

12/14/18

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“It’s the thought that counts.” This phrase is meant to rescue us from awkward holiday moments, like when grandma knits you a sweater two sizes too big. But sometimes, the thought, or lack thereof, can actually cause harm. For instance, if you bake cookies that are not gluten free for your friend who is allergic to gluten. When giving gifts to loved ones, thinking about what would be good for and pleasing to them is important.

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-11

The same is true when we give gifts to our God. We want our gifts to be good and pleasing to him. The apostle Paul prayed about this very thing in Philippians chapter 1. He prayed that that their love would increase in the knowledge of God’s will so that their lives would be pleasing to him. Paul knew that it is God who fills our hearts with both love and spiritual knowledge. He tells us exactly what he wants us to do in his Word and sends his Spirit to help us do those things. Without our loving Lord, we would be lost, settling for whatever we think God might want and falling far short.

Thankfully, Jesus gave us credit for the ultimate gift. He lived the perfect life that God so dearly desires, and he died the death that we should have died as payment for our

sins. Those gifts put us in God's good graces and set our hearts at rest for the day Jesus returns.

What's more, through Jesus' sacrifice and through the Spirit's guidance, we can offer works pleasing to God. No wondering, no scratching our heads. We can be confident that God delights in, cherishes, and celebrates what we do for him as we follow his commands. Through Christ, we know we are pleasing to our Father.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, we praise you for giving us credit for a gift we could never afford—your perfect life and innocent death. Spirit, we thank you for enabling us to offer works that are pleasing and perfect, and for giving us the peace to stand before you on judgment day. Amen.*

(From the WELS)

...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

Pastor Alan W. Gumm

Phone: [630-947-4317](tel:630-947-4317) - revagumm@hotmail.com