Testament salutation or beginning of these epistles. Now, I wish this evening to go on to consider with you the, in more detail, the thanksgiving in this epistle. Paul says, I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Here then we have the thanksgiving of Paul in respect of the Church of Christ at Philippi. And you'll notice how he speaks, he says, I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. He is here very personal, and again he is speaking of his own personal God. As he does later on when he says, my God will supply all your needs. And of course, there's a purpose in this. There's nothing by chance in Scripture. It was for the edification and the good of the Church at Philippi that Paul used the expression, my God. And it is for the good of the Church in every age, indeed, that Paul uses this expression, my God. That is the God in whom, God, the God in whom, who has in Paul performed great things. Paul was a man in whom God had performed a work of grace, and manifested his grace in no uncertain way. Paul himself speaks of God's grace being manifest in him, when it pleased, in the fullness of time, when it pleased God so to do. And these Philippians knew something of the wonderful grace of God in Paul. They had seen it for themselves, and they had heard of it also in his imprisonment, how God had supplied his every need. But in speaking of his God, he is speaking, of course, of the God of his fathers. And it may be that that is what Paul has in mind, more than anything else, because he is a Jew. And this God is the God of the Jew. Of course, he is the apostle to the Gentiles. But it is the same God who had manifested himself in such a way to the Jew in the past, who had now in these last days, as he says, spoken unto us by his Son, Jesus Christ.

[ 5 : 49 ] The God of the Jew, the God of the Old Testament, is the God of the New Testament. When Paul embraced Christ, he didn't cease to worship God. Indeed, he began to worship the God of his ancestors.

He exercised, in essence, the same faith as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had, because God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And this is the God, the God of the covenant, the God of grace, the God who had given faith to the patriarchs, and had given faith to Paul, who had

sustained them and sustained Paul. This same God is the God whom he is worshipping now. And he says, I thank my God.

He doesn't say our God, but my God. And as I said, there are various reasons for his so doing. Upon every remembrance of you. He is giving thanks to God. Now you'll notice Paul is not complaining or murmuring about the fact that he is in prison. Notice the temper of the church in our own day.

We hear people talking about the bondage of the church. And it is through the church of Christ is in bondage because of sin. Because of our backsliding and our sloth. The church is in bondage. But what do we do about it? We go about murmuring and complaining. Not in so many words complaining against God. But in our heart of hearts, is it not true that it may be that we are murmuring against God? That we're no different to the Israelites of old after God had delivered them out of the land of bondage and brought them out into the wilderness to take them to the promised land. They began to murmur against Moses and Aaron. Therein murmuring against God. We are no different. Of course there is nothing in this world to sustain us. Of course we have difficulties and problems. But let us compare ourselves with the Apostle Paul. How many of us have had our feet in the stocks? How many of us have felt the stroke of the whip? How many of us have been stoned for our faith? How many of us have been imprisoned, starving and hungry and cold? None of us. But does Paul complain? Does he complain?

[ 8 : 14 ] Never. But he gives thanks. He praises God for the goodness of God to himself and to others. You see, Paul is not narrow-minded. A Christian is not narrow-minded. I think I said this before. I'll say it again.

The least narrow-minded person in the world tonight is the Christian. Because the Christian has a world view and a world mission. And he has every living soul on the face of the earth in mind in his prayer.

So it is with Paul. He is giving thanks to God for his goodness to himself personally. We know that. But he is particularly here thanking God for the goodness of God to this church at Philippi, to the church in general also. You see, he is not over-concerned about his own personal feelings. And this is what's wrong with so many of us. We go by our feelings. We're governed by our feelings. The just shall live by faith, not by feeling, my friends. And let us see the reasons we have to give thanks to God.

The word of God is full of these exhortations to the Christians to give thanks. If you can find nothing in your own life you ought to be thankful, well surely when you look at other people's lives you see many reasons to be thankful.

