

Theme: Let all People praise You, O God  
Text: Psalm 67  
Date: November 23, 2016

Season: Thanksgiving Eve Service  
Place: Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, CO

Grace and Peace to you as you give praise and thanks to God for all His blessings, from God, our Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The year was 1621 and Governor Bradford of the Plymouth Colony stood before the members of the colony and their guests gathered at the tables in preparation for the first Thanksgiving Dinner in the United State of America. As each of the members of colony sat at the table they had a plate with 5 kernels of corn on it, a cup of water and that's all. As Governor Bradford stood before them he read from his Bible the 67th Psalm, "**May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us.**" (Ps 67:1) He paused for a moment and then said, "This is the prayer that we prayed to God ever time we gathered ever since we left our homeland to make this land our home and God has been gracious to us and blessed us and made His face to shine upon us." Then he continued to read from the 67th Psalm, "**May God's way be known on earth, Your saving power among all nations. Let the people praise You, O God; let all the people praise You! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for You judge the people with equity and guide the nations upon earth.**" (Ps. 67:2-4) Governor Bradford paused once again and said, "God has been with us over the these years of our struggles even when we only had 5 kernels of corn to eat each day, like last winter. God has been guiding our lives all the way and so we come to give Him praise and thank today." He continued to read from the 67th Psalm, "**Let the people praise You, O God; let all the people praise You! The earth has yielded its harvest; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear Him!**" (Ps. 67:5-7) Governor Bradford picks up his plate with the five kernels of corn on it and said to all the members of the colony, " We began with only 5 kernels of corn a year ago, but God has indeed blessed us and He has caused the earth to yield its harvest abundantly for us this year. So let all the people praise You, O God; Let all the people praise You! As we give praise and thanks to God for the blessings that God has given to us, let us now partake in all that the earth has yielded to us on this harvest day." With that all the food was brought out to all the members of the colony and their guests as they ate the first thanksgiving feast.

This wasn't the first time Psalm 67 was used at a Thanksgiving feast, in fact King David could have written this psalm especially for the purpose of reminding the people of Israel why they were giving praise and thanks for the abundance of harvest in their Promised Land as they were rejoicing in the abundance and also when the harvest of the years wasn't abundant. Let's look at this Psalm once again as King David divided it and consider what God is telling us, as we get ready to give praise and thanks to God for the harvest of the earth that He has yielded to us this year.

**"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us."** (Ps 67:1) These are the words that God told Moses and Aaron to speak over His people as His blessing upon them whenever they met together in His presence. We use these words today at the close of our Divine Services in the Benediction as God's blessing is given to us as we prepare to leave, with the words, **"The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you His peace."** (Num. 6:24-26)

God's grace has been given to us over the past year and for our whole live in many ways. Oh, we may not have given Him praise and thanks for the grace that He has bestowed upon us at all time or even given Him any thanks for giving us His grace instead of what we deserved, but it has always been there for us and that's worth giving praise and thanks to God for everyday, not just on Thanksgiving day.

God's blessings are with us also each and every day, though so often we have become so accustom to them that we don't even know that they are there until they are taken away from us, so we need to be reminded of God's Blessings from the basics of life to the harvest that has been given to us this year, which is why numerous Presidents and other important people in our lives have reminded us of the importance of giving praise and thanks to God for all the blessings that He has given to us each year with the celebration of Thanksgiving Day.

So how does God's face shine upon us? Well, that comes as we let God's Word and Sacraments become a part of our lives, like what we are doing tonight as we given praise and thanks to God for giving us forgiveness of all our sin, for giving us faith in all that He has done for us and for given us His body and blood to assure us of His love and strengthen our faith in Him. Yes, the glory of God shines in our lives daily through His Word and sacraments and

yet that is exactly what the devil, the sin filled world and our sinful nature wants to keep out of our lives, so that we don't give praise and thanks to God for shining in our lives and making our lives different from the unbelieving world we live in.

**“May God’s way be known on earth, Your saving power among all nations. Let the people praise You, O God; let all the people praise You! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for You judge the people with equity and guide the nations upon earth.”**

(Ps. 67:2-4)

Thanksgiving is truly given to God when His ways are made known to all the people of the earth. It's as we share the face of God shining in our lives through His love, grace and mercy to others that we are truly giving thanks and praise to God. Thanks because we have come to know that God is the Judge of all the people and we know He will proclaim His judgment with equity and fairness because He is our Creator, our Redeemer and our Sanctifier. God created us and put us in an incredible earth that yields its harvest in due time for us. God provides for all our needs; from giving us life, to sustain us in our life, to preserving our life for all eternity. Yes, in our sinful ways we have rejected all that God has done for us and deserve only His wrath and punishment, but in His love for us He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem us from all our sins and gives us a new relationship and life with Him through Jesus' life, death and resurrection. God not only created us to live with Him and redeemed us from our sins so that we can live with Him now and for all eternity, but He also goes to work in our lives so that His Love, grace and mercy will shine in our lives so others may come to know of His ways and come to the saving power given to us all by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

That's why God made the people of Israel. That's what King David in this Psalm was reminding God's people of as they gave praise and thanks to God for the harvest of each year. That's also what God is reminding us of, as we prepare to give praise and thanks to God for this year's harvest. The harvest of this year also includes the love, grace and mercy of God that we have been given and shared with others through our words, actions and prayers. Truly that's a harvest that has given others faith and strengthened their faith so that they can give praise and thanks to God not only tomorrow, on this year's Thanksgiving celebration, but in our thanksgiving celebration that goes on for all eternity.

**“Let the people praise You, O God; let all the people praise You! The earth has yielded its harvest; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear Him!” (Ps. 67:5-7)**

God put His people in the land of milk and honey for the purpose of blessing them, giving them His grace and letting His love shine in their lives, so that the entire world would see what God’s people have and come to want it in their life also. God is doing the same thing in our lives today. God’s grace, blessings and love shine in our lives as we live in God’s Word and Sacraments in this land of milk and honey and it’s being noticed by thousands and thousands of people from all over the world as they come to see and want a part the harvest that God has yielded for us in their lives. So as it was for the people of God in King David’s time, in the time of the Pilgrims and as it has been for all of God’s people through out the history of the world, it is through God shining in our lives, through His Word and Sacraments, that the world comes to fear Him, that is to know and believe that He truly the God of all. They come to know and receive the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier of all the earth and they learn how to praise and given thanks to Him alone, even when all they have is only 5 kernels of corn. Amen.