

Dear Open Door Family,

Have you ever had a bad thanksgiving? Be careful how you answer. I know that I have been through Thanksgiving days in the past when I have been troubled and when I have been fearful and when I have been self-focused. During those times I was not in the mood to give thanks so celebrating Thanksgiving with others did not go as it could have. What are we supposed to do when we are struggling when we do not feel particularly thankful? How do we respond during hard times? Do we stuff the feelings away somewhere nobody can see them and put on happy face? Or are we cranky and ornery towards everyone? Someone once observed that people respond to hard and difficult things with either a deeper gratitude for the simple blessings of life or they slide into grumbling and complaining about how hard things are. No matter what your year has been like the Scriptures are clear that God is Good ALL the time. Let's look at these verses together.

Psalm 136:1 (ESV) Give thanks to the LORD, for **HE is GOOD**, for his steadfast love ENDURES FOREVER.

Psalm 92:1-2 (ESV) It is **GOOD** to give **THANKS** to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; [2] to declare your **STEADFAST LOVE** in the morning, and your **FAITHFULNESS** by night...

Isaiah 26:3-4 (NLT) You will keep in **PERFECT PEACE** all who trust in you, all whose **THOUGHTS ARE FIXED** on you! [4] Trust in the LORD always, for the LORD GOD is the eternal Rock.

Why do we give thanks to God? Because God is GOOD and He has showered us with His steadfast, ongoing, enduring Love. Why do we give thanks to God? Because it is GOOD to give thanks to Him. Because He is Faithful and we can count on Him no matter what happens. Why do we give thanks to God? Because He gives us peace when our thoughts and minds are focused on HIM. Why do we give thanks to God? Because we can trust Him - He is solid, eternal, never changing Rock. Our God is worthy of our thanks no matter what is going on around us. Maybe you have had a really, really bad year. In your thinking it could not get any worse. Yet in the middle of the stress and difficulties that you face it is good to remember you do not face those things alone. Sometimes the best thing we can do is to start listing all the things we can be thankful for. Things like forgiveness, mercy, the Bible, people who share our hardships, the strength to make it through each day. Those are all things which God gives us and for which we can take a moment to be thankful. The man who wrote these words lost his business and shortly after that all four of his daughters in a tragic accident.

*When peace like a river attendeth my soul
When sorrow like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot Thou hast taught me to say
It is WELL it is WELL with My soul*

*Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.*

*My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*

It is well - with my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul

