

Sermon Psalm 145 10th Sunday after Pentecost Series B

Sermon: 10th Sunday after Pentecost – St. Thomas 22nd Anniversary

Text: Psalm 145 (vv.1-4)

Theme: Praise the Lord!

Goal: To praise the Lord for the blessings poured on His people

Dear Friends,

Introduction: Birthdays and anniversaries are usually moments of joy and fellowship. We experienced this again two weeks ago when we had the bring-and-braai at our home. It's good to sit together, to have a good chat, to enjoy the good food, to be merry.

As a church we have come together today to celebrate St. Thomas 22nd Anniversary. We didn't plan a braai, or didn't make a special cake like last year; but we are actually at a party, a very special party: The Table is set with bread and wine, flowers decorate the Table, and we sing and enjoy our fellowship. The food is not ordinary food; it is Bread from heaven, as our Gospel told us. And who invites us to celebrate and rejoice is not the pastor, nor the Elders; it is God Himself, who established this church 22 years ago and is happy that we accepted His invitation to come here and to celebrate this feast. Year after year, Sunday after Sunday, day after day God is pouring out His blessings of forgiveness and love, hope and joy upon His people. And He challenges us to remember His goodness and to invite others to feast together, because there is plenty of food and blessings to share! – This is the theme of our Psalm for today: *Praise the Lord, for He is good; declare His deeds among the nations; because He gives everyone what we need.*

I – Praise the Lord

To praise the Lord does not only mean to give Him thanks for something that I received. To praise means to exalt God for what He is, to extol His name, to sing His deeds with gladness. We do it in

many hymns like the one we sang before the sermon: Praise to the Lord (LWB 790). The psalmist gives a good example what praise means, and we make his words ours as we celebrate St. Thomas 22nd Anniversary: “I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.”

II – Declare His works

The praise of God in the Book of Psalms is rarely seen as a private matter between the psalmist and the Lord. It is usually a public (at the temple) celebration of God’s holy virtues or of his saving acts or gracious bestowal of blessings (CSSB, Psalm 9:1, footnote). People come together to praise! And this is not something that can be hidden, but it is shared with others. The psalmist says: “One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your deeds.” You, as parents, commend God’s works and deeds to your children, as you had learnt them from your parents. And the children are being prepared to tell about God to the next generations. This is one of the ways that the church grows. Especially Lutherans and other traditional churches have a good family history and we can look back to several generations in our families that were Christians. If the families could just preserve their children in the Christian faith as we were preserved, this would be a big mission. Therefore it is so important to bring your children to the service and to the Sunday School. They need to be nurtured in their faith to be prepared to tell the next generation about the wonder of our God. So, “They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.”

III – The Lord is gracious

The image of God is misunderstood by many people and they do not praise the Lord because they are afraid of Him. Many even complain about some of God's acts. By nature, everyone is scared when thinking about God, because they fear punishment. Therefore Jesus came to reconcile, to make peace between God and humankind. Jesus suffered the deserved punishment of humankind when He died on the cross. There is no condemnation anymore for those who believe in Jesus.

The psalmist and King David, even though he lived one thousand years before Christ, trusted in God's promises and praised the Lord because "The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down."

St. Thomas has experienced how gracious the Lord is. His Word had been preached Sunday after Sunday without interruption during these 22 years, even when there was no resident pastor here. Faithful lay leaders led and are still leading Reading Services in the absence of the pastor. Do not miss the Service when it is Reading Service. It is the same Word prepared by your pastor, just presented by a lay leader. You have to think of yourself and of the others to encourage each other as a family, - and not to isolate yourselves. - The Holy Communion, the Bread of Heaven, has been offered regularly to all to strengthen your faith in Jesus and your love for one another. - Your children have been received in the Holy Baptism and they are loved in our fellowship. – The Lord is gracious. Do not despise His grace, but offer yourself to serve Him in the fellowship of

the church, as we are encouraging you to be good stewards of God's gifts entrusted to you.

IV – The Lord gives what we need

The psalmist praises the Lord not only for spiritual blessings, but also for material blessings. He confesses: “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.” Some use this verse as a table prayer. Our Old Testament reading and the Gospel presented us the Bread of Heaven: The manna in the wilderness; and Jesus Himself given by God to be our food that gives us life. Like a beggar or a hungry child look to our hand expecting something to eat, so “the eyes of all”, look to God and He gives them food at the proper time. He opens His hands and satisfies His creatures.

We work so hard for our daily bread that sometimes we forget that it comes from God's hand. Without health, or skills to work, we cannot earn our daily bread. Without breath we are dead. God provides for us everything we need and we praise Him for what we are and for what we have.

Conclusion: Read Psalm 145 at home again, slowly and meditate on its truths. Praise the Lord with its words and commit yourselves to His work. St. Thomas is a young congregation and has many challenges. The work must be done by all of us, and no one should wait for the others to do what he or she can do. By the engagement of all as one body and one family, God will bless much more our church and bring to our fellowship more and more people. We are a young living church, a healthy and living body that can do big things to the praise of our Lord and to the salvation of many more. - Happy Anniversary, St. Thomas, with God's blessings. Praise the Lord!

Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle, Cape Town, 02 August 2015