[ 9 : 29 ] But of course we must begin with ourselves. And which of us tonight dare say that we haven't much reason and many reasons to praise God. When we consider ourselves and our unworthiness, our rebellion, our sin, and we compare that with what we receive from the Lord.

Here then is thanksgiving. I thank my God. But you will notice that his thanksgiving here is not just a bare thanksgiving and a mention made of praising God.

He is praising God here in the course. And oh my friends, if only we began to praise God again. You know, we hear many complaints about the church in our day.

About our own church, our own denomination. And we know that we cannot escape condemnation. There are many things wrong. But I believe what is predominantly wrong with us is this, that we're not giving God his proper place.

I'm not saying that we should, that that in any way is going to change things. What I mean is we're not recognizing the goodness of God as we ought. Instead of seeing the goodness of God towards us, we're complaining about this, that, and the other thing, and going the wrong way about remedying the situation.

[ 10 : 38 ] Take for example our singing. Now many people say that people don't come to the three church because we sing psalms. I do not accept that. It may be that we do not attract people because of the shoddy way in which we sing psalms.

But I don't believe that anyone goes away simply because we sing psalms. And why do we sing psalms shoddily? It is because we know very little of the spirit of thanksgiving. We know very little of the spirit of true gratitude to God, and true joy in the Lord.

If we were rejoicing in the Lord and a spirit of thanksgiving in the Lord, it would be an automatic thing for us to sing gladly and joyfully and cheerfully to the Lord. But instead of that, we sit back as if what we're singing isn't worth singing at all.

My friends, there is nothing more precious than these psalms which God has given us in his word. The best is there for us to sing. And why use anything else?

It is the word of the living God. That is why it is so different to everything else. And that is the only reason why we sing it. We don't just want to be different. Isn't it? The only reason why we sing psalms is that therein we have the word of God.

[11:50] Hymns have their own place in the church and in the life of the church. But in the service of the sanctuary, surely, as I said, we should sing them. And let us sing them cheerfully as unto the Lord.

And if we have, I said, a spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving to God, no one need teach us to sing them in the proper way. It will be something that is spontaneous.

As singing as unto the Lord. But you will notice that this thanksgiving is accompanied here with prayer or with supplication. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine, for you all making requests with joy.

I thank God for you Philippians, he says. For you Christian men and women in Philippi. Every time I remember you, this spirit of gratitude arises in my heart to God. And as that arises in my heart to God, I pray.

You know how it is. You remember a Christian brother or a Christian sister. And you realize, you remember the grace of God in them. You have seen it.

[12:55] And oh, you think, oh well, I love that person in the Lord. And what happens? You're immediately praying. And your whole day has changed because of that. You got out of yourself.

Well, this is something of what was true with Paul. He prays as he gives thanks. There is here a petition, a prayer. And you will notice also, these prayers, they were made with joy.

There is such a thing here as joyous prayer. Now, that's completely divorced from the world's idea of Christianity.

Prayer to them is a laborious duty. But to the believer, in the believer's experience at one time or another, there are prayers that are made with joy and thanksgiving.

Now, not all prayer is not like that. There are times when the believer is burdened with sorrow, with pain, with grief, with trial. And we cannot rejoice on these occasions.

[14:03] But there are such prayers as are uttered with joy. Ah, joy because of the many reasons we have of thanksgiving and giving praise and thanks unto the Lord.

Giving praise and thanks to the Lord for his mercy towards us in Jesus Christ. For his grace. For his bountiful mercy towards us. And of course, Paul knew there was much good in the church at Philippi.

And that warmed his heart. To know that it was so. That there were those who loved the Lord there, who served the Lord there.

And that there were those who were truly the Lord in that place. But in considering the thanksgiving then, we will consider, first of all, the immediate reason for the thanksgiving.

The immediate reason for his giving thanks here. And we find that in verse 5. Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.

[15:11] For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. There is the immediate reason for his giving thanks to God. For your fellowship in the gospel.

Now what does he mean by fellowship here? I wonder what Paul would think of what you and I call fellowship in the gospel at the moment in the church.

