

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

NOVEMBER 2024

**Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,
for His steadfast love endures forever. (Psalm 136:1)**

The above verse begins a psalm that recounts in detail everything God has done for His people, with each act of God punctuated with "*for His steadfast love endures forever*". The psalm is traditionally said in the concluding part of the Passover celebration, the celebration of God's greatest act of love on behalf of Israel. In so doing, we remember the reason behind each act of God's favor: *His steadfast love endures forever*.

It is the month of November, and this month is best known for the celebration of Thanksgiving, a holiday that is unique to the United States and Canada. We are the only two countries that set aside a day specifically to give thanks. I guess if any country does not affirm a higher deity, there is no reason to give thanks, for to be thankful one must have a source to which thanks is directed. For those who hold no conviction of a superior being, they would have only themselves to pat on the back for the good in their life, fully aware that all things are subject to change and loss. Indeed, a most precarious state in which to live.

The pilgrims are acknowledged as the origin for the practice of celebrating a meal for the purpose of giving thanks. They came to this country seeking to be free to worship God as they believed. Not knowing if they would survive, they took a leap of faith. When their first year in the newfound land was over and they had ample provision to sustain themselves with the help of the indigenous people of the land, they were truly grateful to God and expressed it with a meal in which the whole community gathered. They had experienced once again the truth, *the steadfast love of God that endures forever*.

Fast forward to 2024 where systems have been developed to provide plenteous means of providing what is needed for survival. We have gotten good at taking care of ourselves which inevitably diminishes the need to acknowledge a higher authority as the source of all our goodness. Even though a day of thanksgiving is celebrated, it becomes hollow without an acknowledgement of a source from which all the goodness flows. Without a faith in a divine being whose *steadfast love endures forever*, anxiety and fear become more prevalent for there is no guarantee that the goodness we enjoy cannot come to an end. Mental health issues will abound when there is no faith in a God whose *steadfast love endures forever* and that is a fundamental reason for the issues that plague our culture in these days.

Thanksgiving comes once again. It is a time to recognize that there is a greater reason than our own ingenuity for all that we are blessed with. It is because of the *steadfast love of God which endures forever* Who has made covenant with us in which He has promised in our faithfulness to Him that all things needed will be given to us as well (Matthew 6:33). Let us never forget that all we are blessed with is because we are loved by the divine authority over the whole universe. There is nothing to fear, for the God who has met our needs is meeting our needs and will always meet our needs, and does so out of His love for us and His *steadfast love that endures forever*.

May you sit around your Thanksgiving table with family and friends and be at peace for despite circumstances around us, we are being watched over and cared for by God's *steadfast love that endures forever*. There is nothing to be anxious about. God is with us. Thanks be to God!

With love,

