

This Thanksgiving, I'm Thankful for...

Grace, mercy and peace are yours, from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Growing up in the Brohn household, we always had the same tradition every Thanksgiving, and maybe it sounds familiar to some of you. Before we could have a single bite to eat, we had to go around the table and say what we were thankful for. As a teenager, that was agony. Looking around the table, assaulted by all the smells and thoughts of food I was about to eat, I could barely wait! I was so impatient that I wanted to rush through the prayer and get to the good stuff! I didn't think it was important enough to take the time to think about the different ways God might have blessed me.

However, this Thanksgiving, Psalm 145 shows us that we have much to be thankful for! This psalm was a psalm of David, and it comes right before the final five psalms of the book. These last five psalms are all written to praise God, and Psalm 145 serves as a great introduction to those psalms of praise. In David's outburst of praise and thankfulness, we find through his words that we also have much to be thankful for. We can be thankful that God provides for our physical needs, but also that he provides for our spiritual needs as well.

I. God Provides for My Physical Needs

Look at the personal way that King David describes God in Psalm 145. Verse 15 and 16 tell us, **The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.** Everything looks to God to fulfill their desires.

I don't want you to underestimate what I mean when I say that everything looks to God. Every single living thing on earth looks to God to satisfy its desires. The corn, potatoes, beans that we eat on Thanksgiving... God provided the sun and rain to give those plants the nutrients they needed to grow before they ended up on your table. The turkey you eat? Well those same plants that he causes to grow also feed every animal on earth. If he does all of this just for the plants and animals on earth, how much more does he provide us, the crown of his creation! All the food that is set before you tomorrow, is all there because of God. He has opened his hand in blessing upon all things!

Think about that for a bit. This section of scripture pictures God's hand in a couple of different ways. Here in verse 16 David says that God **opens his hand**. When you hold something in your hand and want to give it to someone, what do you do? Do you hold on tightly for dear life? No. You open up your hand and give it away. God doesn't hold back. He doesn't open his hand up just a little bit. He's not only letting a few blessings trickle out through a couple of open fingers. He opens his hand completely and pours out his blessing on every living thing!

Not only does God provide for all, but he also **satisfies the desires of every living thing**. The picture behind the word "satisfy" really emphasizes just how much God has blessed us. Think of it this way. After you've sat and eaten your fill of turkey and potatoes and pie, think of all that is leftover. You've had all you can handle, and there's still so much leftover! This is how God pours out his gifts on us. He fills up every need and desire of every living creature on earth, so much so that he even gives beyond what is needed!

Not only have we been given exactly what we need, but Psalm 145 also tells us that God provides **at the proper time**. He promises you and me that he will provide exactly what each of us needs, and it will be exactly when we need it. He knows all things and is always doing that is best for his children.

That little phrase, "at the proper time," can be a little difficult to come to grips at times. It's tempting to think, "I'm not patient enough to wait. God, my 'proper time' is right now! If you don't help me out, I may never survive." Greed works its way into my heart, and the temptation is there to never be satisfied. "I haven't gotten enough! God what you've given me isn't enough! You've given my neighbor so much.!" Sometimes, it's simply thinking that I know better than God. "God, I know what's best for me. What you've given me isn't right! I know what I need!" Instead of thankfulness for God's providing for us and his timing, we respond to his gifts with greed, arrogance and ingratitude!

And what is God's reaction to this dissatisfaction for his gifts? While his hand may be open to us and pouring out blessing upon all things, he says he also will raise it up to smack down upon those who do evil.

Verse 20 tells us that **all the wicked he will destroy**. God does not look favorably upon those who do evil. His promise to those who is that he will raise up his hand in order to crush them. God makes it clear. My discontent, my ingratitude for the gifts he has given me will lead only to eternal death. Eternity in hell is definitely not something to be thankful for!

II. God Provides for My Spiritual Needs

But God has not raised up his hand against us. Instead, he reaches out, and pulls us from our troubles. Even though we deserved to be squashed flat as a pancake by his hand, he instead had compassion on us. We might think that we know what is best for ourselves, but when it comes down to it, God looked at us, in us, even through us and saw our greatest need. We needed salvation from sin more than anything else in the world. God provided exactly what we needed. He gave us his Son, Jesus. And look at his hands. He opened up his hands to be nailed to a cross.

Jesus' sacrifice was not some spur of the moment decision. As our Psalm tells us in verse 17, **the LORD is righteous in all his ways, and faithful in all he does**. God is faithful and loving in everything that he does. From the very beginning, all the way back at the fall into sin, God demonstrated his love for mankind. He easily could have wiped out Adam and Eve and simply started over. But he loves his creation, and so he promised to send someone who would right their wrongs. God sent Jesus to pay not only for the sins of Adam and Eve, but also for the sins of the whole world! All those years, and God never broke his promise. Verse 19 emphasizes this again. **He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them**. God is faithful. He will save us whenever we cry out to him. We have nothing to fear!

David adds on to his praise of God's faithfulness by emphasizing just how close God is to us. **The LORD is near to all who call on him. (18)** God is always near. He is not far away, and out of reach. He is close by. He isn't going to miss a single thing you ask of him. He will always hear our cries for help, for forgiveness, even for understanding as we await his response. What a comfort that is! Our God, who has all things in his hand, who is in control of all things, and provides for all things, cares enough for you and me to listen to every silly worry and want that we may have.

Take note of the second half of verse 18. **The LORD is near to all...who call on him in truth**. We don't want our prayers to be an outward thing to make it seem to others as if I am godly. After all, this was the attitude that Jesus was warning against in our gospel lesson. The people came to him for the wrong reasons. They wanted help with their physical needs. But Jesus redirects them. We want to seek the **food that endures to eternal life**. That food is Jesus and his Word. He is the one who sustains us.

So we come to God, crying out to him for eternal sustenance, trusting that he will also care for our physical needs in a way that he knows best. But this cry is not just in our times of struggle. It's in the good times as well. God always wants to hear our prayers. As we come together to celebrate Thanksgiving, it's fitting that we emphasis prayers of thanksgiving. We thank God for all the physical material blessings he has given to all of us. He provides all that we need to survive our lives here on earth. But more importantly, he has given to us what we need to live eternally. He has given us salvation through Christ Jesus! There is no greater truth than this, that satisfies our spiritual needs and strengthens our faith in God.

As amazing as this is, it can still be difficult to stay patient. Sometimes, God gives us exactly what we ask for. At other times, what God gives us may be different from what we think we need, or he even might say no!. We don't realize what we truly need until God provides it for us. However, this Psalm gives us the confidence and assurance that we need. Even though we may not see any results, or the results were different than what we expected, God always answers our prayers in a way that will satisfy our every need.

This Thanksgiving, we offer the same prayer that King David does in verse 21. **My mouth will speak the praises of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name!** As we see God opening his hand to us, we lift up our own hands in prayer to thank him for this. We thank him for our physical blessings; healthy bodies, loving family and friends, tasty food, amazing pie. But we also thank God for the most important gift that he gave us. Even though we may look at his gifts with jealousy or ingratitude, God still loves us. he still satisfies our spiritual needs. He has given us peace, salvation, comfort and security as he holds us in his loving hand, providing for all that we need. So we pray along with David that all people have this same thankfulness for all that God provides. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is certainly good! Amen.