

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of several purple flowers, likely chrysanthemums, with vibrant purple petals and dark centers. The lighting is soft, creating a gentle glow around the flowers.

St. Timothy Presbyterian Church

GRATITUDE

Rev. In Kee Kim

2014 - 2018
Sermons

Contents

DESENSITIZED GENERATION.....	3
AS THOUGH NOT.....	7
LIFE– MATRIX OF GLORY AND SUFFERING	11
YOU ARE NOT AN ORPHAN.....	16
IS GRACE SUFFICIENT?.....	20
CONDITION OF THANKSGIVING	25
PERSPECTIVE OF THANKSGIVING.....	29
IT IS GOD.....	33
LIFE THAT MATTERS.....	38
A RAY OF LIGHT	42
TO LIVE IS BY GRACE.....	46
WHAT IS OUR IDOL.....	52
FOOLISHNESS AND GREED	55

DESENSITIZED GENERATION

July 6, 2014

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

What a Wonderful World

One of my favourite songs is What a Wonderful World. We even sang it once in our worship service. It is just beautiful. In that song you see the beauty, not only beauty of nature, but the beauty of life. Whenever I hear that song or sing that song . I feel that life is beautiful. So let us look at the words there. I see trees of green, red roses too. I see them bloom for me and you and I think to myself, what a wonderful world. I see skies of blue and clouds of white, the bright blessed day, the dark sacred night. And I think to myself what a wonderful world. The colours of the rainbow so pretty in the sky are also on the faces of people going by. I see friends shaking hands saying, how do you do? They are really saying, I love you. I hear babies cry. I watch them grow. They will learn much more than I'll ever know. And I think to myself, what a wonderful world. That's how the song is. Nice song, nice image. But unfortunately the world we live in, it's not this nice. Sometimes it is cold and cruel. People are not always nice, people are not always kind. Sometimes they're rude. I don't see friends always shaking hands. I see friends shaking their fists.

I don't see just blue skies and white clouds. I see storm and scary dark clouds. I don't see innocent kids being taken good care of and we enjoy seeing them grow, but I see kids being kidnapped. As we see this world. Can we always say what a wonderful world? Not really, some people say may say what an awful world. We experienced the rejection, betrayal, racism, sexism, bullying, and big disappointment with people and these experiences make our hearts hardened. We don't easily trust people anymore. We close our hearts to people. Since we don't like the feeling of pain, we shut down all our feelings and we become numb and desensitized. Not only the feeling of pain is gone, but all feelings are gone. We cannot even feel for life. Listen to what Jesus said about this generation. He said, "We play the flute for you and you did not dance. We wailed and you did not mourn" How accurate his description is about the condition of our heart. We don't know how to dance. We don't know how to

cry. We are all locked up inside. We may be too busy to feel. We may be so stressed that we don't want to feel. After this hard work, you come home and you just want to shut down. You don't want to think. You don't want to feel. If this keeps going, slowly our hearts will shut down.

We use all our energy to make a living and there is no energy left to take care of our souls, to take care of ourselves, and slowly we become hardened and hardened. You know, to live in this world, there is no problem to function as an emotionally deprived person. You can function still very well. You can work very well, but your emotion gets dried up and your soul gets so dry.

I want to feel for what other people may go through. When we watch news. We hear everyday so many people die here and so many people die there. The kid is kidnapped with his grandparents. We always hear these news about terrible things going on in the world and after awhile you get numb, you get desensitized. They just become numbers. So many die. 20, 30, 100, whatever. They just become numbers. We don't feel for what they may go through. It is pretty hard to feel anything about other people. We just don't know how other people may feel. We are losing the ability to feel. Our ability to make money and work efficiently gets better and better, but our ability to feel becomes worse and worse.

Rejoice with Those who Rejoice

Saint Paul said in Romans Chapter Twelve, verse 15, this is what he said, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." In other words, dance, when the food is played, cry, when the sorrow is shared. But Jesus saw that we are not able to do that. We have lost the ability to feel for other people feel. When you don't feel for other people, how can you rejoice with them when they rejoice? How can you weep with those who weep? The degree of our intellectual level from our brain may be very high. You're very smart people, but the degree of our emotional level may become lower and lower. But I do believe the real intelligence is not in the brain. I do believe that the real intelligence is to know how others feel exactly. Jesus was like that. Jesus wept, Jesus got angry, but he knew exactly how to feel for the situation. I think that is really intelligence. I think that they are the real smart ones, not the people who are smart in the brain. People who know how to feel, what other people feel. Feeling my friends,

it's not just feeling, feeling needs to be trained, otherwise we wouldn't even know how to feel and our feelings can be very inappropriate. When you should not be angry, you get angry. When you're supposed to be very happy, you don't feel any joy.

I remember myself going through that. I was the person who officiated the wedding and there's a beautiful couple in front of me and there were hundreds of people with beautiful clothes and then they shared laughter and joy. The person who was officiating the wedding, I felt nothing. I felt nothing. People's laughter that bothered me rather. When we don't know how to feel, that feeling needs to be trained. When we lose our ability to feel it is the worst feeling. It is much better to feel painful than feeling nothing. When you feel nothing it really drives you crazy. When you're in pain, when you feel pain, you know what is going on, but when you don't feel anything, it is a really hard to bear. To feel nothing is to feel no pulse of life and that is death.

Jesus Will Free you of Your Burdens

A few years ago, a middle aged man came to me and said "Reverend, I feel numb. I don't feel anything. I don't know what I like and I don't know what I wanna do. I don't even know what gives me joy and what satisfies me. I feel nothing. What should I do?" He asked. When you're not capable of feeling, you cannot truly appreciate the beauty of life. You become victims of hardened heartedness. You become a very harsh person. Jesus pointed this out in verse 18 and 19 "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he was a demon. The son of man came eating and drinking and they say, look, a glutton and a drunkard. A friend of tax collectors and sinners." All they did was judgment. They cannot feel for anything. They could have no empathy for others, no connectedness with others here at the heart level. They just judge everything from their brain, but they cannot connect with people at this heart level.

Modern people suffer from this heart and heart. Nothing good can come about, only judgment, criticism, cynicism and negative worldview. People have been too stress out, people have been too busy, they have been too hurt. They have experienced too many failures and defeat. So if you keep going that way slowly, slowly, you're running towards death, emotional death. My friends, we have good news. This is what Jesus said. "Come to

me all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you'll find the rest. You'll find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Jesus can give us the true rest. The modern people have too much in their soul.

Transform your Pain into Compassion, Suffering, and Love

Their burdens are too heavy. Their soul is oppressed and depressed. They need the rest. We all need rest. Not just physical rest, but spiritual rest. Spiritual rest. That's what we need. Jesus said to come to him. All those who are weary and are carrying heavy burden. He said, he'll give you the rest. He will give you rest. Once you find true rest in Christ, you'll find you will restore true feelings. Then you can really connect with people at the emotional level, at a real level. You can feel for what other people feel. Being spiritual, it's nothing complicated. Being spiritual is being alive. All your sense, all your senses come alive. That's what it means to be spiritual. When you're spiritual, you can feel it because everything is alive and everything so sensitive. You can feel people's joy. You can feel everything, even the pain. When you're spiritual, you can feel the pain much more clearly. That's why you can feel the pain for the pain of other people. When other people are going through suffering, you feel the pain, but the pain does not remain as pain, but the pain is transformed into compassion, suffering, love.

So we need to restore that spiritual senses. Our senses need to come alive so that we may be connected with each other and we may be connected with God. Come to Jesus and find true rest. Don't just run and run and run. Once in a while, stop and think about it. Do you feel what you feel. Many people don't even know what they feel inside. So many things going on. They don't even know what's going on in their hearts. Do you feel what you feel inside? Find true rest in Christ, come to him. He will give you rest and then you'll find true joy of life.

AS THOUGH NOT

January 25, 2015

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

What Does That Mean?

It is hard to truly understand what Paul is trying to say. He advises those who have wives to live as though they had none. I mean what kind of message is that? 'Those who have wives as you have none', it requires interpretation. Is it the message that you should take your wife for granted, or is it the message to not to take your wife too seriously? If you by mistake think that that's the message and you've practiced it, you will probably be in big trouble. You know, these days if you don't listen to your wife and take her for granted, probably you will starve or you can't do anything. If you are going to make an appointment you have to first check with wives. When I arrange visitation, I don't arrange with the husbands. I arrange with wives, because if they say yes, it's yes. If they say no, it's no. Fortunately, that is not the message Paul is trying to communicate. Paul does not say, to take your wife for granted.

Weeping, rejoicing, buy things, dealings all over the world... they're all very much part of what we do and what we experience. Common experiences and important things are very much part of how we live day by day. You know, there are times when you have experience, great joy of life. When you have your first child in your hands, when you get a job you want so much, when you meet a special person of your dreams... you experience great joy when we go through these things. There are also times when you experience the sadness of life. When we lose our loved ones, when we had difficulty with our job or our business, with our boss. There are children who are in trouble at school or in their personal lives. We feel the deep sadness of life when we experienced these things. When there's a family fight, conflict, difficulties, relational difficulties, we experience the sadness of life.

So we only experience joy, rejoicing and we experience sadness, weeping. That's very much part of who we are, and what we experience, and these are really important moments of our lives. When you experience joy, you want that moment to last forever. "I wish that this moment is everlasting. I'm so happy. It's just perfect right now. I hope nothing changes, that it just

eternally stays there as it is.” When you experience sadness, you don’t want it. You want that to pass by quickly, but somehow you feel like that sad moment will be with you forever. You have this worry that this suffering and sadness will never disappear, will never go away. “Will it be with me for the rest of my life?”

