

PATRIOTIC WORSHIP SERVICE
5 PM SATURDAY, JULY 4 /9 AM SUNDAY, JULY 5, 2009

MESSAGE OH, GIVE THANKS! Psalm 107

Intro. My text for our 4th of July weekend ,from Psalm 107, are very, very familiar words to us. They are part of our common table prayers. Let's say them together:

**OH, GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD AND HIS LOVE ENDURES
FOREVER!**

Psalm 107 continues to say, **'Let the redeemed of the Lord say this ... those the Lord has gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south'**. Psalm 107 is a return from Babylonian Captivity psalm, but its contents can very easily apply to us today. As the people of the United States of America we have been gathered from the east and the west and the north and the south and as the Holy Christian Church we are the redeemed of the Lord through our Lord Jesus Christ. So, here we are God's gathered and redeemed people on this 4th of July weekend 2009 applying God's Word to ourselves in our giving thanks unto the Lord. But is it proper for us to give thanks for these United States of America? After all we live in a far different America on July 4, 2009 than July 4, 1776. Over these 233 years we can recognize an awful lot of flaws in our nations history; the inhumane treatment of native Americans relocating them and confining them to reservations as we northern European immigrants took their land or how about the awful American institution of black African slaves. And certainly we don't need to go back centuries or even decades to recite the sins of our nation, how about today, abortion of the unborn, the redefinition of marriage, the greed of Wall Street and Main Street for that matter. In the past, in the present and in the future our nation will face corruption in leadership, in institutions and in us as the citizens of these United States of America. So can we in good conscience truly give thanks when we consider our nations blemishes, wounds, sores, calluses, and out and out sins? The first verse of our Introit for this 4th of July from **Proverbs 14** says

'Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people'.

Here's another way to ask that question: can a child give thanks for their parents? Even though say one of their parents is an unbeliever and the other parent has failed in numerous ways? Well, of course they can give thanks! A child can love such parents with all their weaknesses and flaws and failures and give thanks **'TO THE LORD'** for all the blessings God has given the child through his parents. The key isn't the parents or our nation or even our individual faults and failings, our thanks is due to **'THE LOVE OF**

OUR LORD', who has gathered us as a nation and who has redeemed us through Jesus Christ! So, even though these United States of American has its many, many flaws; past, present and future, we can, we must as people gather 'from the east and the west and the north and the south' this 4th of July week end to sing our hymns, to say our prayers, to hear God's Word, to wave our flags, in repentance and in faith as God's redeemed people, saying together:

**OH, GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD AND HIS LOVE ENDURES
FOREVER!**

And that is what I want to talk to you about a little bit this 4th of July weekend, God's love upon us as 'one nation under God' which moves us give Him thanks and praise.

I. As Christian American's on the top of our list of thanks to the Lord is the heritage of our faith which has been passed down through all the generations of our United States of America. The vast majority of the people we call our Founding Fathers were godly men and women by their own testimony as Christians; the 3 Branches of Government Executive, Legislative, Judicial, the statement 'all people are created equal', the Bill of Rights and many, many more are all established upon Judeo/Christian beliefs of sin and grace, of law and order, of unity of spirit, and of conviction of conscience.

The early German immigrants who began Immanuel Lutheran, Plainview in 1875 were leaving Europe not only for financial gain due to the Homestead Act. But the early members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod were fleeing what's called the Prussian Union of the state church, government church, so they could worship and preach and teach God's Word in freedom not under government regulation and control.

