



Don't Take Life for Granted

Worship Resources from GHDA

Don't Take Life for Granted is a package of worship resources for use in congregations. Collected by GHDA national staff, they are free for you to download, copy and use as best suits your congregation.

Their theme of thankfulness would be very appropriate for Thanksgiving Sunday, but could be used at any time.

Special thanks go out to Rev Lothar Schwabe for sharing his gift of writing.

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- _ A "sermon starter" based on Job 10:12 "You have granted me life and steadfast love".
- _ How can we avoid taking God's gifts for granted?

2. Who Made the Breakfast This Morning?

- _ A children's message that reminds us all that we serve while God provides.

(more children's message ideas at <http://www.elcic.ca/ghda/resources/2003/partners/food.pdf>)

3. Forgetful Soul

- _ A meditation based on Psalm 103:2 "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits."

4. Prayer Petitions

- _ Based on current (fall 2004) GHDA projects and concerns

If you have other suggestions – resources that would help you to address peace and justice concerns and to encourage support for GHDA – send your ideas to ghda@elcic.ca or fax to "GHDA Coordinator" 204.984.9185.

More information at <http://www.elcic.ca/ghda>



TAKEN FOR GRANTED

Sermon Starter

"You have granted me life and steadfast love" Job 10:12

Will you sit with your family around the Thanksgiving table this year counting your many blessings and thanking God for gifts regularly taken for granted?

What do we mean when we talk about taking God's gifts for granted?

Unfortunately we often take for granted that something is just there - without anybody granting it. It then follows that we do not owe thanks for anything that we can take for granted.

Thanksgiving means the opposite. It means that we do not take all gifts for granted but rather as having been granted by God

Our theology of Christian Stewardship leads us to consider what we do with all that is granted to us by God and how we can share those gifts with those in need.

If we keep the "giving" in "Thanksgiving" then we are not far from sharing with others out of that which has been granted to us in the first place.

Rev Lothar Schwabe 2004



WHO MADE THE BREAKFAST THIS MORNING?

Children's Message

Mom did? Dad did?

Do we have to thank Mom or Dad for making the breakfast?

How did they make the breakfast?

They poured cereal into the bowl? They made toast?

Did they really make that cereal or that toast?

They bought it at the store?

Did the people at the store make that cereal?

Someone else made that cereal? Did the baker make the bread?

How did the baker make the bread?

He took flour and stuff and baked it?

Who made the flour?

It came from the grain the farmer had raised?

Who made the grain?

God made it grow?

Then who really made the breakfast this morning? God?

Then should we not thank God for making the breakfast?

And we thank Mom or Dad for preparing and serving it.

So, again, who made the breakfast this morning?

Rev Lothar Schwabe 2004



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Psalm meditation

FORGETFUL SOUL

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits. Psalm 103:2

Yes, Lord, that's me,
Old Forgetful Soul!
You allow me to listen to the works of the greatest musicians on a compact disc or tape.
Such luxury was unheard-of less than a century ago.
Even the kings and queens could not do that.
They had their own court orchestras, but none had the choice of the variety and the quality of the music that I can hear.
Have I said thank you to you for the gift of music?
I take it all for granted.
I am not very thankful at all.

O yes, and speaking of royalty:
They took delight in beautiful transportation, those carriages which took them over bumpy roads at a top speed of 30 m.p.h. over short distances.
They did not have a string orchestra in the back seat to provide the good music I can hear in my car.
I think they would have traded a castle for my little car!
Have I said thank you to you for my car?
I take it all for granted.

Lord, I would not even trade in my house for one of their old and cold castles.
O, they are nice to look at on holidays, but having to live in them?
I wonder, what would they have given to be able to live with the modern conveniences that we have.
Have I been thankful for my house?

And the food which was "fit for a king."
They got some oranges in the winter, when a sailboat came into the harbor.
They never had the choice of the vegetables and fruits that I can choose from any time of the year at the supermarket.
Have I really been thankful for the food I can eat?

Royalty in those days did not have TV.
They did not have the choices of movies and sports events to go to. Am I thankful?
They needed a lot of servants to do what my machines do for me.
They certainly did not have the benefit of modern medical science.
I live much better than any of the envied members of royalty of the past.
Is my soul happy and content?

And that is only the material stuff you let me have.
I have not yet started to recite the really important things that David talked about.

"...who forgives all your iniquity..."

Now, that is something. FORGIVES ALL!
I have forgotten what it is like to drag myself through life with a ton of guilt on my shoulders.

"...who redeems your life from the Pit..."

That is what Jesus has done for me!
Did I get used to my freedom?
Do I take that for granted, too?

"...who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy..."

This is getting to be too much for me, Lord!
I do not mean your love and mercy, but my lack of gratitude for such great love and mercy.

"Psalm 103 - Of David"

Should I take comfort in that the great David must have had the same problem of a forgetful soul that I have?
Or else why would he have made an effort to remind himself?
I think I am beginning to look for excuses.
David's problem is no excuse for me at all.
He only anticipated the Messiah.
You allowed me to get to know you, Lord Jesus.
But I am not very good at thankfulness and at **"Rejoice in the Lord always."**
What can I say?
Thank you, Lord Jesus!

Rev Lothar Schwabe 2004



Don't Take Life for Granted

Prayer Petitions

Bless, Lord, the displaced people like those of Darfur, Sudan. Don't let us take for granted our homes, security and peace – blessings that are ripped from many by conflict and war. Grant that faith may ease the pain of their loss while it pricks at our conscience and goads us into action.

Thank you for people who understand politics, for those willing to serve as advocates, sit on committees, attend meetings and speak on our behalf to government officials. Give us the will to do our part – to educate ourselves, to share what we know, to sign petitions and write letters – and to support with our financial gifts those organizations that represent us.

Keep us astonished and appalled, God, at the state of our world. Do not let us slip into complacency.

Remind us, Lord, that poverty is not just a problem of other nations. Show us our neighbours who struggle this day to find a job, to heal a marriage, to feed their children. Help us to see our pay cheque not only as reward for hard work but as an opportunity to share.

Bless the projects of development agencies like Canadian Lutheran World Relief. Grant their volunteers and employees safety as they work for and with others around the world.

As we return today to our safe homes, **make us mindful** of refugees. Lead us to opportunities for action and compassion. Bless organizations like KAIROS whose members educate us and speak out for the powerless.

Bless our money, Lord – the riches that we manage on your behalf. Be with the staff of our church that administers those dollars through Global Hunger and Development Appeal. With your guidance our gifts can do so much good!

Give us the courage to look beyond our lives, to act outside of our comfort zone, to see the needs of others and to try to make a difference. Accompany us on our way.

Bless us with the foolishness to think that we can make a difference in the world.