We Are More Than Our Circumstances

St. Paul in today’s passage is saying that these moments will not be with us forever. They’re passing by, they are transient. He said in verse 31, “for the present form of this world is passing away.” So marrying, reaping, rejoicing, and doing business, they are all important human activities, but still they are not permanent. They will not stay with us forever. They’re important and we should do our best to do well with all those, but we cannot attach eternal value to it. We cannot assign eternal value to these things that we experience. If we do that, we’ll be disappointed. We will be disillusioned. When we experience these things going away from us, we will overreact to our situations. That suffering comes to us, and if we attach permanent value to that suffering that we experience, we will be consumed by our fear for that suffering. Suffering may come, but it will pass. Same with joy. When we experience joy from our circumstances, we wish that joy we get in the things of the world may be permanent, but that’s not possible. The joy will soon go away. At the prayer retreat, in our group a woman shared “You know, I set this standard on my life, you know about children, about finances, about help and all that. I just wished that I could just maintain that level and when it goes down, when it crumbles, I worry and I worry that it may crumble.” And she said, “I’ve experience being crumbled, I experienced being at the bottom of my life. And then all these years I built up to get to this standard again, but now I’m more worried than before. What if this just crumbles? What if my children, what if my finances, what if my help?” The fact is we have no control over that.

I shared this with you at the retreat, there was a movie called *Shadowlands*, that portrays the life of C.S. Lewis who was a professor at Oxford University and a great Christian writer. Later he became converted and became a great Christian writer. He married Joy Gresham, a divorcee from the United States in his late age. All his life, he was just a scholar living in an ivory tower. As soon as he got married he realized how great life is. He really enjoyed the married life, but soon after the marriage they discovered that she had cancer. While taking care of her he experienced

what it mean to truly love somebody. That's something that he never experienced before as a scholar, but he understood what it meant to truly love somebody, but at the same time he experienced how painful it was. Once they went to their favorite part in England, a rural area, they really enjoyed being there, Louis, filled with happiness and joy, he said this to Joy Gresham, "This is my kind of happiness, by the present moment is entirely self contained, untarnished by any fleeting thought of what has come before or what may come later." He really enjoyed that moment, not bothered by any other things, that pure present moment he enjoyed. Then joy his wife gently rebuked him saying, "That's only temporal isolationism. That happiness cannot be genuine if it involves shutting off the past or the future, what is yet to come to the future infuses the very texture of what is now experienced, the pain that is part of this happiness now." That's the deal. She realized that that moment can not stay there forever. That beautiful moment, however beautiful that moment may be, cannot stay there forever. So after that, she passed away. Joy knew that the joy that they experience at that moment cannot be self contained. Nothing in this world can be self contained. They all pass by. You will soon disappear and the suffering will replace the joy. After her funeral, C.S. Lewis said, "A child chooses safety, but a grown person chooses the suffering, the pain is part of the happiness. Now I find I can live with the pain after all." That's the deal. What St. Paul is teaching us today is to experience inner freedom, inner freedom so that you may not be so attached to things that pass away – so that you may not be so obsessive about the things that cannot stay there forever, eternally.

Live as though not, let those who have wives as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present of this world is passing away. With inner freedom, we can handle all our life situations including the transient nature of life. It doesn't depress us, it doesn't make us feel hopeless, so instead of trying to hold on to what cannot be held on to, hold to God, who is permanent, who is eternal. Our inner freedom prepares our heart to let go of things that have passed away. When you try to hold onto the things that pass away, you become so powerless, helpless and hopeless. You lose the meaning of life. No matter how painful your life may be right now, the pain will pass away someday. Don't let the pain consume your life. We are more than just victims of our temporary circumstances. We are stronger than

that. You're stronger than that. They cannot completely control us, we have eternity within us. We have eternal life within us. Those who only have hope for the transient things, the things that passed away, ultimately will find meaninglessness of life. But when you find that eternal life in you, that in spite of our transient nature of life, we can live out our life with courage, joy, hope and peace. What are you holding onto? Things that have passed away, are you scared to let go? Hold on to what does not pass away. Everything may pass away, but not the light of the word of God.

LIFE – MATRIX OF GLORY AND SUFFERING

February 15, 2015

Mark 9:2-9

God's Glory

There are many, many different ways of appreciating God's creation and beauty. We need to celebrate God because of everything, not just because of one or two things, but because of the totality. Everything that God has provided for us. I was thinking about the life of disciples with Jesus, what would have it been like? Life with Jesus Christ... Before they met Christ, they were pretty ordinary people. The fishermen, they believed in God, and they worked hard. But after meeting Christ, somehow a lot of wonderful things were happening. It must have been fantastic and they never witnessed that kind of things in their lives. Before day to day was predictable. They just worked hard. But when Jesus was so different, every day they were shocked, surprised, totally unexpected. So in life with Jesus Christ, it must have been really fantastic. They witnessed many out of this world experience. They saw sick people coming and Jesus laid his hands and they were healed. Then demon possessed people, then Jesus came and just with his word of authority, he challenged them and exorcised them. They were terrified, they were trembling and then they left. And this miracle of feeding 5,000, 10,000 people with only five loaves of bread and two fish... they actually witnessed all these things. Every day they experienced some out-of-this-world experience. They've never had that kind of a thing. They never saw that thing. And most of all, Jesus even brought them Lazarus. Come on.

So I think they experience, tremendous joy, and excitement. Life was very, very different after meeting Christ. Even today's experience is very much an out-of-this-world experience. This story is one of the five pillars of Jesus' ministry or Jesus' manifestations, resurrection, ascension, and all that. So it's a one-five. Up in the mountain they saw Jesus completely being transformed. His clothes became dazzling white such as no one on Earth could bleach them. Not only that, they saw Moses and Elijah who are on Earth 14 years before Jesus Christ came, and the 900 years before Jesus came respectively. And all of a sudden they saw Moses and Elijah. The teachers were talking with them. What would he talk about? Probably might

be my guess, but probably he was talking with them about the cross, how he had to die. The cloud came and then from the cloud they heard the voice and the voice said “This is my son.” They loved it. They listened to him.

Wow. Best of the best. He can't get any better than this. He can't get any more dramatic. The ultimate supernatural experience. We e don't have that kind of experience more often these days. I hope that we could have more of these experiences, then they will take God more seriously. They'll come to Bible study and be more serious. Like, “Wow, God is really alive, God is really there.” I just hope that God really shows a little bit more.

It's Not All About The Glory

I don't want to explain to these stories in a way we can understand and accept, that's no fun. You don't kill the power of the story. It was not an understanding of experience. It was an inexplicable experience. No matter how much we tried to explain it scientifically or whatever, it is inexplicable. I don't just leave it as it is. It wasn't beyond our ordinary day-to-day experience, the experience was beyond that, and I wonder if the disciples were even there. I think they would have just stood there with their mouths open in awe. They could not even communicate with each other. They were just standing there. They were terrified. Yes, of course. When you experience what you cannot explain, you become terrified. But it can be good at the same time. They were terrified, but it was good. Peter liked that experience so much that he was like, “Hey, why don't we build three tents, three dwellings, and then one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah. So why don't we just say here in this mountain? This is great. I never experienced it and I feel so peaceful. I feel so glorified here. I want to stay here. Why don't we just stay here?”

But Jesus' reaction was strange. That's why I like Jesus, that's why I'm fascinated by this person, Jesus. He's not like any other human being. He's not like any other. When you read a story, you can see how different he is from most of us. I mean, the utmost experience was a wonderful out-of-this-world experience and they were so excited and then they were coming down and thinking that they were going to be the three disciples that Jesus took. Not all twelve disciples. Peter, James and John were the main core disciples. They took these three and then went up and then on they way

down, they must have been like, “Wow. This is really, really great. I’m going to go down and talk to the other guys. You know what I experienced at the top of the mountain? I met Moses and Elijah. We heard a voice and we saw the dazzling white that was the transformation.” They were just dying to share what they experienced on the top of the mountain with the people down there. But strangely Jesus said, “Don’t tell them what you experienced.”

I wonder, isn’t it better for them to share about how wonderful they experienced it with other people so that they could believe in God more? That was not Jesus’ way of letting other people believe. Jesus was always saying that’s not how you can believe. That’s how you can obtain, but that’s not how you change. That’s what Jesus used to say. We didn’t read it today, but right after the story, there’s another story. It was after the experience, all these fantastic things at the top of the mountain. They came down and there was a father who came to the disciples with a sick son and then they asked the disciples, “Please, can you heal my son?” The disciples could not. They had a wonderful experience, experiencing the mountain. When they came down, they could not heal the son of this man. Then this was what Jesus said: “You faithless generation. How much longer must I deal with you? How much longer must I put up with you?” They had a wonderful experience at the top of the mountain. It was a heavenly experience, but when they came down and faced that dark reality, they were powerless. Experiencing God is great. I think we should all experience God at some point of our lives. But Jesus is telling us that there is life down there, where we have to deal with the evil, darkness, hurt and pain. Christian life or Christian discipleship is not just about experiencing God. Christian life is about dealing with our everyday situations, where we experience suffering, disappointment, sadness, anger and frustration.

The Christians live in a matrix of glory and suffering. Both are present in our lives. Every day we encounter pain, suffering, hurt, and all kinds of negative things. Everyday you encounter your own dead demons. You’re encountering your own darkness. You cannot expect life to be just always good and glorious. The secret of life is not in searching for the experience of His glory, but in it to be empowered and to be able to deal with our dark reality. We cannot always look for honey and some kind of pleasure of this sweetness. We cannot always ask for, “Okay where is the fun or where is the honey? Where is the pleasure, where is His glory?” We cannot always

do that. We have to learn to be strong in every situation that we encounter in our lives. Yes, we need to experience God, but we cannot stay there as Peter wrongly suggested. You have to come down to where we have to deal with the suffering in this world. We should not only ask God to give us the joy of experiencing God. Also ask God to empower and equip us to deal with the pain and suffering of this world. I do believe that God will give us the wisdom and power to do so.

The Ability To Suffer

Last night while I was finishing up my sermon, my mind was wrapped around this mountain top experience. Yes, these disciples experienced this wonderful manifestations of God and the Bible was reflecting on it. I'm on my bed and this call came in and then one of the ministers in Toronto – he's an intermediary of our church – we started talking about the problems that I have at church and he asked me for advice. I was at the top of the mountain right there. Oh my goodness. This church problem, people fighting, kicking out ministers and and all that stuff. Oh my goodness. We are always facing challenges in the world. Ask God to give you wisdom and abilities to be able to deal with challenges in this world. God will grant that.

