



Give thanks

in all circumstances ...

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Thanksgiving 2021
Fredericton NB

Dear Friends,

If there's one thing we may have learned from this time of global pandemic, it's that no matter the circumstance there is always much for which to be thankful. When we were locked down and in complete isolation from one another, I'm thankful that we were able to devise ways to reconnect. I'm thankful that even in the midst of the inconvenience and even danger caused by COVID-19, churches have continued to experience continuing support from members to keep furthering the important work that is ours to do. At times, the challenges were significant and it's certain there are more to come, but it's important that the challenge doesn't define us, rather it's the blessing even in the midst of the struggle that helps us be who we really are.

The Apostle Paul said, "Rejoice always, pray continuously, give thanks in all circumstances." He didn't say we should wait until we feel thankful. He didn't say to express gratitude for all the good stuff of life or rejoice as long as things don't seem too tough. "Always" is one of those words that leaves little room for misinterpretation. Whatever the situation, God has placed some gift in the midst. Can we find it and make the faithful response? – thanksgiving.

Too often we believe that giving thanks is the result of feeling grateful. In fact, it's the other way around. Happiness is not thrust upon us. Happiness results when we follow the command of St. Paul. Thanks-giving makes us happy; we don't give thanks because we're happy; we're happy when we're full of thanks. Paul is telling us there's something in every circumstance for which to be thankful. The result of giving thanks is gratitude. What we choose to do influences how we feel, not the other way around.

During this season, as always, we prayerfully remember those who are facing challenges in their lives. Whether that be adjusting to the loss of someone we love, changes in employment, continuing separation from family and friends, the onset of illness or the resulting changes caused by being older this year than we were last, let's pray that we'll look keenly for the gift even in the midst of the messiness of life. Bringing ourselves spiritually to the place where with sincerity we give thanks to God if only for the basics, we'll reap the real harvest God promises the faithful.

May you find success in your thanks-giving this year and receive the true peace God grants to the thankful heart.

Yours sincerely,



Geoffrey
Dean of Fredericton

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