**“Thanksgiving”**

**2018**

**Ps 107:1 “Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.”**

**In 1827, magazine editor and writer Sarah Josepha Hale—who was famous for writing the nursery rhyme “Mary Had a Little Lamb”—launched a campaign to establish Thanksgiving as a national holiday.**

**For 36 years she published numerous editorials and sent scores of letters to governors, senators, presidents and other politicians.**

**Abraham Lincoln finally heeded her request in 1863, at the height of the Civil War, in a proclamation entreating all Americans to ask God to “commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife” and to “heal the wounds of the nation.”**

**He scheduled Thanksgiving for the final Thursday in November.**

**We have arrived as a nation in need of the same exhortation to prayer for the suffering and wounded in body and soul.**

**Many in California mourn over the loss of loved ones and of all their worldly goods over the raging fires that engulfed their state.**

**Hate and unrest fester like a cancer in a nation bitterly divided on political issues.**

**It seems that hardly a week passes that we don’t read or hear of yet another mass shooting spree snuffing out the lives of scores of innocent bystanders.**

**Across the world, terrorism continues to rear its ugly face in terrible acts of violence.**

**And sometimes we wonder, “What can we do to make a difference in a world gone mad?”**

**The Bible has an answer—we can turn to the God of Scripture, the one true God of Creation, and call out on Him!**

**It begins with recovering what is almost extinct in our world—giving thanks to God.**

**The Bible says in Romans 1, ”Because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were they THANKFUL; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (1:21).**

**The downward spiral of a people or a nation begins with not being thankful.**

**When thanksgiving toward God disappears, darkness rushes in.**

**Romans 1:21 goes on to say that the unthankful “became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”**

**From there the unthankful civilization Paul has focused on found itself on the slippery slope of sexual depravity and minds that could not think straight anymore—what the Bible calls a “debased mind.”**

**So, amongst the many positive things I could say about being thankful, here are a quick three:**

**I. Being thankful reminds us of where our blessings come from.**

**“Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17).**

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**II. Being thankful helps us keep our troubles in balance.**

**Unthankful people count their troubles, while thankful people count their blessings.**

**Being thankful prevents you from being overwhelmed with the negatives of life.**

**If you’re focused on the good things God has done, it saves you from the lie that all is bad and gloomy.**

**In the Psalms, David has a negative thought, “Will the Lord turn away forever? Will He never show favor again? 8 Has His loving-kindness stopped forever? Has His promise come to an end for all time? 9 Has God forgotten to be loving and kind?”**

**But then he stops this negative train of thinking, “I will remember the things the Lord has done. Yes, I will remember the powerful works of long ago. 12 I will think of all Your work, and keep in mind all the great things You have done” (Ps. 77:7-12).**

**This is what being thankful does. We choose to remember the good things God has done, and to thank Him!**

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**III. Being thankful is how we practice the presence of God in our lives.**

**Again, the Psalmist wrote, “Enter His gates with thanksgiving a*nd* His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name” (Ps. 100:4).**

**When we thank God, it says He literally “inhabits the praises of His people!” (Ps. 22:3)**

**Let’s stand to give thanks to God by taking communion, showing thanks for the gift of His Son and the life He gave!**