Last Thursday I visited one of our retired elders. Actually he's Jenny's grandfather. Just very recently he discovered that he's suffering from lung cancer. There was no symptom, he was healthy. Just three weeks ago I talked to him. He was at the service and all of a sudden, terrible lung cancer and he's fighting right now in uncertainty. How am I going to deal with this? I pray that God may grant him and his family the power and the grace to go through this very, very difficult time. Let us ask God to equip all of us for a source of strength when challenges come to us. Transfiguration, that is the foreshadow of resurrection. Transfigurations show what will come at His resurrection. The resurrection will be different from the transfiguration. These disciples just went up to the mountain to experience transfiguration, but without the cross, there is no resurrection. You cannot just experience resurrection. Only through the cross, you can experience resurrection. St. Paul said, "You die and you rise with Christ." You'll need, to experience the resurrection, you'd have to take up the cross.

It is easy to believe in God when everything is going right, when everything is good. It's easy to be living up. When the darkness comes to you,

difficulties come to you and hardships come to you, when the cross comes to you, are you going to give up?

When you've had a mountain top experience, it's good to be living up. But down there, when you experience the evil darkness and the cross, are you going to give up? Without that cross there is no resurrection. I saw some people – they started well, coming to church and experiencing God and all that. They experienced the cross in their lives, but they stopped there. They gave up. They don't go through to get to the resurrection. This Wednesday is Ash Wednesday. That means starting this Wednesday, Lent begins. Meaning we reflect on Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. That we are already on the way of the cross, our journey to fullness, is also our journey to the cross. Without having journeyed into the cross, there is no fullness. There is no resurrection. May God give you strength and insight about the journey for each of us. I hope that we Christians become able to deal with the darkness of this world. I don't want Christians to be soft, or Christians just sucking on the honey and pleasure and joy in God. I want our Christians to stand up. Deal with the darkness, injustice of this new world to stand up strong. That's what Christian journey is all about.

YOU ARE NOT AN ORPHAN

May 3, 2015

John 14:15-21

Embrace All of Life

At every Korean session meeting, we have training. I had to train them with a book by Henri Nouwen. The book is called "A Spirituality of Living". Before the session meeting, for about 30 minutes, we talk about the spirituality of being an elder and leading the congregation. Hopefully I will do that with the English-speaking congregation too. And from that book, this phrase caught my attention, and this is what Henri Nouwen said, "Jesus calls us to gratitude. He calls us to recognize that gladness and sadness are never separate. That joy and sorrow really belong together, and that mourning and dancing are part of the same movement. How true that is about our life. Our life is a combination of all this. If you demand that only good things should happen in your life, then it will be pretty difficult for you to live with gratitude.

You wish that this will happen, but not all the time that happens. But if you demand that, that should happen all the time, then it will be pretty difficult, to live with gratitude. Knowingly and unknowingly, you'll build some kind of resentment within you. So I see a lot of people living with some kind of resentment with them. They don't really know that they have this resentment within them, but when the situation arises, then you realize, how come I have so much resentment? That resentment was unconsciously accumulated and built up within you. So if you demand that life should be in one way, whether you like it or not, you will most likely build and accumulate some kind of resentment. Life is a mixture of good memories and regrets, love and disappointments, joy and sadness. If we cannot accept this fact of life, we will have a hard time living meaningfully in this world.

Gratitude is to embrace all of life. That's what gratitude is. Gratitude is to embrace all of life, the good and the bad, the joyful and the painful, the victory and the defeat. Gratitude, if you don't embrace all of your life, gratitude is not possible. This is what Saint Paul said, "in any and all circumstances, I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going

hungry and of having plenty and of being in need.” In all circumstances. In other words, he learned the secret of embracing all of life. He had a secret of embracing all circumstances. That’s why he could say be joyful always. That’s why he said, give thanks in all circumstances because he learned the secret of being able to embrace all of life, and then right after that, after this passage, this is what he said, this is his secret. “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” I can do all things through him who strengthens me. In other words, I can embrace all of life through him who strengthens me. That was Paul’s secret. So then gratitude is not a psychological phenomena. Gratitude is a spiritual thing. If you don’t have God through whom you can do all things, then gratitude is not possible. When we have God within us, fully within us, who strengthens me, then we can embrace all of life. Not just the good things that we like to cherish, but bad things that we don’t want. That is where deep gratitude comes from. In today’s passage, Jesus promised I will not leave you orphaned. I will not leave you orphaned. He will never leave us alone. That is Jesus’ promise. In your darkest moment, Jesus will not leave you alone. That is Jesus’ promise to you. No matter what circumstances you may go through in your life, Jesus will never leave you alone. Jesus lived a very short time here on earth, and after that he left us. Thirty three years. He left us, he said, I’ll never leave you alone, and then he sent the Holy Spirit to us, and this was what Jesus said, “and I will ask the father and he will give you another advocate (that means the Holy Spirit) to be with you forever. This is the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you and he’ll be in you.” You are not alone. The spirit is within you. In your life circumstances, sometimes you’ll experience a lot of bad things that you don’t want, but even in that moment, Jesus will be with you.

You are not Alone

Often when life’s tragedy hits us, suffering hits us, difficulties hits us, you’re scared and you’re not quite sure about the uncertainties of the future. But you know what? What is the most common emotion people experience when they were hit by tragedy? Deep loneliness, that’s what they experience. When life’s hardships hits us, we feel alone. We feel like we’re abandoned. In that deep loneliness, we feel that we are abandoned, all by ourselves. When Jesus Christ was on the cross, he said, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Jesus is not crying out. Jesus is not asking why God has abandoned him, but he was expressing the deep loneliness

that any human being will experience when they go through suffering and hardship.

We feel like nobody seems to care. We feel like nobody seems to understand the deep pain we go through, and we feel like nobody can walk along with me in this dark path. "I'm all alone who has to go through this." We become sad, lonely, and later even angry. When things are good, you enjoy the companionship, but when deep darkness and pain hit us, we realized the limit of the companionship, limit of what the companionship can offer to us. Ultimately nobody can help, we realize. That's reality, that's when we feel alone. Not only do you feel alone, you're all by yourself, but you know what you also experience? You understand that you're not strong enough to be able to go through this all by yourself and you feel alone so you feel so helpless. You feel so alone, but you also know that you are not strong enough to be able to go through all that on your own.

That's when your spirituality becomes really important, not religiousness. Spirituality, deep connectedness with God. That's when the spirituality kicks in. Until then, you don't even know what spirituality does, but when you experience this, then spirituality kicks in and then you realize how important it is. Depending on whether you can believe that the spirit is within you or not, the results are quite different; either you can stand tall or collapse. You know one thing good about experiencing this deep loneliness is that when you experience this deep loneliness, that's when you can meet God. You can only meet God when you're alone. When you're always with other people, you cannot meet God, but when you experience that deep existential loneliness, the feeling that you're all by yourself, that's when God comes in. That's God's attribute. God is strange. When we are broken and totally vulnerable, God comes, appears to us when things are all right, somehow God disappears, but when we go through that hardship and difficulty, God's slowly comes in and then you see God. So one thing good about feeling this deep loneliness is that you can experience and meet God in a real way.

When everything goes alright, we don't feel alone. We feel right in with the people around us. Well, when we go through pain, we experience loneliness, and we feel like an orphan, Henri Nouwen said, "God is hidden in our pain." So only when you go into pain, you find God. God is hidden in our pain. It is so true. When you feel like you are orphan, that's when you

realize that you're not an orphan. When you don't feel like an orphan, then you don't even know that you're not an orphan, but when you feel like I'm an orphan, that's when you realize that you are not an orphan. You're not alone because you meet God. You strongly feel that "I'm not an orphan. God is with me."

Trust in God

My friends, you have two choices. When life's tragedy and hardships hit you, are you going to respond with resentment and become cynical, or are you going to search for God who is hidden in your pain? If you hold onto your pride, then you will build resentment, but if you let go of your pride and hold onto humility, then you'll be able to search for God, hidden in your pain. When you're holding onto your pride, that will destroy you and your life will be diminished, but when you hold on to God within you, then you will be saved and life will be enriched. I know some of you went through tremendous suffering. You have a choice, which one are you going to hold onto? Life's journey is not possible without feeling deep loneliness. That's very much part of the real journey. Ultimately in that journey, you have to walk alone.

You have no choice but to do that. That's what spiritual journey is all about. Somehow this year, you will experience difficulties, hardships, and prejudice in your life. When you encounter them, understand the theme of this year. You are on this journey, spiritual journey. In that journey, you'll encounter both the good and bad, joy and sadness. That's what a journey is. During that journey, you will experience some difficulties and devastation, helplessness and hopelessness, but ultimately that journey will take you to fullness. When God is with us, what is important is trust. Do you trust God is within you or not? When you trust, then it will come alive. You'll come out of it with stronger faith and stronger character. If you hold onto your deep-rooted bitterness, you will fall and you will not be able to get up. Life will be full of complaints, but when you hold onto the spirit within you, then gratitude will start kicking in and then you can embrace all of your life.

IS GRACE SUFFICIENT?

July 5, 2015

2 Corinthians 12:2-10

Accepting Life's Circumstances

I see life as very interesting. I'm not saying that if it is good or pleasant necessarily, just interesting. A life is never either this or that. Life is often both this and that. Life circumstances are never either good or bad. Life circumstances are both good and bad. If there is laughter, then there are tears. St. Paul experienced going to the third heaven. We don't know exactly what he was talking about, the third heaven, but the experience was fantastic; an out of world kind of experience. He himself said, "I'm not sure. I don't know whether I was in the body or out of the body." So he had a tremendously high spiritual experience. Not many of us will have had experience of going to the third heaven while alive on this earth, but that's not the end of the story. The Bible is like that. That's not the end of the story.

And then that's the not main story either. Soon, God gave him a thorn in the flesh. Actually, it wasn't God who gave him a thorn in the flesh, but God allowed Satan to give a thorn in the flesh of St. Paul. And this thorn bothered him tremendously. He was tormented. Now he had just experienced paradise as this spiritual high, then soon, he experienced the bottom, the lowest point of his spiritual life by being tormented by Satan through the thorn in the flesh. So we realize that life is either this or that. Life is always both this and that. People are like that. People are never either good or bad.

