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It's November, the month when we as a nation celebrate Thanksgiving, so let me begin with a question: How has God blessed you today?

Go ahead. Take just a couple moments to think about that. If it makes it easier, write a list.

If coming up with answers seems like a challenge, you're not alone. From the time we wake up to when we go to bed, it's often the negative things that tend to capture our attention, and I'll be the first to admit that 2020 has given us a long list of challenges and hardships to choose from. But why should we let the negative and the difficult define our days when God's love is with us and God provides everything we need?

Whenever you are feeling overwhelmed or anxious or down, I encourage you to acknowledge the hardship. Name it or at least try to. There is nothing wrong with being honest about our feelings. In fact it is often the first step of the journey toward hope. There is no shame in truthful assessment. This is a challenging time for all of us, even though our challenges are different. So, name the frustration, the grief over things lost or the fear, and then remember God's love is with us and God provides everything we need. And then, praise God anyway, because praising God is the key to hope and happiness at all times. We see it in the words of Psalm 34:1,

I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

We see this reminder again in Philippians 4:4, as Paul is nearing the end of his letter to the church at Philippi, he encourages his readers to focus on the positive, which is a persistent theme in his letters.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

And later in Philippians 4:8, Paul writes

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.

With the wisdom of Psalm 34 and Paul's letter in mind, let us develop a habit of counting our blessings not only when things get tough, but when we are also at our happiest. Doing this will revitalize our souls and help us see that God has given us so much more love than we realize. Plus, practice makes perfect. The more we recognize God's gifts for what they are, the easier it will be to fall back on those blessings when we need them most.

Today I challenge you to set aside some time each day through the month of November and list the things God has done for you. Be specific. Think through every area of your life. Work backwards if it makes it easier. Reflect on God's blessings over the past year. Now go back five years. You get the idea.

Bible Reading Plan

November

1. 2 CORINTHIANS 6
2. 2 CORINTHIANS 7
3. 2 CORINTHIANS 8
4. 2 CORINTHIANS 9
5. 2 CORINTHIANS 10
6. 2 CORINTHIANS 11
7. 2 CORINTHIANS 12
8. 2 CORINTHIANS 13
9. GALATIANS 1
10. GALATIANS 2
11. GALATIANS 3
12. GALATIANS 4
13. GALATIANS 5
14. GALATIANS 6
15. EPHESIANS 1
16. EPHESIANS 2
17. EPHESIANS 3
18. EPHESIANS 4
19. EPHESIANS 5
20. EPHESIANS 6
21. PHILIPPIANS 1
22. PHILIPPIANS 2
23. PHILIPPIANS 3
24. PHILIPPIANS 4
25. COLOSSIANS 1
26. COLOSSIANS 2
27. COLOSSIANS 3
28. COLOSSIANS 4
29. 1 THESSALONIANS 1
30. 1 THESSALONIANS 2

As for me, I'm going to be intentional about keeping a daily gratitude journal. Each day I'll post something from my list on our church Facebook page and I invite you to add your blessings in the comments. I'm also going to do my best to remember that I am blessed to be a blessing to others. So, in addition to naming God's blessing to me, I'm also going to look for a way each day that I can be a blessing to someone else.

I'd like to begin, by giving thanks to God for you and for the blessing of serving as you pastor. I'd like to pray a blessing from Numbers 6:24-26 over you:

The Lord bless you
and keep you;
the Lord make His face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn His face toward you
and give you peace.

Blessings,
Robin



Operation Christmas Child Takes Off!

Now more than ever, children need to hear about God's amazing love. You can share the love and hope of Jesus Christ with a needy child by using a simple shoe box. Operation Christmas Child is an easy mission project for every person or family in the church.

Use a preprinted box or your own shoebox. If you are using your own box, please wrap the bottom and the lid separately. Do not seal the box. Put a rubber band around it, label it boy or girl, and enclose \$9 to help with shipping costs.

Brochures with suggestions for gifts and instructions as well as pre-printed boxes will be available at the church in October. Return your box to the church by November 15.

If you can't shop or don't have the time you can build a box online. Go to <http://www.samaritanpurse.org/operation-christmas-child/buildonline/>

What's really inside each box you prepare? Not just toys and gifts, but love, hope, joy and an opportunity to share the message of God's love with children around the world!



Quilt Sale

Saturday, November 14th
9am to 1pm

(In the Grace United Methodist Church parking lot)

The Piecemakers have been busy creating a variety of quilts and much more. You are invited to come browse! Proceeds will benefit our church and missions in the community. Please remember to wear your mask.