

**January 13-19, 2019**  
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Sunday, January 13, 2019

Give Thanks

Text: Psalm 92:1-4

***“It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.”***

At this point in my life, I find that I focus more on thankfulness for God’s gifts. In this very divisive and greedy world, it is hard to be thankful every day, but reading the Psalms can help us focus on thankfulness. The author of this psalm is anonymous and this psalm is a song for the Sabbath day. The Sabbath is a day for rest and reflection on the goodness of God’s creation. It is a call to worship the Lord.

When we are called to worship on Sunday morning, are we grateful to be in the presence of a community of God’s people? Are we thankful for God’s Word and Meal? Do we sing our praises to God with joy in our hearts? Do we have a need for this worship to help us through the upcoming week? I hope that your answer to each of these questions is a resounding yes.

We can never say thank-you enough. We can thank our family, friends and especially our God. This thankfulness can change our lives and lead us to be more positive, loving and humble.

Let us pray: *Dear Lord, I give thanks for your love and faithfulness. My heart is filled with joy by my opportunity to worship you. Let my words and actions sing your praise. Amen.*



Monday, January 14, 2019

Give Thanks

Text: Psalm 138:1-3

***“I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your***

***faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything. On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul.”***

When I called, you answered me. What a great reason for thanksgiving!

Life can take a path of many twists and turns. We can be on top of the world one minute and in the depths of despair the next. I think of a time when my husband had a call to be pastor of a two-point parish in the UP. We had a home that we had built in the beautiful Northwoods of Wisconsin. We were close to my family and I had a great job at the hospital. We prayed that this would be the right direction for us, even though it would be a hard transition. We called. God answered.

The community of God’s people opened their arms and welcomed us. We enjoyed our time serving and becoming a part of many families through weddings, funerals, baptisms and weekly worship services. We made friends for life. And it was a time that we both grew in faith. God answered our prayers.

If we stop to think about it, there are many times in our lives when we have called and God has answered our prayers. Do you remember when you have asked for protection, strength, comfort, patience or love? Do not take answered prayers for granted. Give thanks!

Let us pray: *Heavenly Father, we give you thanks and praise for all of the times that you have answered our prayers. Amen*



**Tuesday, January 15, 2019**

Give Thanks

Text: Psalm 7:17

***“I will give to the Lord the thanks due to his righteousness, and sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High.”***

This Psalm is written by David as a request for justice. David is giving thanks that in a time of injustice, God can be depended upon to be righteous. Does this remind us of the world that we live in today?

Every day our radios, TVs and newspapers give us news of people that are leaving their countries to come to the United States of America with dreams of a better life but are turned away. We hear of people that are homeless and hungry in our great country. We hear of the financial devastation that comes from not having health insurance. Thousands of years later, we also see a time of evil and injustice.

We can start wondering if anything is just or fair, but in the words of this Psalm, God is righteous. If we find ourselves facing these injustices, we can be assured of God’s presence. If we are blessed to live in this country of abundance and have homes and food and health, we can

do God's work and help those that are in need. The destruction of injustice is ultimately God's righteousness. For this we give thanks.

Let us pray: *Lord, it is often frightening to see the injustices of today. We thank you for the gifts that you have given us, and we give thanks for your presence. Amen*



**Wednesday, January 16, 2019**

### Give Thanks

Text: Psalm 30:11-12

***“You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.”***

This is another Psalm written by David. David was very blessed by God and had security, riches and power. It made him feel invincible. However, worldly possessions can disappear in a moment.

As years have been added to my life, I am thankful for my worldly possessions, but all of that is nothing without health. Some years ago, I was diagnosed with an autoimmune condition that causes pain in the muscles. Typically this disease lasts for about one year, but my condition went on for nearly five years. I prayed daily for the return of my health and it was a time of mourning for me. However, today I am off the medications and daily exercise has nearly returned me to my former health. As David writes, I am dancing.

Now comes the hard part. I pray and give thanks daily for God's restoration of my health. But...will I be like David and be able to give thanks forever... in distress as well as prosperity? May it be so.

Let us pray: *Dear God, I thank you for your presence in my life through good times and bad. You are faithful. May I be faithful to you. Amen.*



**Thursday, January 17, 2019**

### I Hope...

Text: Philippians 3:13-14

***“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”***

Life can be filled with regrets. Financial decisions, relationship choices, chances taken...things that haven't turned out as we planned. When we place our hope in the things of this world, we can be disappointed and discouraged. We become hopeless. When we place our hope in Christ, we realize that we are children of God. We are growing and maturing spiritually. As God perfects us, we do good deeds for Him.

When we think about our dogs, the old saying comes to mind: “Hope springs eternal.” It is not that they always are deserving of a treat, or a hug, or a pat, or attention, but they always expect it. Our love and devotion to them...what they receive from us over and over again...leads them to be always expectant...always hopeful.

By placing our hope in Christ, we can move beyond our regrets. We can forget what was behind us and move forward. We cannot perfect ourselves, but God is working in and through us. God has built the gift of hope into our world. There are new paths to follow and doors and windows that open to what is coming. We can expect and pray and hope!

Let us pray: *Dear God, you give to me again and again. It is not that I am deserving of your gifts, but you make me feel worthy. You spoil me...I know that there is more and more...I hope. Amen.*



**Friday, January 18, 2019**

### Give Thanks

Text: Psalm 75:1

***“We give thanks to you, O God; we give thanks; your name is near. People tell of your wondrous deeds.”***

This Psalm confirms that God is the final judge and this judgment will occur when God is ready. When God is ready, He will do what needs to be done and not what we would like him to do. God will ultimately overrule and destroy the wicked.

We may all have our own ideas of who the “wicked” are. Perhaps the government is wicked. Perhaps our neighbor or coworker is wicked. Perhaps even someone in our own family is wicked. Our God is near and when the arrogant, boastful and powerful seem to have it all, we need to wait for Him to carry out His plan. God does wondrous deeds and when the time is right, God will act.

When we are hurt by someone or some situation that we feel powerless to overcome, give thanks that God is present. He knows how we can all suffer at some time, and he promises that He will be the final judge. We can have confidence in this promise.

Let us pray: *Dear God, only you can feel the pain of our suffering. I thank you for your presence and you promise. Only you are the final judge. Amen*



**Saturday, January 19, 2019**

### Give Thanks

Text: Psalm 107: 1-3

***“O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those he redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.”***

What has God done for you?

I often think about what I want. There are so many “things” that I think would make my life better. I want a new vehicle. I want more time for myself. I want nicer hair. I want to win the lottery. (My husband says that I will never win unless I buy a ticket!) If I really think about it, I can come up with many wants, both large and small. But this is not where we should spend our time.

I can think of many more blessings than wants. I have a wonderful loving husband, a beautiful home, a great job, a faithful dog. I have my health and am able to pay my bills. And above all, God has given me salvation through his only Son. God’s gifts never end. Give thanks for all that God has done for you. Give thanks and tell. Tell everyone of your blessings, by living a faithful and obedient life.

Let us pray: *Lord, you have given me so much. Help me to remember that I have many more blessings than needs. Help me to live my life in a way that gives thanks for all your blessings. Amen.*