People are both good and bad. We cannot paint a person as a bad person or a good person because they consist both of good and bad. But we like to a paint reality with one color. If there is just one color, it is easier to understand, easier to grasp, and easier to control. So we paint reality with one color. But as you look at the reality, honestly and carefully, you realize that reality is a combination of many different colors and the spiritual spirituality or spiritual journey is to embrace all colors of our reality and be

thankful in all circumstances. Embrace all colors and be thankful in all circumstances.

Having Gratitude

Do you want to know what the secret happiness is? I found the secret of happiness. You want me to tell you, yes or no? It's very expensive. I'm telling you for free. I realized that the secret of happiness is that you never expect life to be this or that, but to accept both this and that. Never expect life to be this way. If you don't have that expectation, then you'll be happy. Accept both this and that. But a lot of unhappiness comes from, "Oh, life should be this way and if life is not this way, I'm not happy." If you continuously insist that, then you'll never experience happiness in life. If there is rain, there will be sunshine. Accept both rain and the sunshine.

Our issue in life is not whether life is this or that. Our issue with life is whether I can survive through the situation I am in. Whether if my the life situation is either this or that, the issue is whether I can survive through the situation that I'm in right now. Mary Jo Leddy said in her book "Radical Gratitude" that being grateful is the secret of life, and gratitude is the most radical attitude towards life and this is what she said about gratitude: "In gratitude, the vicious cycle of dissatisfaction with life is broken, and we begin anew in the recognition of what we have rather than what we don't have, in the acknowledgement of who we are rather than in the awareness of who we are not." We are not happy because of our life circumstances, my friends. We are not happy because of our attitude towards our circumstances. Do you understand? We are not happy because our life situations are a certain way. It is because of our attitude towards certain situations of our life, we become very unhappy. Right after experiencing the third heaven, the spiritual high, St. Paul experienced the spiritual low. He was thrown down into the bottom of his spirituality. He just wanted to remain at a spiritual high.

My Grace is Sufficient for You

So with relative confidence, you know when you're spiritually high, you have spiritual confidence. With relative confidence, he approached God and prayed thinking that when he prays, even he can even remove mountain. When you're spiritually high, you have that kind of spiritual confidence. So he

approached God, and prayed three times. The Bible is figurative. That does not mean that Paul prayed only three times. That means Paul prayed as much as he could. I mean, would you think that Paul is finished praying only after three times? No, he prayed as much as possible. He prayed with confidence, with spiritual high, but somehow surprisingly, God did not answer him. God did not take out the thorn in the flesh. Sometimes in your life, with your logic, with your brain, you think that this is the best and you prayed, but God does not listen.

That's what St. Paul experienced. He thought that with the absence of a thorn in the flesh, he can do much better with his ministry, for you, for God and everything, so he thought that it would be best that the thorn would be removed, so he prayed three times. But God did not take away the thorn. When God does not listen to your prayer that of which you desire the most, the prayer that in your head is the most reasonable and good, and God still does not grant that prayer. What do you do? Do you give up? Do you give up praying? Do you give up believing in God? Do you give up spirituality? Paul experienced God not answering his prayers, but that was not the end of it. He got this message and the message is: "My grace is sufficient unto you, my grace is sufficient for you." What is God doing here? God was teaching Paul to learn to accept all his life situations, whether with the thorn or without the thorn. God taught Paul to live with not only with good situations but also with bad situations too. God taught Paul the only thing we need in this world or in our life is this. The only thing that we need. What is this?

The Gift of Grace

Grace. That's the only thing that you need in your life. Everything else is extra. Everything else is a bonus. When everything runs out, but if grace is still operating within you, then you can survive that. Grace is the most important thing. Beyond that, if you have wealth, that's a bonus. If you have good children, that's a bonus. If you have a beautiful boyfriend/girlfriend, that's a bonus. If you have beautiful children, if you have your health, that's a bonus, but the only thing that we need in our life is grace. St. Paul discovered that grace is sufficient for you. St. Paul learned this secret and that your power does not come from your power. Your power comes when you're powerless. Your power does not come from your power. Your power comes when your power is gone.

This is what he said: “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” In other words, power is made perfect in powerlessness. When you’re powerless, then you can experience real power. When you feel powerful, that powerfulness may not be the true powerfulness that we need in this world. The true powerfulness is when we feel totally powerless. We experience the true power that doesn’t only come today and disappears tomorrow. There is another power, the kind of power that exists today, but disappears tomorrow, but the power Paul is talking about is a power that lasts forever with you and that power is God’s power. And through his weaknesses, he experiences the true power of God. Unless you are stripped off of all your power, you won’t see the power of God working in you. When you’re totally vulnerable, that’s when you experience the true power of God in your life. The star shines brighter in the darkness, in the same way, God’s power shines brighter in the dark night of the soul. When you go through tremendous darkness, that’s when you experience the true power. We are so scared that I want to have power. I have power of popularity, fame, money. Well, you know all those things. I want to have this because without this, I can not survive! So you live with this power, being scared that someday you might go away, but when you let go, when that is taken away from you, sometimes that’s when you experience the true power that is operating in you and that gives you true confidence in your life.

Finding Strength Through Weakness

That’s why Saint Paul could boast about his weaknesses. This is what he said: “So I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.” He tasted the power of Christ, so he does not boast about his power. Rather, he boasts about his weaknesses because in those weaknesses he experienced the power of Christ. I hope that all of you will become the people who experience the power of Christ. I hope all of you will live and become the people who live with the power of Christ dwelling in you, rather than power that you accumulate. That power just disappears and evaporates.

During KSM service, when Reverend Chung was doing communion, I got a message from Reverend Son that a member of our congregation who was in hospital, passed away this morning. He was in the hospital. He wanted to have worship with us at the same time. And then he sat and drank

something. And after that he passed away. The fragility of life. The vulnerability of life. The power that we hold onto doesn't last forever. When I said that, all members in the congregation about his age, all his friends there were totally shocked. Everything that we hold onto in this world can be taken away just like that. I hope that we all experience the power of Christ, that never departs from you. And that we live with this grace of God operating in you. When this grace of God operates in you, you know what happens? You are being content. I told you at the retreat, the complainers shouldn't complain over people. You are the problem. You are the problem.

When we experience the spirituality, we learn to be content in whatever circumstances, good or bad, well fed, or hungry because even in your weakness, God's power will be manifested. Experience. Don't have doctrinal faith. Have faith that experiences the power of Christ. Put down your traditional faith and experience the power of Christ dwelling in you. But many times when you hold onto your power, you will not experience that power that much. When you let that go and let yourself become completely immersed in the grace of God, everything else is bonus. Be content and be thankful. When you know that power, in the life situation where it tries to shrink you down, you'll come out, standing tall. May the power of Christ dwell in your life.

CONDITION OF THANKSGIVING

October 11, 2015

Habakkuk 3:17-19

God and our Response

Happy Thanksgiving. It's a wonderful day. What beautiful autumn weather. You know I was reflecting on Thanksgiving and I realized that we don't give thanks when things are going alright. We give thanks when things get rough and tough and life gets entangled. Strange isn't it? But that is real Thanksgiving. Why is that so? Because Thanksgiving is not our response to our situation, but our response to God.

Today, the Prophet Habakkuk said, "though the fig tree does not blossom and no fruit is on the vines, though the produce of the olive fails and the fields yield no food, though the flock is cut off from the fold and there is no hurt in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, yet I will rejoice in the Lord." Was he gone mad? No, he was not mad. He knew the essence of Thanksgiving. If he thought that Thanksgiving was his response to his situation, he would not have been able to say that. How could he say that? How could he be thankful when he lost everything. When he didn't have anything.

So we realized, I realized that Thanksgiving is our spiritual response to God, not our human response to our reality, and that is what Thanksgiving is. When you look at St. Paul, after believing in Jesus Christ, he lost everything. He lost his family. He lost his fortune. He lost his status. He lost his position. He lost everything. He became nobody. He even said that "I have become a laughing stock of the world." He lost everything, and yet he said, "give thanks in all circumstances." Wow, there must be a secret there, "give thanks in all circumstances." All these disciples of Jesus Christ, after meeting Christ, they lost everything and yet their hearts were filled with Thanksgiving. Henry Nowan, who is a Catholic priest who used to teach at Harvard University, said when he was at Harvard, he was filled with complaints about his life. But when he came to Toronto, in the northern Richmond Hill, a debrief community, he lived with people who had mental and physical challenges and then he said he was filled with Thanksgiving.

He learned what it meant to give thanks. When he was at Harvard, he couldn't do that, but when he was in that situation, he was able to do that.

A Lifestyle

I used to go to New York quite often for speaking engagements and then at one retreat I heard a story about this youth pastor. This youth pastor didn't have much money and then a congregation member gave him the car she used to use, but it was an old car so it broke down quite often. One winter it broke down, so he went out and tried to fix it. During that time you could fix it, now its more difficult, but you used to do that. So he ran out to fix the car, but there was another car, a woman driving, and then she skidded. It was in the winter and it hit him. So he was in between the two cars, against his car and her car. But she was so scared and shocked, so she pulled out but skidded again.

But unconsciously she did that about three or four times and his leg was not just broken but shattered. So they all felt bad and on the day of his surgery, they had to cut off his leg. On the day of his surgery all the congregation members came out and with tears and all that and while he was going in his hospital bed, he said, "Don't cry, let us sing. God is so good, God is so good." In that circumstance, he gave thanks, he gave the prayer of Thanksgiving, not because he doesn't have that one leg anymore, but because in spite of that there is God, because of God. That is what true Thanksgiving is. Thanksgiving is not our human response to our situations, but it is a spiritual response to God. So I put the sermon title as "Condition for Thanksgiving", but there's no condition that you cannot be thankful for, in all circumstances, we can be thankful for. The only condition that I can see is a condition inside of us, within us, whether we have that or not, either we can give Thanksgiving or not. I think that is faith and spirituality. Faith we have inside of us and the spirituality we have inside of us. They are the conditions for our Thanksgiving and then I realized that Thanksgiving is not what you do once in awhile when good things happen to you, Thanksgiving is a lifestyle.