I wonder if that would be acceptable to Paul in the least way as true fellowship in the gospel. It may be. That it is.

We must examine ourselves honestly as to whether we know anything of this fellowship of which Paul speaks. And the first thing we notice about such fellowship is this.

That it is a fellowship of grace. That it is not man-made. It is not organized like a society or a club.

[16:15] Any man can do that. That is man-made fellowship. And I'm not belittling that that has its own place in our society. But that is not the fellowship of which Paul speaks here.

That is not the fellowship of the Christian church. That is not the fellowship of the gospel. The fellowship of the gospel as I said is a fellowship of grace. It is sovereignly affected by the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is something that is the gift of the Spirit sent by the Father to the church. Now we hear not so much perhaps today of ecumenicity as we have in the past.

But there is still that idea abroad that if you join up together with various denominations then you have fellowship. How my friends, there is a fellowship amongst all believers.

No matter what denomination we belong to, it is already there. It isn't something that has to be organized. It is something that is of the Spirit.

[ 17 : 16 ] If you love the Lord Jesus Christ, you love the brethren. Remember in that chapter that we read together what John said. He said he gives a mark of grace. What is it? We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren, says he.

Do you? Do we love the brethren? Do we know this fellowship of the gospel which is spoken of here? That is indeed manifested in love to the brethren, which is the gift of the Spirit to the church. You see, my friends, apart from Christ and the Spirit, this fellowship is completely impossible. It cannot be. We can try and unite people, mold them together, make them come together, make them agree and so on, and we can never do it.

But when God the Holy Spirit comes into my heart and your heart and warms us as God's people, then there is unity, then there is fellowship. And our fellowship is not only with one another but with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Christ, in our effectual calling, draws us to himself by his word and spirit, unites us to himself with an eternal bond that cannot be broken, and in so doing he unites us to one another in him.

[ 18 : 31 ] And there is no power on earth or in hell that can separate the brethren, one from another, in the bonds of Christ's love. That is what Paul is speaking of here, the fellowship of the gospel.

The Spirit apprised to us the merits of Christ's death in our effectual calling. Our life is hid with Christ in God.

Our lives are together united in Christ. In other words, their lives are hid. Paul says, our lives, but that means all the believers who were raised and made alive in Christ and with Christ.

How, my friends, does your heart rejoice when you meet one of the brethren? When you meet one you know is the Lord's. No one need tell you even that they are. There is that witness of the Spirit that is so essential to real and true fellowship.

And as I said, nothing that man can do can either bring that about, nor can man bring that on.

[ 19 : 58 ] It is all of grace. A fellowship of grace then. And then we'll notice secondly that it is a fellowship of faith.

This fellowship of the gospel. A fellowship of faith. That is, all who know the fellowship of the gospel come to Christ by faith.

Faith which is the gift of faith. I'm not talking just now of that intellectual faith, of that historical faith that some may have. Within the visible church.

But I'm talking of that living faith. Whereby we are united to Christ. And whereby we enjoy the salvation purchased by Christ.

That faith that is Spirit given. That is the gift of God. And my believing friend, you know this evening that if you have faith that it indeed is of the gift.

[ 21 : 02 ] It is of God's giving. That it is not of ourselves. But this also is a fellowship of prayer. Is this not clearly taught us by Paul himself?

He says, every time I remember you Philippians, what happens? I pray for you. I pray for you.

Believers pray individually for themselves of course.

But they pray for one another. They pray for one another in the silent closet. Of their hearts. In their homes.

Oh, we thank God for the prayer of the saints. We thank God first of all for the intercession of Christ. But I thank God tonight for the intercession of God's people. Do you?

Or are you one of these people who lives a lonely life as a Christian? All alone. You can live quite well on your own. Well, you ought to question your confession if that is the case. That is not the spirit of Christianity.

[ 22 : 04 ] That's not the spirit of the gospel. Remember that the Christian church was known in the New Testament because of their love one to another.

