

- the *Rock of Christ* on Whom we build our lives,
  - the *new day of birth into God's Kingdom*, bringing us new meaning,
  - a *true faith in the true God*, the trustworthy God of truth.
- These are treasures the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in them.

### Psalm 118:1, 19-29 (NIV)

- 1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.  
 19 Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.  
 20 This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter.  
 21 I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.  
 22 The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;  
 23 the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.  
 24 This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.  
 25 O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success.  
 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.  
 27 The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.  
 28 You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you.  
 29 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

19-118-1-Thankfulness in Psalm 118

Thanksgiving, providence, spiritual victory

Psa 118:19-29

The Christian has great reasons for celebrating Thanksgiving.

### INTRODUCTION:

–[Sir Moses Monetfiore, a Hebrew philanthropist had a family motto: “*Think and Thank.*” In the old Anglo-Saxon language, *thankfulness* meant “*thankfulness.*”]

Thinking of all God's goodness to us stirs up and helps us express the gratitude of our hearts.

–Like the early Pilgrims, the church is an alien people in hostile world. [An old Pilgrim legend: A evil Indian medicine man once cast a spell on a Christian minister so that the ground became a bog of quicksand under him and he couldn't get out. The Indian laughed, but the minister challenged him to a duel of endurance to show that God's power was greater than his spell. As days went by, both became hungry and thirsty, but a white dove kept bringing the minister little red berries and the medicine man had no spell against doves. Finally the Indian fell over from weakness and the spell was broken. The bird dropped one more berry that fell into the bog as the minister made his way out, and it began to grow. And that's how we got cranberries and why we eat them at Thanksgiving.] At Thanksgiving we eat cranberry sauce to celebrate our gratitude for God's watch-care over us, but evil medicine men aren't our problem. The hostility against the church is from the powers of darkness defeated by Jesus on the Cross. – Psalm 118 helps us think about God's watch-care and thank Him for it. This is psalm has both historical and prophetic significance. It's a psalm thanking God for victory! We can join in this song of praise because of the victory won for us by Jesus! **HOM.idea.**

**I. We Thank God for the Open Door!**– v.19, *Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.*

A. What door should we want opened for us?

1. The world wants the door of *power, prestige, prosperity...*
2. God wants something better for us– Mat 6:33, But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Those other desires aren't alien to us, just not as precious.)

B. The attitude of gratitude is the doorway into God's presence– v.20, This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter.

C. v.21, *I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.* The “gate of righteousness” save us from the enemy of our

souls through the open door of forgiveness from the *penalty of sin* and through Christ as our door to salvation from the *power of sin*.

D. The “gate of righteousness” stands open today–

1. Symbolically, this is the open door of the church: “whoever will may come.” [As a kid, I used to envision how, if people’s spiritual eyes were open, they’d see demons slinking about at bars and brothels, but angels hovering in and around churches. People would be flocking to get in.)
2. But This “gate of righteousness” isn’t always entered:
  - a. Jesus warned in Mat 7:13-14, “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”
  - b. Jesus is Himself that gate– John 10:9-11, I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

**TRANS:** Jesus is the open door to *salvation*! He invites us, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” But some reject His invitation– v.22-23, *The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.* And this is our 2<sup>nd</sup> point:

## II. We Thank God for the Solid Rock!

- A. Let’s think about what this “capstone” or “cornerstone” is NOT–
  1. It’s not feelings about Christ (these are shifting and unstable)
  2. It’s not doctrines about Christ (these only describe our Rock)
  3. It’s not the example of Christ (this is the character of our Rock)
  4. It’s not the Church of Christ (this is what is built on the Rock)
- B. The Rock is Christ Himself – God has laid His Son as the sure foundation of our salvation; we marvel and give thanks!

**TRANS:** [When I was a kid, I always got sea-sick on boats and was so glad to get my feet back on solid ground.] Thank God for Jesus Christ, the solid Rock! [The song by Priscilla Owens, *We Have an Anchor*, describes our gratitude for that Rock: Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, / When the clouds unfold their wings of strife? / When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain, / Will your anchor drift, or firm remain? / We have an anchor that keeps the soul / Steadfast and sure while the billows roll, / Fastened to the Rock which cannot move, / Grounded firm and deep in the Savior’s love.] Because of our Rock...

**III. We Thank God for a New Day!– v.24**, *This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

- A. Each new day is a gift: God shuts the door on the *past*, keeping the *future* in His care while giving us 24 hours to make *today count*. [*Groundhog Day*: a disgruntled meteorologist Phil Collins is stuck in Punxsutawney with the same day happening over again, until he gets a new view of life by making his day count, before he can move on to the next day.]
- B. Each day is “*the day the LORD has made*,” in which He invites people to live with new meaning as they “*enter the gate of righteousness*” and build their lives on Jesus Christ, the solid Rock.
- C. For us, part of this *new day* is the corporate life of the church– v.25-26, *O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you. (As a group we pray for *deliverance* and *success*; we bless one another; and we celebrate Thanksgiving each month in the Eucharist.*

**TRANS:** What a lonely time Thanksgiving Day must be for atheists: “*all dressed up and Nobody to thank*.” They need a *Groundhog Day* experience. They won’t get it right until they find their *new day* in Christ, and a *new way of life in Him*.

## IV. We Thank God for a True Faith!

- A. Are you thankful that God is a *God of light*, a God Who *communicates and reveals the truth to us*?– v.27a, *The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us.*
- B. Our proper response is to come to the altar– v.27b, *With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.*
  1. In the OT, *the altar* was a place of *thanksgiving*, where animal sacrifices was part of worship; *Jesus became the final sacrifice*.
  2. Now we give thanks at the NT altar, *the Table* representing the Sacrifice of Christ, a place of *renewing our commitment to Him*.

## CONCLUSION:

–This Psalm ends the same way it began, with thanksgiving– v.28-29, *You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.*

–**The Christian has great reasons for a thanksgiving celebration.**

The Christian faith is a life lived in gratitude for:

- the gate of righteousness opened to us through the Cross,