Reaction to Circumstances

It is your attitude towards life, not because we feel like being thankful, but we give thanks because that's who we are. We are people of thankful hearts. Our thankful circumstances do not bring thankful hearts, but our

thankful heart brings thankful circumstances. Let me say that again. Our thankful circumstances do not bring thankful hearts. Our thankful heart brings thankful circumstances. Often it is not our best circumstances that destroy us, but it's our attitude towards the best circumstances that destroy us. Some people after bad experiences or bad circumstances, they come out stronger. They come out greater, they come out wiser. But for some people because of bad circumstances, their life becomes ruined. So it is not just bad circumstances, it is our attitude towards the bad circumstances that either destroy us or lifts us up.

Even in our best circumstances, we should be thankful. When difficult situations come, many people worry about the future and soon fear traps them and they respond to situations with anger and frustration and they become very negative and they become worse because of that attitude. But when we respond to our bad circumstances with thanksgiving, we'll be able to keep the positive attitude and nothing can destroy us. Even though I may not have any of those, my circumstances can never destroy me. When we build a strong spirituality, we can be strong. Being strong does not mean to have strong muscles. Being strong means to be thankful in all circumstances. Thanksgiving opens up our lives and breaks the bad cycle. That bad cycle is a cycle of complaint.

Habit and Discipline

Complaining is a habit. Thanksgiving is a discipline. If you just habitually do things, you will always complain, but Thanksgiving is discipline, spiritual discipline. The only thing that can break the habit of complaining is Thanksgiving. That's why we need to discipline ourselves to learn to be thankful in all circumstances so that we can break the cycle of dissatisfaction and complaint in our lives. Mary Jo Leddy, in her book "Radical gratitude", said "In gratitude, the vicious cycle of dissatisfaction with life is broken and we begin anew in the recognition of what we have rather than in what we do not have. In the acknowledgment of who we are rather than in the awareness of who we are not." Gratitude is the foundation of faith in God, as the creator of all beginnings, great and small. We have to break the cycle of dissatisfaction. Complaining, dissatisfaction and all these things are poison to our spirit.

People who live with a complaint, they live with poison and it is. It poisons our spirituality. It poisons our spirit. As long as we continue our lifestyle of a complaint, we can never build spirituality. We can never build a good Christian faithful life. The more you complain, the more you become enslaved to your dissatisfaction. Not because people complain, not because there are good reasons to complain, even when there's nothing to complain they make up reasons to complain because it has become a habit in them. The best way to deal with that is to give thanks intentionally. From small things to big things, learn to be thankful. There are so many things to be thankful every day, every moment. There are so many things to be thankful. So I said in a Happiness seminar "Get a journal, the Journal of Thanksgiving. Every day write down five to seven items to be thankful. Just simple. Just get a journal every day. Write down, write down five to seven things that you are thankful for that day." In that way, you can discipline yourself to be thankful. When you start being thankful, amazing things can happen in your lives. When you continuously complain, you will run into the deeper and deeper darkness. But when you give thanks in all circumstances, every day, the joy will come back. You will experience the beauty of life, the beauty of people and friends and the beauty of the world.

Happy Thanksgiving. Thank you for being here.

PERSPECTIVE OF THANKSGIVING

November 29, 2015

Philippians 4:6-10

Perspective of Thanksgiving

Scripture reading is from Corinthians for chapter four, six, “don’t worry about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with Thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, what is commendable? If there is any excellence, if there is anything where you think about these things, keep on doing the things that you have learned and see her and seen in me at peace will be with you.”

Don’t let Bad Circumstances Make You Unhappy

Last Thursday was American thanksgiving, I prepared a message not because it was American thanksgiving, it’s because last week I really reflected on the world that we live in. Full of chaos, difficulties and hardships, and these somehow speak the message of thanksgiving, and I tell myself why in this kind of situation, I had to speak about thanksgiving. The world we live in is quite gloomy, almost every week, something terrible happens. You don’t know what’s happening. There’s no safe place in the world. When you go to a concert, it’s dangerous when your in a train it’s dangerous, even when you go to hospital, it is dangerous. There’s no safe place. We don’t know what’s happening. That Paris tragedy that happened yesterday I just found out that one of our and members was in Paris when the attack happened. This world is getting more and more crazy. Gratitude is difficult because our senses are not very good. Uh, this kind of situation, we can get down very easily. He can be easily swept by the dark mood of our environment, but we don’t want to be sad all the time. You don’t want to fear all the time. You don’t want to feel down all the time. And many people are really tired, tired of being affected by circumstances which fluctuate all the time, always be an up and down. And also we realized that we can never make circumstances that can make us happy. Circumstance that just happened. That’s the reality. That’s an isolated regardless of wishes, circumstances just happened. Sometimes good things happen.

Be Thankful, Be Resilient to the Unwanted

A lot of times bad things happening in our lives, as we reflected on Canadian thanksgiving, Gratitude is not in response to all of our circumstances. Because something good happen I'm thankful, that's only beginning of the gratitude. Gratitude is not our response or reaction to our situations, but rather I'd like to see gratitude as the attitude or perspective with which we see our reality. I think this is the currently correct way of looking at gratitude. Gratitude is not a response, It is our attitude it's our perspective with which we see more of reality, especially when difficult situations attack us. We should not lose our perspective of gratitude, that's when we need gratitude. When life becomes hard, when it becomes so difficult, that's when we need gratitude. We should not lose that attitude. We should not lose that perspective. American Journal of social psychology, they studied these people after the 9/11 in 2012 and they discovered that people with positive attitude, including the gratitude were able to cope with the tragedy much better after the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2000, he found that gratitude gave the people the resilience, the power to persevere, to fight against depression.

Say Thank You

I think there is power of a simple thank you, when we are able to say thank you. There is power behind this short phrase. Saint Paul said into this passage "do not worry about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with Thanksgiving. Let your request be known to God". In other words, in all circumstances, pray for thanksgiving. He didn't say this when his situations were terrific and great and good. Where did he write Philippians? He wrote this letter in prison. While he was in prison, he said "Give your request with Thanksgiving." So to Paul, Thanksgiving was not a response. Well, it's not a reaction to his situation. It was his perspective. It was his attitude with which he sees the reality. I hope that all of us have the wisdom, all of us have that perspective and attitude towards life, and our life will become better then living with constant complaint. When we live with this perspective, what happens to us? When we live with thanksgiving what happens within us and your internal world, What will happen inside us? I asked a KSM member this question, and then all they said was positive energy, just really loud voice.

Do Not Complain or You Will Fall Into Negative Behaviour

Saint Paul said “here the end is very important.” He first said, “give your request with Thanksgiving, and that peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” That’s what will happen within us. When we live our lives with Thanksgiving, and peace of God that surpasses all understanding will start flowing within all parts. And that creates a positive energy. The peace of God will give us the resilience, resilient power to resist against the dark power of this world. We lit up the first candle today, first advent. As this candle lights up the dark room. Our Thanksgiving becomes that light to fight off the dark power of this world. may we respond to our life with Thanksgiving especially when life becomes very difficult. Peace of God will be available, and God will give you the peace of God. When life is difficult, let us not complain, I think that’s a stupid thing to do. It’s a natural thing to do, but it is a stupid thing to do, an equally difficult time been spent complaining, that’s a weakness. The strength is really respond to it at Thanksgiving. Strong people do it. Weak people will complain, and as soon as you start complaining, you see yourself falling into the world of negative thoughts and negative feelings. Present your request with Thanksgiving to God and Gospels. God’s peace will guard your Hearts, thoughts and minds. That is the power of simple thanksgiving.

I realized that that is a secret of happy people. All the happy people that I’ve seen, the homeless had this pamphlet actually that tells us if that you look deep inside there is a gratitude operating in the lives, but when we see unhappy people, I hardly hear “Thank you.” I don’t see much of thankful attitude. So I realized that, this is where happy people and unhappy people are separated. That is thankfulness. The goal of spiritual maturity is in order to be a thankful person, has a mystical experience, in all circumstances how can you be thankful? That’s a mystical experience, that’s some mysterious power. Meister Eckhart, which a spiritual giant kills so many books on spirituality and Meister Eckhart said this, if the only prayer he said, “Thank you” That will be enough. It’s a profound statement.

Preach Happiness by Being Thankful

Only prayer they can say is, thank you. That’s good enough. In other words, ultimate level of your prayer, is prayer with Thanksgiving. I think thank you, is the nicest thing to say both to God and to other people. I

asked KSM members, Say Thank you, Teach your children to say thank you mom. For the smallest thing we have to teach them. Thank you is a nice thing to say to God and to other people. It is so easy to overestimate the importance of our own achievements compared with what we owe to the health of others.

The reasons we are here, It's not because I have worked so hard and I have achieved so much or I, I have so much talents and gifts. The reason we are here at this age, it's because there had been many people who help us deal with our problems, difficulties. There were so many people who helped us. There are more people who helped us. But sometimes we forget that and we complain, instead of the thankful, we live our lives indebted to God and indebted to other people. I think that's a basic humanity.

Recognizing it, recognizing that and realizing that, our basic humanity lives in to God and indebted to the people around us. So living with gratitude, it's just such a rapid response, appropriate response. This most appropriate response also liberates us from pride, greed, worries, negative thoughts and negative feedback, and were supposed to live with gratitude but that lifestyle liberates us from all of these negative things. In a university study, two groups of students, one group students write a Thanksgiving Journal and then the other students write anything. After 18 months they started these guys were much, much happier with their lives. Write a general thanksgiving, anything, write down five to seven reasons why we're thankful, very easy. Write in detail rather than I'm just thankful for life, I'm thankful for so and so. So for me, I'm thankful for the praise team and I'm thankful for this and thankful for that, This can easily fill us with happiness. As you just started doing that, you start focusing on the beauty of life rather than the ugliness of life.

And now I realize why God wanted me to say the message of Thanksgiving in this dark and gloomy world, our thanksgiving is a protest, our Thanksgiving is our fight and will not let us down. We'll live with thanksgiving, and we will fight against whom tries to destroy our soul.

IT IS GOD

May 29, 2016

Hosea 2:7-8

We just finished the first part of our Hosea study. I enjoyed the study. It's very different from the New Testament study. The language is very extreme, but behind the language I see a beautiful picture of the truth about God. I think Hosea captured the message very clearly and very emotionally. Hosea's message is simply verse 8.