Behold how they love one another. That was how they were marked out in the world. Because of their concern and love one for another. Are you praying for your brother, my friend?

Are you praying for your sister? Do you know something of their needs? I believe if you are truly alive to the Lord, my friend, no one need tell you their needs in one respect.

The Lord will tell you it. And it may be that you need not even know. And he may never tell you their specific needs. But when he puts them as a burden on your heart, you'll have to pray for them. And you cannot but pray for them. And that is what we need. Men and women constrained to pray in such a way that they cannot but pray. Bearing one another's burdens at a throne of grace.

[ 23 : 04 ] This is a fellowship of prayer. And what fellowship this is. But there is not just that individual prayer. There is the united prayer of God's people. Remember how we noticed in the confession of Lydia. We noticed there that they were gathered at the riverside in prayer.

And it may be that people mistook what I said last week, Sabbath evening. I'm just saying this, by the way. I was corrected in saying the Ganges. It wasn't the Ganges I said. It's the Ganges, I said. It's spelt the A-N-G-I-T-E-S.

The Ganges is in India, of course. That, by the way. Well, as they were gathered there, they were praying. It was a prayer meeting.

It was blessed. God was in the midst of them. And the women were gathered praying. Some people ask me, is it right to have women's prayer meetings? Of course it's right to have women's prayer meetings. God forbid that I should forbid anyone to pray.

Or to gather in groups to pray. We only pray that there would be more of that. This is what we need. These women were gathered together. But would they have prayed with Paul and Silas?

[ 24 : 08 ] They're never, never. Oh no, they were Jews, remember. They would not. Once these men arrived, they would leave it in the hands of the men. Because that was how God had taught them so to do.

There is then a fellowship of, this fellowship is one of grace, one of faith. It is one of prayer. But above all, as I've already sought to say, it is a fellowship of love.

A fellowship of love, drawn to Christ. They are drawn to one another in the bonds of Christ's love. Notice what he says in verse 7 in regard to these Philippians.

He says, I have you in my heart. When Paul says that, he means it. They are there in his heart. He is carrying them with him. They are deep down, deep rooted in his heart.

Their concerns, their affairs, their worries, their fears. He knows all about them and he's carrying them in his heart. Verse 8, God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

[ 25 : 08 ] He is separated from them. But he longs after them. He's longing for their fellowship. Can you do without the fellowship of your fellow believer, my friend? Ask yourself tonight this question.

And I must ask myself this question also. Can we do without the fellowship of our fellow believers? If we are Christians, I don't believe we can. We must have their fellowship.

And if we are separate, although we are content in believing it is God's will, Paul was quite content to be in prison knowing that the gospel was going to be furthered according to his being because he was in prison.

At the same time, he was longing for the fellowship of his fellow Christians. He longed for them. And he longed after them in the bowels of Jesus Christ, in the very heart of Jesus Christ, in the very depths of Christ.

You see, they were implanted in Christ and everything was in accordance with that. In chapter 2, verse 2, notice what he says.

[ 26 : 13 ] Fulfill ye my joy that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord of the one mind. There you have this fellowship again. And my friends, let's ask ourselves tonight, is this true of us?

Are we all like-minded with regard to the gospel and the cause of Christ among us? And men's souls among us? Have we the same love?

Are we of one accord, of one mind? If not, there's something wrong. We need not expect prosperity in the spiritual sense. If this is not so, this is what Paul desired for them.

Ah, my friends, if we have the love of God in our hearts, and if we know the fellowship of the gospel, this is what we desire. This is what we want above all else, that our hearts be filled with love to Christ and to one another in the spirit of Christ.

And indeed, have this fellowship of love one with another. What does Christ himself say? A new commandment I give unto you. Ah, we're so concerned with the commandments.

[ 27 : 18 ] There are people who are always on about the law. The law. Here then is the law. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.