The very foundations of our nation, our state, our community have been on Christian morals, ethics, principles and faith in the Good News of Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world, our Redeemer. We are the recipients of those foundations of our American society and culture. And that gives us more than enough reason to gather this 4th of July week end and sing our hymns and songs, offer our prayers and praise, wave our flags, and affirm God's Word together:

**OH, GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD AND HIS LOVE ENDURES
FOREVER!**

II. Now if that wasn't enough to give thanks on this 4th of July weekend, here's another reason to cheer those words of Psalm 107 as those gathered from east and west, from north to south, whether that is east and west, north and south from all around the world or just simply in and around Plainview. For a moment picture the physical topography of our nation: from east coast to west coast, from Canadian border to Mexican border. What diversity we enjoy; in Maine there is the rugged Arcadia National Park, in Florida there is the archipelago of the Florida Keys, in California there is beautiful San Deigo Bay, in Washington there is majestic Mt. Olympus. This summer Sharon and I will travel from the head waters of the Mississippi River near Bemiji to its mouth in New Orleans. We will travel from the North Shore of Lake Superior to the Gulf Shores of Alabama. Travel anywhere, from Alaska to Hawaii, from New York to Portland, from N. Dak. to Texas and you'll see a great nation from east and west, from north to south. Just for the vast variety of our nation we have much to give thanks unto the Lord.

And not only is our nation beautiful in its topography. Think of its bounty. Just take a little drive from the east and west, from the north and south in Goodhue, Wabasha, Winona, Olmsted counties and see the crops and the industry and farms and homes and businesses and natural resources. The average standard of living for us American's even in these tough economic times far exceeds other nations of the world. Surely we can sing our hymns and songs, offer our prayers and praise, wave our flags and affirm God's Word together:

**OH, GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD AND HIS LOVE ENDURES
FOREVER!**

III. The main body of our introit today is taken from Deuteronomy 8 saying to God's Old Testament people:

'Take heed lest you forget the Lord your God ... beware lest you say in your heart, my power and the might of my hands have gotten me this wealth ... and if you forget the Lord your God ... your nation shall surely perish'.

Those words of God still apply today. We as God's redeemed people gathered from east and west, north and south must not 'forget the Lord our God' for it is by His unchanging love that we do not perish as a nation or as individual people. Times certainly change, situations of life certainly change, cultures certainly change, societies certainly change, rise and fall, succeed and fail. The Babylonian Captivity of Psalm 107, the entering of the Promised Land of Deut. 8, the 13 Original Colonies of 1776, the German

immigrants of 1875 have all changed as will our times of 2009, but the Lord our Redeemer and His Word remains unchanged 'Let the redeemed of the Lord say this ... those He has gathered from the lands' no matter what time or place or generation we live we must say together:

'OH, GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD AND HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER!'

The freedoms we celebrate this 4th of July week end have never been free. Many of those Founding Fathers who signed that Declaration of Independence 233 years ago were hounded and persecuted and many died for their convictions which we enjoy today. Those early German immigrants who founded Immanuel Lutheran were poor tenant farmers who brought nothing but what they could carry to this greenwood prairie out in plain view. But, just look around and affirm what their sacrifice has produced by the grace of God as He gathered them 'from east and west, from north and south, as His redeemed people'. As the present generation of gathered and redeemed people we have a God given responsibility to gather in worship and praise and pray and sing and wave our flags and raise our cheers to our God who loves us so much to make us citizens of this great land even with its faults and failings. We have a God given responsibility as citizens of these United States of America to participate as citizens with our voice, our vote, our civil disobedience at times as our Founding Fathers and Lutheran immigrants did to establish this great nation, state and community. As a redeemed and gathered people we have a responsibility to give thanks for those in our armed forces who are in harms way right now, so we can enjoy the freedoms of our picnics and camp outs, our reunions and vacations, our 4th of July worship. Conclusion: By the grace of God we have been made citizens of heaven through our Redeemer Jesus Christ who has not only redeemed us of our personal individual sins but has redeemed us of our national sins as well, but in the mean time we have been made citizens of these awesome United States of America with important responsibilities on earth as well. As God's redeemed people, His Holy Christian Church gathered from east and west, north and south, as the United States of America we have the responsibility to say and to lead our community, state and nation in saying, together, so we do not perish:

OH, GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD AND HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER. Amen