

## **All That the Lord Your God has Given You**

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

The First Sunday in Lent, February 21, 2010

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

The Lord your God has given to you the house that you live in. The Lord your God has given you the car that you drive. The Lord your God has given to you the clothes that you are wearing and the ones that are waiting in your closet at home to be worn. The Lord your God has given to you the furniture in your home and all of its appointments. The Lord your God has given you the computer on your desk that allows you so much access to the world. The Lord your God has given you the television in your living room or den that allows you so much relaxation. The Lord your God has given to you the land that you own. He has taken it from another and given it to you. The Lord your God has given you your garden. The Lord your God has given you the career that you have pursued. The goals that you have achieved, the wealth that you have accumulated are all gifts from His liberal hand. The Lord your God has given you the education and the opportunities that you have enjoyed. Ever had an experience where a set of events came together in your favor? That was the Lord your God blessing you. The Lord your God has given to you the health that you enjoy. The food that you eat is all straight from His compassionate hand.

The Lord your God gives you the wealth that makes all of this possible. He gives you the money that you need to sustain this body and life. He defends you against all danger and guards and protects you from all evil. All this He does out of fatherly divine goodness and mercy without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

There is someone who signs your paychecks. They sign them on behalf of the Lord your God. It is the Lord your God who issues you your paycheck. It is the Lord your God who provides the markets for you to sell your commodities. It is the Lord your God who provides the commodities to sell in the first place. The Lord your God is good. The Lord your God has given to you all of these things.

When you bring the first of your paycheck to the Lord your God there is a recitation that it is necessary for you to perform.

Oh yes, you bring the first of your paycheck. You will not wait until all of the bills are paid and then offer to the Lord your God whatever is left after all of the bills are paid. You will write the offerings to the Lord your God first and then pay all of your bills. You will find that in this practice you will always have money left over. You will not starve. The Lord your God will provide all of it for you.

You will bring those checks or bills to the pastor and he will put them on the altar. And you will perform a recitation.

My father had no connection to the people of God of old. My father was not a descendant of Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. He had no part in the redemption out of Egypt. He had no part in the ancient kings of Israel. My father was a wandering German or a wandering Irishman or a wandering Anglo Saxon. Whatever my father was, he was not from the children of Abraham.

Even though my father had no connection with Abraham and therefore no connection with the Lord my God, nevertheless, the Lord my God was pleased to provide me with a connection to Him. That connection is Jesus.

Because I am a descendent of my father and my father was without God in the world, I too was born godless. I was born sinful. I was born selfish and self centered. I was born blind to God unable to see

His goodness and His kindness, unable to see His wrath and His judgment. I was born dead and cut off from the Author of life.

And Jesus brought me light. Jesus brought me life. When Jesus received the three wise men, He showed that He was here for more people than simply the descendents of Abraham. When Jesus commended the Roman soldier and told the people standing around that He had not seen faith like that of that Roman soldier even in Israel, He made known to me that He had come for me too and not just the Jews. When Jesus healed the girl of the Syro-Phoenician woman, He let me know that He had come also for the Gentiles.

Jesus tore down the dividing wall of hostility between the descendents of Abraham and the rest of humanity. Jesus made peace between the Jews and the Gentiles. The salvation that He came to bring was for both Jew and Gentile.

In my guilt I cried out to Jesus. In the anguish of my soul I cried out to Jesus. When I was surrounded by all of the things that bothered me, I cried out to Jesus. In my labor and toil, in my sickness and in death I cried out to Jesus and He heard my cry.

He saved me from sin and from death. He saved me with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. He saved me with signs and wonders and with great fear. Jesus turned water into wine. Jesus commanded the wind and the waves. Jesus walked on the water and bid Peter to do so also. Jesus healed the sick. Jesus raised the dead. Jesus fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. These are His mighty signs. These are His mighty wonders that He performed in public. With these mighty wonders Jesus came to save me.

Some of His signs were private. Some of His signs were spectacular only from a spiritual point of view. He overcame the temptations of Satan. He faced my temptations. He faced the temptations of appetite. He faced the temptations of public acclaim. He faced the temptations of the twisting of the Scriptures. He faced the temptations of greed. He faced the temptation to forsake the Lord His God. Jesus faced down these temptations. Jesus did not succumb to these temptations. He overthrew the Devil. It was done between Him and Satan alone, but it was nevertheless done and He showed His mighty power. It is a power that no one else has been able to duplicate.

He saved me when He prayed in the garden. He saved me when He submitted to the Father's will. He saved me when He stayed in the garden and permitted His own arrest. He saved me when He was arrested. He saved me when He was put to trial. He saved me when He made no defense. He saved me when He was struck and when false witnesses testified against Him. He saved me when they took Him before Pilate. He saved me when Pilate found Him innocent and yet sentenced Him to death. Jesus saved me when the soldiers beat Him, when they flogged Him, when they mocked Him and when they pressed upon His head the crown of thorns. Jesus saved me when He carried His own cross out to Golgotha. He saved me when they drove nails into His hands and His feet and He hung there on the cross. Jesus saved me when He called out to His Father in heaven and there was no one to hear Him. Jesus saved Him when He fulfilled the Scriptures, crying out that He thirsted. Jesus saved me when He shed His blood. Jesus saved me when He gave up His spirit. Jesus saved me when they pierced His side and a sudden flow of water and blood came from His side. His followers took Him down from the cross and laid Him in the tomb.

Jesus saved me when He rose from the dead. He saved Me when He ascended into heaven. He saved me when He sat down at God's right hand. He saved Me when He sent to His Church on earth the Holy Spirit. Jesus saved me when He sent me His Holy Spirit.

He saved me eternally. He saved me from sin. He saved me from death. This is your recitation. If this recitation is too long, perhaps the Apostles or Nicene Creed will do. The Apostles and Nicene Creeds tell of the wonders and signs that Jesus performed. They tell of His great fearful deeds that He performed.

It would be enough for Jesus to have done those things for us and for our salvation and then stopped. After all what does it matter if we live in poverty, if in the end we live forever? What does it matter if we suffer humiliation here, if in the end we live in glory? What does it matter if we suffer sorrow here, if in the end we live in joy? It would be enough for Jesus to have performed the actions that we recite in the creeds for us and for our salvation, but Jesus did not stop there.

He brought you out of sin. He brought you out of death and then Jesus has granted to you all of the good things that you enjoy. He has given you your clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, land, animals and all that you have. He has given you a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace health, self control, a good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors and the like.

If you doubt His blessing in regards to clothing and shoes, food and drink, look to the third world countries and see how you eat and dress compared to them. If you doubt that you have faithful rulers, look to the rulers in the Middle East or in Communist countries or in southeast Asia. I realize that the blessings that Jesus gives come with question marks as to weather or not they were really good. Nevertheless He has given them to you. He has given them to you for the time that you have them. You did not have to have them at all. You did not deserve to have them even for the short time that you did have them.

Jesus does not simply grant you salvation and stop there. He grants you all of the other physical blessings that you enjoy in this life.

And so I have brought the first of my paychecks to the Lord my God. And you will place your money in front of the Lord your God. And you will rejoice before the Lord your God over all of the good that He has given to you and to your house. And remember the Levite and the sojourner who is in your gates.

Let us make recitation and offering and rejoicing together.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.