She shall pursue her lovers, but not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them. Then she shall say, "I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better with me then than now." She did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished upon her silver and gold that they used for Baal.

Main Message of Hosea

This is the main message of Hosea. It is God who lavished upon Israelites, but the Israelites did not know that it was God, and they went to Baal and they gave gold and silver to Baal for a blessing.

God Gave us Abundance

My friends, it is God who has provided all we need and beyond. God lavished upon us all the good things that we enjoy in life. Not just the material things, the totality of life. I was thinking, would God be able to give more than what he gave? Is there any more things to give on God's part? And I realized that there's nothing more he could give. He gave all the abundance.

When I was young, I could only imagine going to heaven. I could not imagine beyond this. You can eat whatever you want, there are all kinds of abundance, all kinds of things that you enjoy. That's what heaven was like when I was young. So God has provided all good things for us, but it's not just material things. We have to remember, God did not just give you material things. God gave you peace, God gave you happiness. God gave

you good friends, good family and good people who will always there for you. Life is not just material. Life is more than a lot of things, and God gave all of us all good things. In that sense, life is a gift from God. Yes, life is a gift from God. He provided all good things, so I believe that says that life is a gift from God.

Peace Through Chaos

Last week and the week before were tough for me because I had two retreats back to back and I had two funerals back to back. First I had a funeral on Thursday night, and then a funeral on Saturday, a Friday morning funeral, a Friday evening funeral, Saturday morning. Too many funerals. Too many reflections on death. It was tough. But you know what? In the midst of a very busy and hectic schedule, I had peace of mind. Where did that peace come from? I don't know. I could very well be frustrated and stressed out. I didn't even try to make myself feel good, but peace was there. So I sit down, I'm stressed out, I'm frustrated and all that, but where did that peace come from? I realized that life is like that. That's what life is. When you face hardships, difficulties, and problems in life, life has it's own way of finding peace. That's what I realized. Life moves into that direction. Life knows how to find peace and happiness on it's own. I don't have to even try anything, life just moves towards that. That's what I realized about life. Because life is a gift from God, it is made to be that way.

Whether you're religious or not, you will find peace, comfort and assurance if you don't ruin it yourself by being angry and frustrated. We are often the culprit of our own unhappiness. We are the ones who block the way. We are the ones who don't let our lives find peace and comfort and assurance. We are the problem. If we just move ourselves outside of it, life will find it's way, but we are the ones who make ourselves frustrated, angry and stressed out. Life is a gift from God and it will know how to find it's own giftedness and its own peace and it's own happiness, and yet we are in the middle and we are making ourselves very unhappy. We are the problem.

The 7th, Most Important Day

About the nature of life, and our life force, I realized that God made our life that way. I thank God for that. For six days God created heaven and earth. The material things. First day, second day, third day, he created all of these things, mountains and oceans, and all material things. After he created all

those material things for six days on the seventh day, what did he do? He rested. Why? Was it because he was tired? Can God be tired? Since he worked so much for six days, on the 7th day he had to take a rest? I don't think so. He left the seventh day to rest and he let every creation on the seventh day rest. He created rest, and without peace there is no rest. Just because you physically rest, that doesn't mean that you're rested. If you don't have peace, then you don't have true rest. In other words, God gave peace on the seventh day.

Peace was built in God's creation from the beginning. The 7th day is more important than the six days. In six days, he created all the material things. On the seventh day he created the crucial thing that we need, which is rest, peace and all those things that make us happy.

When you look at the scripture of Genesis, God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it because on it, God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. God not only created all the trees, flowers, oceans, mountains, rivers, animals and human beings, on the seventh day, God blessed them. In other words, he added blessing to the materials. So what you get is not just materials. What you get is blessed materials. You have all the materials, but don't have joy. What good is it? God not only gave materials, but blessed materials. The happiness with it, the joy with it so that you can have appreciation for the abundance you enjoy. That is what God wants.

God Gave Enough

Then how come people don't seem to be very happy with life when they have all the abundance they can get? You can't get any better. You can't get any more than this. If you want more than this, that's greed. Wake up. If you want more material than this, that's greed. We have more than enough. God gave enough.

The reason we human beings are not happy is because, Hosea saw it this way; verse 8, she did not know that it was I. That's a problem. (She is Israelites). She did not know that it was I who gave her the green, the wine and the oil, who lavished upon her silver and gold that they used for Baal. The problem is she did not know that it was God. The reason we cannot enjoy all the abundance and live with happiness is because we don't know

it is God who provided all these good things for us. She used silver and gold for Baal. That's an idol. She went to Baal thinking that Baal can give her true happiness. How true that is for us right now. When God gave all the abundance, we turned to something else and asked for blessing. Asked for happiness. We often forget that God is the source of all the blessings and all the good things that we enjoy. We try to create our own happiness. Try it. You can never. Our autonomy has become our own Baal. Our ability and capability have become our own Baal. But you don't realize that your self centeredness kills your soul and takes away the true joy you're supposed to experience. The more we try to create our own happiness, the more miserable we become, because the source of happiness is in God. It is God who created all that. It is God who gives all that.

Two Things Humans Have Done

There are two things human beings did. One, they have forgotten that it is God who has provided all the good things in our lives. Two, they have become self centered and self absorbed to create their own happiness. The result, we have become very unhappy and feel very empty. That's exactly what happened. That's what happened to people in history. That's what's happening to people right now, and that's what will happen to people in the future because that isn't how God made life.

Two Things Humans Must Do

If life is a gift, we need to do two things. One, be thankful to those who gave the gift. Be thankful to God who gave you the gift of life. Two, share the gift of life with others. Share. If it is a gift, share it. Don't take it all. Share it with others. Be thankful and share, those two things. Very simple. If life is a gift, then we always live with thankfulness that will drive away all our worries, anxieties, frustration, all that. Two, share it. By sharing it, you will experience the abundance of life. When you are thankful and you share your life, that's when you become the happiest. Life when it is shared shows it's best, and you start enjoying the beauty of life. If you remember these two things, your life will only get better.

A good life is not a good life because nothing bad happens. A good life is a good life because in the midst of all the bad things that happen in life, we will never lose hope and the beauty of life. That's when life becomes good.

Life is Beautiful

When I watch the movie, I'm sure most of you watched it, Life is Beautiful, I heard the message very clearly and strongly. This Jewish man who was about to be executed is so bright. He takes care of his son. He talks with him, he plays with him as though nothing bad will happen. He celebrates how beautiful life is, and the title of the movie is Life is Beautiful.

Life is good, not because nothing bad happens, but because in the midst of all the bad things that happened in your life, you never lose hope. You never lose perspective. You never lose the beauty of life.

We will only discover a deeper taste of life. As wine gets better. As it matures, you will taste the deeper taste of life as you get mature about life. Don't forget that life is good. And what is good you share. Don't forget the life is gift. Celebrate it, enjoy it, and don't ever ever forget that it is God who gave you all the good things in life. I want you to enjoy the maximum joy of life. That's what I want for everyone, to enjoy the maximum joy of life. Remember those two things, one, be thankful and two, share.

LIFE THAT MATTERS

September 18, 2016

Matthew 25: 31-46

My Existence and Others

Her life that matters. It's in my sermon topic. Does my existence matter to anyone? I think this is a very important question. We have to ask ourselves all the time, does my existence matter to anyone? Are there questions that will shape my life? These questions we have to ask ourselves continuously, for example, what shall I eat or what shall I drink? What shall I wear? Those are not important questions. Those are the questions that will shape my life. That's why Jesus said don't even question those things but, there are some crucial questions that shaped my life. One of those being, does my life matter to somebody out there? I think that will shape who we will be if our existence matters to others, we can say you're living a good life. That's what good life is. Good life is not about good food and good enjoyment, good life is if your life matters to somebody dearly, then you are living a good life. But if people don't care whether you exist or not, if my existence doesn't matter to anyone than it is sad. Sometimes I go to a funeral and I see these grandchildren coming out and see them share about their great grandparents in tears. You know, whenever I see that I feel good. I mean their grandchildren, they probably did not spend much time with them and they are not friends, but the grandchildren missed them so much and mattered to them quite a lot explaining why they cry so much, thinking about their grandparents. Then some of them share the life lesson that they taught them throughout their lives and things like that. When I look at that, in the funeral, I realized that they lived a good life. Their life mattered to their grandchildren dearly. You know, our existence cannot be defined in itself. We cannot define ourselves within just us. Our existence can only be defined in our relationship to others. I am who I am because of the relationship that I have with other people. there's a South African saying, "I am because of who you are, because you exist I exist". My existence can only be defined in our relationship to others not in itself. As you look at this passage, this is what differentiated the sheep from the goat. This is what Jesus just said, "For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was sick and you

took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me". Their lives matter to those who are hungry, who are strangers, who are naked, who are sick and who are in prison. Their life mattered to them. A few days ago on September fourth, Mother Teresa was canonized as a saint. Her life mattered to many people, not only to poor people in Calcutta, but too many young people. Her life inspired many young people and gave them New Vision. A life can be like this, not everyone is selfish, not everyone is hungry. It's not just for money and fame, there are some people who live selflessly. There are some people who sacrifice their lives for other people. There are people like that, and she set the standard for them. She gave the vision to the young people, that you can also live a good life like this. She is a saint in every sense of the word because she lived a good life and her life mattered to many people. You don't need to be rich to live a good life, I don't believe so. I don't believe in materialism in that way. You don't need to be so successful to be happy, to live eighth, so called good life. You don't need to be so smart and powerful to have a fulfilling life. That's illusion, don't go after that. Young people don't go after that. At the end of it, you'll be so disillusioned, that's not what makes a good life. Good life is if your life matters to somebody, what we need is just simple, your desire to live a life that matters to people, that's life.