That is the depth to which Christ expects you and I to love one another. Even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

This then is the fellowship of which he speaks. A fellowship of love. And this is his immediate reason for thanking the Christian church at Philippi for their fellowship in the gospel.

It is a fellowship also in which we help one another. Again in that chapter we read in John's gospel. We read how how contradictory it is for us to say that we love one another and yet close our hearts, our minds to one another's needs.

It is so contrary to the spirit of gospel fellowship. It is so contrary to the spirit of Christ. It is a fellowship also in promoting, of course, the work of the gospel.

[ 28 : 43 ] Oh, may God grant that we will be like the church at Philippi, united in one mind, striving for the good of the gospel, for the good of men and women's souls.

There are men and women on our doorsteps, in our community, around this church, dying without Christ, without hope, without God in the world. And you and I are foolishly allowing ourselves to be driven about to and fro by the devil with these petty little things that are marring the fellowship of the church of Christ.

Oh, this fellowship is something that, as I said, is of grace. Something wonderful. It is a fellowship in promoting the work of the gospel. A fellowship in warfare.

We struggle side by side, my friends, against a common foe. And therefore, let us, let us remember that and pray for one another.

And you will notice what Paul says here, that this fellowship of which he speaks, that it was what we might call a lasting or continual principle amongst the Christians in Philippi.

[ 29 : 59 ] Always and every prayer of mine, for you all make a request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. This is what he could say of them.

From the first day that the gospel came to them till that day, all these days, weeks, months, years, they had continued in that fellowship. What a precious place that would have been to live in.

And all my friends, may God grant that we will seek to cultivate the same. But let us notice, secondly, the ultimate reason for his thanksgiving. We've been seeking to consider together the immediate reason, but the ultimate reason for his thanksgiving is this in verse 6.

Being confident of this very good, very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Now there he has been giving thanks for that immediate reason for their fellowship in the gospel.

God's work in you. And he goes on to speak of this work of God. He says, being confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you, that he will continue that work.

[ 31 : 11 ] This is his confidence. His confidence was that ultimately this would be the case, that God would continue until the day of Christ this work of grace in them.

And we have in these words the doctrine of what we speak of as the perseverance of the saints.

There are some people who don't like this doctrine. Why? I don't know. I think it's one that is most comforting to the church of Christ to know that where God has begun a work, he will complete it.

And you'll notice he speaks of this work as the work of grace. God's work in you. He has begun a work in you. It's not of yourselves.

It is all of his grace. Sovereign grace, my friend, working in the soul. It is good, a good work. And remember, our Lord said to one of old, why callest thou me good?

[ 32 : 17 ] There is none good but God, so that there is nothing good but what comes from this good God. And this indeed is what we have in the work of grace. The direct outworking of the purposes of God's grace in the soul in our effectual calling and regeneration.

This work is a good one. It is good in its origin. It has begun with God. It came from God. It's good in its quality because it is again of grace.

It is good in its purpose and result. It cannot be otherwise. What a good work it is. And this is the work of which we ought to speak. And this is not a shoddy work.

Oh no. It is the work of God and it cannot be. And you'll notice out of the distress of a prison in Rome comes this message of cheer.

What is the message? It is this God will not leave this work unfinished. he will complete it. There will be opposition to it from outside and from inside.

[ 33 : 28 ] There will be much opposition to it but this is the truth. God has begun this work and because he has begun this work he will finish it. Lay hold of that tonight my believing friend. It may

be that the devil is telling you that you are going to fall from grace or you have already fallen from grace because of a certain sin you have committed.

but of any man sinned my friends we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous. And he who has begun a work in us will complete that work.

My covenant I will not break nor change that which by my mouth I speak says God. When we believe that a saint can fall from grace we have lost sight of the covenant with a God who says I give unto them eternal life.

None can pluck them out of my hands. What does David say? Surely that which concerneth me the Lord will perfect make. David in his distresses David in his anxiety David in his need David in his sin is still safe in the hands of almighty God I have given thee upon the palms of my hands and your walls are continually before me.

