

“GIVING THANKS”

“Thankful for Today”

In today's sermon, “Thankful for Today,” there were opportunities for you to see that God is with us. That even in the midst of chaos, grief, and heartache- God loves us and calls us into a deeper relationship. Being thankful for today, means opening up our lives to see God at work, allowing the Holy Spirit to reform anxiety into transformation for the good of the world. This week, as you work through the daily readings, there is object or image to reflect to help you reflect, then you are invited to take action. This is intended to be an experiential centering on scripture that allows you to be more fully present for what God has to offer each day. May you experience God's goodness and grow in gratitude being attentive to the blessings we often bypass.

– Pastor Rebecca Goltry Mohr

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon: **“Thankful for Today”**

Daily Prayer: A Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may wish for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what other claim cannot be done.

Study Guide

Monday, November 12, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-4 (a cozy blanket)

The first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians is the oldest extant piece of Christian literature. The letter follows a Hellenistic form, starting with an opening salutation and giving thanks. Paul is fond of the church at Thessalonica, fourteen times he addresses them as brothers and sisters. His affirmation is an affirmation to us still today. Giving thanks to God first then affirming and giving thanks for the Thessalonians' life of faith, love and hope is the tone Paul sets with this. Verse 4 says, "Brothers and sisters, you are loved by God and we know that he has chosen you." (CEB) How does this love that was present long ago still give you peace and assurance that God still loves you?

Action: *Find a warm blanket, take time to rest with the blanket remembering that as brother and sisters, we are loved by God. God chose you! God's warmth and affirmation surrounds you, just as the warmth of a cozy blanket. Pause and know you are loved.*

Tuesday, November 13, 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10 (a fallen leaf)

The power of the Holy Spirit is visible to me when I see gushes of wind taking leaves by flight in the midst of brisk autumn days. This second reading from 1 Thessalonians is steeped in the Holy Spirit, and relies on the legacy of the apostles and evangelists from before. The mission of Paul swept across many regions and became known because of the work of people sharing the good news and the chain effect that took shape.
Action: Go outside, pick up a fallen leaf, as you hold the leaf; think of the change that is happening as each leaf drops from the tree, imagine a gush of wind moving leaves from one place to another. Remember the leaves from before, the glorious colors and expressions they gave us this beautiful autumn. As you look at these leaves make a commitment to allow God's spirit to work through you, illuminating your gifts to move throughout your community sharing the good news of Jesus Christ to others.

Wednesday, November 14, Psalm 146 (sounds of nature)

This psalm of praise for God's help highlights God's activity with those in the margins. God favors the oppressed. God's love and compassion are always at the disposal of those in need.

Action: Find your own unique way to praise the Lord! Listen for all of God's creatures singing their own songs, maybe it is a single songbird that greets you in the morning, or a gaggle of geese flying south, or squirrels running through leaves. As the seasons change, so do the sounds we hear outdoors. Pause, Listen, Pray and Go forward celebrating with gratitude the goodness of God!

Thursday, November 15, 1 Kings 17:8-16 (a piece of bread or cake)

The woman, neither out of confidence nor out of desperation, believes the prophet and continues to dip into her meager supplies for days without their food running out, and they all eat well for the duration of the famine.

Action: *Find a piece of bread or cake to eat. As you eat it reflect on times when it was hard to make ends meet but somehow the supplies didn't run out. As you continuing chewing on this bread, imagine ways you could also share what you have with others. We know from this story that the widow didn't have much, but when sharing, she still didn't run out of supplies. Consider taking another step by hosting friends for dinner or going out to eat with somebody you haven't seen recently.*

Friday, November 16, 1 Kings 17:17-24 (a warm beverage)

This scripture is unsettling, the son of the widow becomes ill, to the point of death. Elijah becomes upset with the Lord and calls out to God, then stretches himself across the boy three times and revives him. This story shows that Elijah is a prophet, and it also shows God's resilience and care for those in the margins.

Action: *Make yourself a warm beverage, perhaps a nice cup of coffee or tea. As the drink is very hot, watch the steam spewing over the top of the cup. When are times in your life when you have felt pressure, or heat? What did you do in those moments? Who did you turn to? As mentioned on Monday, God loves you and you are chosen as God's. As the drink cools, drink and taste the simple blessings of God, giving thanks for the love God pours over us each day we are alive.*