A Good Life

It's now September, we are entering the fall. Fall is a season where we think about the abundance of life. Abundance of life is not about how productive or how great you are. It's not about you. Abundant life is not about you. Abundant life is about how enriching your life is to other people, how you enriched other people. That's what abundant life is all about. Abundance life is fruitful life, fruit does not exist for itself, fruit always exists for others to enjoy. So living a fruitful life is not just for yourself. You living a fruitful life is to live a life that enriches other people and heal other people. When you live that life, that is good life. That's my definition of good life and that is the definition of good life in the Bible. The good we do to others is humanism. Yes, that is humanism. Humanism is a good thing. Humanism is something that we have to strive for, something that we always be mindful of, but to us as Christians, that is also our spirituality. It's not just humanism, it is our spirituality. Jesus said this, "Truly, I tell you just as you did it, to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me, so what we do to people right in need is not only humanism, but spirituality". Good that you do to other people, is something

you do to Jesus. To Jesus humanism and spirituality are not different. They are very deeply interconnected, in Jesus' mind. Being spiritual is being humanistic. Humanistic is being spiritual. They go together. Our service for the people who are in need is our devotion to the Lord Jesus. Loving Jesus is not expressed through our emotional response to Jesus. Raising your hands and praising God and saying "I love you, Jesus", that's not you. Express your love to Jesus. I mean that's one way, but the inferior way. Superior way is through having heart for those who are suffering around us. When we have heart for those around us, that is having a heart for God. That was a central teaching of Jesus Christ, wasn't it? Jesus said "Love your God and love your neighbour", they're connected. Jesus said, humanism and spirituality are connected with each other. First of all, who brought those two together and then made the greatest commandment? Love your God and love your neighbour. He's the one who connected those two.

Having a Heart of Others

A reporter once asked Mother Teresa, "Why do you do what you do?" What you do is like throwing eggs against the rock, you won't change the problem of hunger in the world by doing what you do and why do you do what you do? and Mother Teresa simply answered like this, "You know? when I look at the eyes of the hungry children. I see little Jesus. That's why I do that, to Mother Teresa humanism and spirituality we're not separate. when she saw hungry children, she saw Jesus right there. When we see people who are suffering around us. We should be able to see Jesus, little Jesus. We should see in each other little Jesus in each others eyes. Well, why don't you look around and see the people around you. Do you see Jesus or do you see devil? Jesus is not way up there. Jesus is right here amongst us, in anyone eyes who's suffering. Jesus is right there because they need Jesus. Mother Teresa might not have had the gigantic economic plan to relieve the hunger problem of the world, but there's one thing that she taught us and that is very important lesson "Have heart for those, for suffering", I think that is the greatest lesson. That is where everything begins. Have heart for those who are suffering. If you see the neighbouring country suffering, have heart for those. If your neighbour is suffering have heart for those, that's how everything begins. We are living in a heartless world. We don't care about anybody around us who suffers. We need to restore their heart. That is what healing is all about. We need to restore their heart for those who are suffering around us. You don't need to go to

prison. You don't need to go out the street. Just look around you. There are people who need your attention and have heart for those. That's what humanity and spirituality is all about.

A RAY OF LIGHT

July 23, 2017

Luke 11:34-36

I'm going to further explore the Inner Voice that I sent last Wednesday. There I said what we see controls our lives. What we see controls our lives. We are very much affected by what we see, we are very much affected by how we see things in life. We see that a lot in the Bible. Many stories actually show that. It was when Moses sent out twelve people to the land of Canaan, the promised land, before they actually entered the promised land. So these were spies, they went into the promised land. They saw the same reality, same situation. But ten people and two people had a totally different report. In other words it's the same reality, but what they saw was very, very different.

Ten people said this, "There we saw the Nephilim. The Anakites come from the Nephilim. Anakites are giant, huge people and to ourselves, we seemed like grasshoppers. And so we seem to them." So they saw giants. When they see giants, what happens is, "Oh, I'm just a grasshopper. I'm like dirt. I'm nobody compared to that giant." That's how 10 people saw it.

But two people said this, "The land that we went through as spies is an exceedingly good land." They didn't see the giant. They saw the beautiful land. Do not fear the people of the land. For they are no more than bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us, and do not fear them. Same situation, same reality. They all saw, but one focused on giants and the other focused on God who gave them the beautiful land.

Don't Look at The Wind

We see the same thing in the story of David and Goliath. All of the Israelites when they saw Goliath the giant, they were so scared and terrified. Nobody would dare to come out and fight against Goliath. They were all scared because they saw a giant. But David came along. He didn't see a giant. David saw God. And then he saw Goliath as a kind of rude man who insulted God.

So depending on who you see, what you see, you're very much affected. Jacob, he had to run away from home. He was in the middle of the wilderness and then he fell asleep. He was in the wilderness, but there he met God and all of a sudden that land became Bethel, House of God, the Holy Land. The same wilderness, but before he met God it was just a wilderness. But after he met God he saw it as the Holy Land.

Do you remember the story of Peter walking on the water, when Jesus called Peter to come? Peter focused on Jesus and he was able to walk on the water, but as soon as his focus has changed from Jesus to the wind, when he saw the wave, he started falling. The same situation, but when he saw Jesus, he was able to walk, but when he saw the wind, he started falling into the water. And Matthew recorded the incident in this way. But when Peter looked, he saw the strong wind, he became frightened and began to sink. He cried out, Lord, save me. See, how important our eyesight is, how important what we see is, how much they affect us. You may be the same reality that you're living, but depending on what you see, you can either walk on the water or fall into the water. I believe that this is a very, very important truth for you to remember. If you don't understand this truth, then you won't understand faith, you won't understand how faith works. You won't understand what the world of faith is like.

Everyone experiences the same reality, but the way everyone sees the reality is very different. So I'll say, we don't live the reality. We live the perceived reality. Let me say it again. We don't live the reality, we live the perceived reality. The reality doesn't kill us, the perceived reality kills us. We should not live oppressed by our reality. We are given the power to interpret our reality. We don't just live the reality. We have power to interpret our reality, and we live with that power to interpret our own reality. I believe that that power comes when we have the eyes of faith. When we have the eyes of faith, we have the power to understand our reality in a new way. Otherwise, you will see as everybody else sees. But when you have the eyes of faith, you'll see a deeper aspect, deeper dimension of your reality, and you will live that reality, the reality that you saw. You know, the eyes of faith always look for a ray of light in the most difficult and gloomy situations. In the pitch black darkness, the eyes of faith always search for a small ray of light, and when you follow that light, a whole new world opens up for you. Depending on what we see, our mood changes, our thinking changes, our life changes. If you see certain things over and

over and over again, you are shaped by it, if our eyes only see the darkness of life, we will become gloomy, our thinking will become distorted and our lifestyle becomes dark. In that sense, your eye is the lamp of your body. If you're constantly seeing only pleasure in your life, then what you see will shape you and be the kind of person you become. If you constantly see self-centeredness, only yourself, then you'll be shaped by that self-centeredness.

Follow The Light

Our eyes are so important and what we see routinely and repetitively. That's what's important. What do you see repetitively? Not just once or twice, but continuously. What do you see everyday in your life? That will be what will shape you. When our eyes see the ray of light, then everything comes alive – the way we see the world, the way we see each other and the way we see our life. The eyes of faith actively search for the ray of light in the darkness and I realized that the eyes of faith never misses the opportunity. Doesn't matter how small the opportunity may be, the eyes of faith always see that.

Sometimes we see no way out. Don't you experience that? There is no way out, no solution in our problems... but when you carefully look at them – your problems and your situation – you'll be able to see small potential for the answer, and God lets us see that small opening, and we have to have eyes of faith to see that. Discover a deeper perspective. Your life will change. Find the light in your life. The light will guide you. The light will open up the new world for you.

People only see death. Death is everything. Death is the end. But even in death, the eyes of faith looks for a ray of light, and that's what Paul did. When he saw death and it found a ray of light, he saw the resurrection. Death may be the reality for everyone, but to Paul, he saw the ray of light and resurrection even in death. When we see only death, the death will control our life, but if we see a ray of light, even in the darkness of death, the light will lead us to resurrection. Don't think that the reality you presently see is everything. That's a fool, only fools do that. Don't give what you see the absolute value and power. What you see may be a typical, superficial, mindless, and distorted interpretation of your reality. That is not everything.

Newton's universe and Einstein's universe are very different. It is the same universe, but the way Newton saw the universe was very different from the way Einstein saw the universe. Just last week, Time magazine chose Einstein and had a special, good magazine, go and buy it. I just bought it yesterday. I was reading through it and though the universe – it's the same universe – but what Einstein saw opened up a whole new perspective, a whole new world for all of us. Cultivate your eyes so that you may see bigger things in your reality. With the eyes of faith, we can see new things in any circumstance.

Your Reality

That's why St. Paul says, "Give thanks in all circumstances." Because in all circumstances, even in bad circumstances, Paul found something beautiful. That's why he said, "Give thanks in all circumstances." you'll see hope in despair, God's power in your suffering, resurrection, in death and light in darkness.f

People fall not because of reality. People fall because of their distorted reality, distorted view of reality. As we experience hardships in life, failures in life, disappointments in life, our eyes have become distorted. Our eyes need to be restored in our Lord. We pray that God may touch our eyes and restore them, like the scale that fell from Paul's eyes when he met Christ. I wish that the scales that blocked my vision may fall from my eyes so that I may be able to see the beautiful world of God. Beautiful life, I want to see. What is the sermon you listen to every week? What is the nature of sermon? Sermon is very much like an interpretation of your reality. You should see this reality in this way. That's what sermon is all about.

Try to find the answer every day that opens up your life, not closes your life. Always find the answer that opens up your life. You will be able to see that answer and you'll become a bigger person.

TO LIVE IS BY GRACE

October 8, 2017

Luke 17: 11-19

A good life

We all try to define what a good life is. What does it mean to live a good life? We only live once, so I think we all need to live a good life. What is a good life? I was thinking about it, and then this thought came to me. A good life is very simple. Just recognize that your life is by God's grace. Just that simple recognition, that simple understanding. Your life is by God's grace. When we recognize that, we can live a good life.

I was thinking about Hank and Inha's father. The last few days he was struggling with his sickness, I visited the hospital he was at. His room was very dark and did not have any windows, but that day was a bright sunny day. And so he asked me, "Reverend, how's the weather outside? Is it good?" And I said, "Yes the weather is really good, sunny and all that." And he said, "I won't be able to see that on a walk, again, will I?" "Who knows? But I hope that you will get better so that you also enjoy the sun." He was never able to enjoy that sun again. After a few days, he passed away. Just simple things like that we take for granted. The beautiful sun, we can walk around anywhere we want. Just by recognizing that life is by God's grace, we can appreciate so much about life.

