

Greetings in the living name of the Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ,

**SCRIPTURE:**

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV) – Larger reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

*“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

**STORY:**

There is a legend about two angels who were sent to earth to gather up the prayers of men and women. One was to fill his basket with the petitions of mankind. The other was to gather their prayers of thanksgiving. Some time later they went back to their Father's house. One had a basket heaped high and running over with the innumerable petitions of men and women. The other returned with a sad and heavy heart, for his basket was almost empty.

**OBSERVATION:**

Is it just my imagination or is it a reality that we are quicker to rehearse our problems than to embrace our blessings? It appears that we make long laundry lists of the ills visited upon us by our friends, family and neighbors ... or life in general ... than to lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving for all the is good in our life.

Now, I will have to admit that it is possible to take this scripture to an extreme as a former member responded to my question, “How are you doing?” with “I have a terrible toothache, praise the Lord!” Pain is pain and yes, we can learn from pain, but I believe that God desires only good for us as in “I will not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men.” (Lamentations 3:33) ... so to “Praise the Lord” for a toothache just seemed a little over the top and extreme in my book.

Maybe it is the “glass is half-full or half-empty” syndrome. We see life and our circumstances depending on our mindset ... spiritual mindset, that is. If we are in an ongoing relationship with God then life is half-full, everything is a blessing, and we literally give thanks to God in all situations. But on the other hand, if our relationship with God is casual as in - catch-as-catch-can, pray if I have the time, read scripture only if I have nothing else to read – thus seeing our life as half-empty then we take every little criticism personally and we read into every little thing something negative.

I believe that God does not wish for us to live life in this fashion – therefore, God's instruction to give him thanks for everything ... maybe even toothaches.

**QUOTE:**

*“Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough.” – Oprah Winfrey*

**PRAYER:**

Help us to see the good that surrounds us and the blessings that fill our days. Help us to discover the fullness of a life with you. In the name of the one who makes it all possible, Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim  
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***A passing thought about the Worship Service when we do start in-person worship again. It probably will look a lot like what we are presently posting on Facebook. And, by the way, we will continue to post the service on the internet. We are working out the details.***

***This week is World Communion Sunday. So be prepared with your bread and juice.***

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