

Thanksgiving and Prayer

The Epistle for the Second Sunday in Advent is Philippians 1:2-11. The faith and support of the Philippians encouraged Paul. Like the Psalm Devotion, this text is about thanksgiving.

Whenever he thought about the Philippians and his eventful ministry among them, the apostle must have remembered the special way in which the Lord had called him to bring the gospel to that area of the world.

Paul thanks God even as he makes requests before His throne. The basis of Paul's prayerful thanksgiving is not only their reception of the gospel but also their active support of his ministry. They were in partnership with Paul.

The Philippians had contributed financial support. But Paul doesn't limit their partnership to this one act. They have given him gifts when Paul was no farther away than Thessalonica (Phil 4:16). And the Philippians had been a comfort to Paul from the very beginning.

Verses 6-8 complete the thought begun in verse 3. Paul can thank God most heartily because he has confidence in his endurance through the grace and power of God.

That have been written for us... We should first thank God from the heart that by His Son He has delivered us from the darkness of ignorance and the captivity of sin and death. Paul prays for the cause of the salvation (knowledge, discernment, through Jesus Christ) and the effect of salvation (love abounding, approving what is excellent, blameless at Judgment Day). Every other Christian doctrine can be placed under one these two headings.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, fill our lives with the fruit of Your righteousness that we might abound in love, approve what is excellent, and be pure and blameless on the day of Your return. Amen. (TLSB)