

Hello everyone! And welcome to our Wednesday Word devotion for today, November 25, 2020. Thank you so much for tuning in, and for taking this time out of your day to focus on God and focus on your faith.

Happy Thanksgiving week, everyone! I'm guessing many of us are thinking right now about how to adapt this beloved holiday for the challenging circumstances this year, and I want to join you in solidarity. It's really hard to have plans change and not be able to see our beloveds safely, and adapt traditions to a difficult season.

But I would also love to take today to talk about the heart of this holiday - which is thanksgiving, or gratitude, itself. I was really touched in our last Confirmation class with the 4-5th graders and their mentors recently. We were sharing prayers, whatever it was that we wanted to pray for, and someone said, "I pray to remember things to be grateful for. There is so much."

There is so much to be grateful for! And sometimes when we consider gratitude we think it has to be the big things, that only these big or eloquent things are what we can share as being grateful for. And we do this with prayer sometimes too - that our prayers have to be these beautiful and eloquent speeches and proclamations of our love for God and Jesus, but they really don't have to be. And the things we share our gratitude for, can be the big things, certainly, but how much more will we gain from seeing the abundance of small blessings for which we can be grateful? God really cares about us having a relationship with God, and the more intimate and everyday we can make that relationship, the better. When we think about the people we have the closest relationships with, our conversations are often abundant and about the smaller and everyday kinds of things. Like the "how was your day?" conversation with a partner or spouse, or the silly joke you share with your sibling over a text. These little yet intimate things make our relationships with others really close, and when we share gratitude both for ourselves and with God, the small things truly add up and matter deeply. Saying, "hey God, my coffee was at a really wonderful temperature when I drank it this morning, thank you", or "hey God, my spouse/partner brings so much joy into my life, thank you for bringing us together" - these are both incredible and important prayers.

So as we think about gratitude and thanksgiving this week, notice these small but important things that make up the fabric of your everyday. We may be grieving the loss of some big or beloved traditions this year, but there is still an abundance of blessings for which we can share our gratitude today. And if you're missing someone particularly, reach out. Call or text or video chat them and strengthen that relationship. Just as we can reach out to our fellow beloved humans, I would also encourage you to reach out to God in prayer today too, and all days, or course. Sharing the small and intimate things you're grateful for with God is a beautiful and life-giving practice of loving the world God made.

For all of you tuning in today, and for all the people I am blessed to be pastor for, I give God great thanks today, and every day. I am grateful for this technology of webcams and internet and Facebook and the website, all the things working together to be able to reach out and connect with you even from a physical distance. And I will certainly be grateful for the roast

chicken and Thanksgiving side dishes Mike and I will be sharing later on tomorrow, just the two of us, as we remember all for which we can give thanks to God.

So today I am going to share with you one last psalm in this psalm and prayer series of the Wednesday Word. And I wanted to let you know that through the season of Advent, the Wednesday Word is going to look a little different. Each of the devotions coming out at noon will be provided by folks in the NWSWI, including synod staff and fellow pastor colleagues of mine. Each devotion will be on a different topic of justice, and I cannot wait to share this series with you! They'll be a bit longer - more like 25ish minutes each week. Throughout Advent, we will also have weekly Holden Evening Prayer services made by Mt. Zion premiering online at 7pm. So I would encourage you, as part of your Advent practices, to tune in and check out both of these great Wednesday options.

Alright, for our thanksgiving psalm today, please enjoy the Word revealed to us in Psalm 30:

I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up,
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

2 O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,
and you have healed me.

3 O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

4 Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.

5 For his anger is but for a moment;
his favor is for a lifetime.

Weeping may linger for the night,
but joy comes with the morning.

6 As for me, I said in my prosperity,
"I shall never be moved."

7 By your favor, O Lord,
you had established me as a strong mountain;
you hid your face;
I was dismayed.

8 To you, O Lord, I cried,
and to the Lord I made supplication:

9 "What profit is there in my death,
if I go down to the Pit?

Will the dust praise you?

Will it tell of your faithfulness?

10 Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me!
O Lord, be my helper!"

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

Please join me in prayer:

Almighty God, Father and Mother of all mercies, we humbly thank you for your goodness to us and to all that you have made. We praise you for your creation, for keeping us and all things in your care, and for all the blessings of life. Above all we bless you for your immeasurable love in redeeming the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies that with thankful hearts we praise you, not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving ourselves to your service and by living in your gifts of holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all worship and praise, now and forever. Amen.

Go in peace dear friends, have a beautiful day and blessed Thanksgiving. Amen.