

Hello everyone! And welcome to our Wednesday Word devotion for today, September 30, 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.

So today's devotion is about thanks, and it's part 2 in the three part series based on prayer, and specifically Anne Lamott's book "Help, Thanks, Wow". I always personally feel grateful on September 30 each year, as it's the day that Mike and I began dating back in college, so it's fun to remember all those anniversary celebrations and be especially grateful for that relationship with him in my life. Our wedding anniversary isn't until January, but it's nice to have multiple times a year that we are particularly reminded of our gratitude for each other.

And that's one of the two things I want to say about gratitude today, as we dive even deeper into prayers about thanks. Sharing our thanks with other people gives the power of gratitude a new level, because it's more than just what we're thinking about, but we get to let others into our grateful thoughts and energy, and that's a gift. The other thing about gratitude, which Anne Lamott does a great job of diving into in her book, is that it changes our perspective around us. If we are in a situation where we need God's help, there is also powerful space to be grateful for what we do have, even if in that moment the only thing we can come up with having is God. Because God is with us, we always have something to be grateful for. And even just starting with that one bit of gratitude, it leads to us seeing even more things that we have in our lives for which we want to give thanks. Sometimes it's simply "thanks for letting me have enough food to eat today, and warm, comfy clothes to wear", and sometimes it's more like "thanks for the blessing of my husband and family, thanks for mental and medical health care, thanks for keeping me alive today". Giving thanks to God for the many ways God shows up for us, for the many ways in which we are blessed, is one of the most important prayers, and ways that we orient ourselves to God, our creator and sustainer in all times and places.

So for today's psalm, I want to highlight a beautiful psalm all about thanks to God to encourage us in our gratitude. This is Psalm 138:

- I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;
2 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.
3 On the day I called, you answered me,
you increased my strength of soul.
- 4 All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord,
for they have heard the words of your mouth.
5 They shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
for great is the glory of the Lord.
6 For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly;

but the haughty he perceives from far away.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies;
you stretch out your hand,
and your right hand delivers me.

8 The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands.

This is the Word of the Lord.

And now please join me in a word of prayer:

Lord God, for all the ways you work in our world, and give us the blessings of life, we give you thanks. We thank you for the people in our life who reflect your love, and who we have the gift of loving in return. For this beautiful weather, for the changing of the seasons and miracle of creation, we give you thanks. For the ability to adapt and carry on in new ways when faced with a challenging season of pandemic we give you thanks. For everyone who works to keep us alive, for the ways healthcare workers, researchers, leaders, and essential workers serve their fellow people and world, we give you thanks. We lift to you all the prayers we said before you today, and the ones we continue to hold in our hearts and minds. Thank you for always hearing us, showing up for us, and loving us, O God. In your Son Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Go in peace dear friends! Have a beautiful day. Amen.