What did Christ say? And this is the Father's will that sent me that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing but should raise it up again at the last day.

[ 34 : 54 ] That is what Christ says. He who hath begun a good work he will fulfill it he will complete it. Again he says I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Now my friends as I said people or certain people in the church of Christ evangelicals who don't like this doctrine. How they can say that they love the doctrines of grace and yet that there's no time for such a doctrine as this I don't know I cannot understand they'll have to answer for themselves.

But I feel that it is perhaps because they believe that if you believe in this doctrine you're just going to sit back and do nothing about it but that isn't the way Paul teaches at all that isn't how scripture teaches this doctrine at all this isn't what the Bible teaches.

Oh no in his teaching Paul links divine preservation which is another way of speaking of the perseverance of the saints he links divine preservation with human perseverance so that he goes on in the next in the next chapter to speak thus work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who worketh in you you see man is not passive in this preserving grace of God or persevering grace of God not at all my friends but man is most active and again in the context you notice that this preservation is not for selfish purposes but to qualify us for work that is how he is speaking here of God preserving his people being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work and you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ enabling them to continue in the fellowship of the gospel to the grace to the glory of God the Father ah my friends then if this was a word of comfort to the church at Philippi 2000 years ago is it not a word of comfort to ourselves today to know that it is God who is in control to know that our salvation rests in Christ and that where he has begun a work he will complete that work until the day of Jesus Christ and just a word or two finally on the day of Christ on the day of Jesus Christ in verse 10 it is spoken of as the day of Christ the same words are used in 1 Corinthians slightly different there it is the day of our Lord Jesus in 1 Thessalonians it is the day of the Lord what day is it then well someone might say well this is the day of the Lord well in one sense it is it is the day of grace and my friends let us remember that this is the last days these are the last times God is speaking to us in these last days by his son Jesus Christ speaking in mercy to you and unto me calling us to repentance so that it is yet day let us repent and believe the gospel let us commit our souls our hearts our all to this Christ for there is another day coming of which is spoken here we believe and that is the day in which Christ will be manifested in his glory when he will come to be made wonderful in those that believe to take vengeance likewise upon those who know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ when my friends he will be met by his bride the church the last day in other words ah but someone says these saints died before the last day and more than likely we will die before the last day yes that is true but the work of grace will continue long after we are gone you know my friends that's another lesson we have to learn we are so concerned as if everything depends on us now I'm not saying we shouldn't be concerned but let us not live as if everything depends upon us everything depends upon

[ 39 : 14 ] God not upon us and he will use us according to his own will and purposes and long after we are gone no one will remember we were ever here at all but the work of grace will go on in the hearts of others and we believe that generations will yet arise that will glorify his name as you and I have never done that even from amongst those who are but babes and sucklings at this moment God is going to build a church that is to be to the praise and glory of his name long after we are gone and all they and us together will meet Christ ultimately as his bride or he will meet with us

when everything will be perfect and as John says there will be no more sin there will be no more trial there will be no more sorrow there will be no more tears when forevermore the saints of God will sing the praises of the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne singing to him who washed us and cleansed us from our sins in his own body upon the tree well Paul was giving thanks to

God for that which he had seen in the church at Philippi their fellowship in the gospel but also more particularly for the fact that he knew that this God of his was going to continue that work among them and surely we have much reason to give praise to God things are not what we would like them to be but there is much reason for us to thank God all the same and that is what we ought to dwell upon and pray to God himself to correct the wrongs pray to God to bring order out of the chaos pray to God to raise up from among ourselves and among others men and women boys and girls who will love the Lord be blessed word to us let us pray oh eternal one we beseech thee this night to bless thy word to our hearts and grant us thy grace that we may indeed take to heart what thy word teaches us stir us up in our hearts that we may praise the

Lord humble us in thy presence in acknowledgement of our sinfulness and waywardness and teach us to wait upon thee that we be taught of thee and go before us pardoning sin for Jesus' sake amen