St. Paul's Confession

St. Paul's confession came to my mind. He said, "I am who I am by God's grace and His grace towards me has not been in vain." That simple sentence has profound meaning. St. Paul recognized that he was who he was by God's grace, and that grace is never in vain. It is important to remind ourselves continuously that we live by the grace of God. Only when we recognize that our lives are by grace and we live by the grace of God, then we can be thankful. We can live a thankful life, and that is so precious.

10 lepers were there. Only one was able to live a thankful life. They were so focused on their healing, they were so focused on themselves. They could not recognize that their healing was by God's grace. Only one person

was able to confess and say that his healing is by God's grace. That's why he came back to Jesus just to simply thank him, and Jesus said, that man gave praise to God, gave glory to God.

Living by God's Grace

When we realize that our lives are by God's grace, then we have this thankfulness and when we express that thankfulness and gratitude to God, that is praising God, and that is the ultimate aim of human being. Our aim is to glorify God and by being thankful we can glorify God. So many people don't realize that their lives are by God's grace. Even in today's scripture, only 10 percent recognize that. In the whole population, even though they have so much, only 10 percent were able to recognize that "my life is by God's grace". I'm sure at St. Timothy 90 percent recognize that. Only 10 percent doesn't recognize. We are very different in that way, but in the whole world, only 10 percent recognize that their life is by God's grace. Most people don't recognize that.

God Who Blessed You

In Deuteronomy, God said to the Israelites these words; he made water flow for you from Flint Rock and fed you in the wilderness with Manna that your ancestors did not know to humble you and to test you and in the end to do you good. Do not say to yourself, my power and the might of my own hand have gained me this will. Do not say to yourself these things. It is God who gave you all that. Do not say to yourself that with your own strength and with your own power, with your own hand, you made your life. It's not you who made your life. It is God who blessed you.

God cannot freely bless those who do not understand that their life is by God's grace. You know why? For your sake. If you don't realize that what you have is by God's grace, then you take it for granted and you even abuse it. When you abuse the blessing, the blessing turns into a curse. That's why God cannot freely bless those who do not understand that their life is by God's grace. Only when you are ready to receive that blessing, God can freely bless you. I think we need the humility to recognize that my life is by God's grace. In Deuteronomy, he said to humble you and to test you is first and, in the end, to do good to you. First God has to humble us and test us so that in the end we can recognize and appreciate the blessing that we receive from God.

The Entitlement Attitude

What makes us unhappy is the entitlement attitude. The entitlement attitude is a bad thing. When you start living your life with this entitlement attitude, we become very unhappy and we lose our thankful heart. Without a thankful heart, we can never be happy. Even if we don't have much, if we have a thankful heart within us, we can be happy. That's what I believe. I believe that even if I don't have much, if I am full of a thankful heart, I can be happy. I can tell you from my own experience, when I did not have much before, I was happy when I had a thankful heart. A person who takes a simple bowl of rice with the thankful heart is much happier than the person who returns the airplane simply because the stewardess did not serve the macadamia nuts on a nice plate. Who's happier? Entitlement attitude. It can never make you happy. What I'm saying now is not a theory. This really happened on Korean airlines.

Behind the thankful heart there are a lot of good spiritual qualities. Humility, patience, consideration, deep understanding and appreciation, gentleness, full satisfaction and love and so on. A thankful heart does not just come. A thankful heart comes when you have these spiritual qualities, and behind the complaining heart, there are a lot of undesirable qualities and characters such as pride, arrogance, selfishness, dissatisfaction, anger, hatred and entitlement attitude and so on.

Life Becomes Beautiful

I believe that thankfulness is not a response to our situations. It is not your response. Thankfulness is a viewpoint. It is eyesight. The way you look at the world, the way you look at yourself, and the way you look at life, that's what thankfulness is. Thankfulness is not a response to the situation around you. Just because all of these things are good, you are thankful. That's not it. I see a lot of people who have so many things who are never thankful, but the people who don't have as much as them are thankful because it's not a response to the situations around us. It is our eyesight, it is our viewpoint. It is how we look at our life, ourselves and our situations. When we have this viewpoint of thankfulness, we'll be able to see the abundance of life and all of a sudden life becomes beautiful. When you have this thankful heart, everything comes alive. Everything becomes beautiful. The parents that you have, they're beautiful. The children, they are beautiful. The houses that you live in, they are beautiful. When you

have this thankfulness, everything comes alive and everything becomes beautiful. Life itself becomes beautiful.

I learned this secret. You can never deal with your shortcomings by having more. By having more, you feel more lacking, so when you feel that you're lacking something, don't try to have more because that will intensify your hunger and desire. Do you know how you deal with your shortcomings? By being thankful. When your heart is filled with thankfulness, you don't feel that you're lacking anything, so you deal with your shortcomings. When your heart is filled with thankfulness, you never feel that you don't have enough. That's why St. Paul said, "I've learned to be content in all circumstances. When I'm rich, I'm fine, when I'm poor, I'm fine", because his heart is full of richness. It's abundant, so he doesn't feel lacking in anything. But it's not just Saints who say that, extraordinary people, smart people will be able to say that. Oprah Winfrey said this, but she's not a saint. "Be thankful for what you have. You will end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you'll never, ever have enough." Pretty Smart, Huh? That's true. That's what the scripture says.

Where Will Your Heart Move to?

Let me ask you, if you just leave your heart alone, where do you think your heart will move towards? Will it move towards thankfulness? Or will it move towards complaints? If you just leave your heart alone, let it go wherever it wants to go, where do you think it will go? I believe that your heart will automatically move towards complaint. Why? Because everyone lives with a natural self defense instinct. That's why people become overly sensitive to dangers around them because we want to protect ourselves. So when imminent dangers come, people are sensitive, and soon you lose your heart to fear. When you lose your heart to fear, you know what the result is? Complaint.

I learned this not from psychological books. I learned this from the scripture. The Israelites, when they're in the wilderness, whenever they face dangers, they lose their hearts to fear and then what? At the end, what did they do? They complained. So our heart, if you just leave it alone, it moves towards complaint. Why am I saying this? Thankfulness is not something that will automatically happen to you. It has to be intentional. You have to practice it. You have to have a spiritual discipline to be

thankful. If you're just natural, you'll never be thankful, but when you have spiritual discipline to be thankful, only then can you be thankful, and you can create a path through the spiritual discipline so that your heart moves to thankfulness. Your heart is here, if you just leave it alone, you will move to the complaint, but if you create a path through spiritual discipline than this heart will move towards thankfulness, and this thankfulness, once you have it, it will create a new path for you. It will open up a new path for you. The road that leads you to abundance, to joy, and to a bright future. When you have a thankful heart, that road opens up for you.

Don't Be Too Smart

My friends, don't be too smart. If you're too smart. You cannot be thankful, because you calculate too much. Then soon you get drunk in your own thinking and you start believing that your thinking is right. You start trusting your own thinking. In the end, we come to the conclusion that I have to make my life with my own hands. That was what God warned the Israelites about in Deuteronomy. Living is by God's grace. If you don't realize that, you're being too smart. If you're too smart, you make everything complicated.

You cannot untangle life that is in tangles. I asked much older fellows in KSM, they're in their seventies, eighties, and nineties. I asked them this question, "Do you believe that you untangled your life, or your life became untangled?" I told them, I believe that my life becomes untangled. I can never untangle my life. Am I right? They all said with an Amen, you don't untangle your life. Your life becomes untangled. Everything will be going alright, and the best way to untangle your life is being thankful. When you're thankful, everything will be alright. You don't have to worry about it.

Your Faith Has Made You Well

When this man came back to Jesus to thank him, this was what Jesus said, your faith has made you well. What does that mean? He's already healed. His leprosy is gone, and now Jesus is saying to the person who's already healed, your faith has made you well. In other words, your life will be alright from now on. You don't need to worry about it. And I realized that faith and thankfulness go together. This man believed that he was healed by God's grace. The other nine did not believe that, but this one person believed that his leprosy was healed by God's grace. So next time difficulties come in his

life, because he already had experience he will believe that he'll be alright because God is with him. When you live with that kind of attitude, your life will become untangled. You will be alright. Your faith has made you well.

You have a wonderful life ahead of you. Don't make it complicated, and don't try to untangle on your own. Every moment when you're thankful, you'll be alright. Your life will become untangled without you realizing it. "Oh my goodness, all these things happened. Why is this? I don't deserve this. I didn't do anything to make these things happen", but that miracle will happen in your life. You'll be alright. You don't need to worry about it. Just be thankful in all circumstances. That is the power to chase away darkness. To chase away complaints. To chase away negative thinking. Be strong.

WHAT IS OUR IDOL

October 22, 2017

Exodus 32:1-14

We are Not on Our Own

We depend absolutely on ourselves. That's the only thing that we know we only depend on ourselves. That's why when we do everything well, we feel like our life would be alright and there's a promising future. When my life is going well, we feel like our life would be great in the future. When we are capable and smart enough to handle our problems, we feel that we can handle almost anything well, but when we are not doing very well and when we feel our powerlessness and when we cannot handle our problems with our brain, we get deeply discouraged and depressed because everything depends on me. Every single thing depends on me and my future depends on me. Happiness depends on me. That's why we live with this eternal anxiety. What if I can't? Simon sent to parents an article about the anxiety of the youth. Anxieties not just for the adults. Even the young children, they have anxiety problems because everything depends on me. The world taught them to believe themselves and that only created anxiety. The world taught you that you're on your own, so take care of yourself. You're on your own. Nobody's there to help you. You're on your own. Take care of yourself. That's a fantasy. I'm not on my own, my parents helped me, my friends are helping me, my communities, helping me and I have God who cares for me.

Our Golden Calf

We are continuously creating this kind of fantasy that we are on our own and we can take care of ourselves and that gives us only anxiety, narcissism and self-centeredness. That is our golden calf. I think that is so prevalent in our lives, it consumes us. Sometimes we feel like we have all the world in our hands, but soon we feel like we are thrown into the bottom of the darkness. When they said that the golden calf will lead them from now on, what you're really saying was we will dictate from now on our own destiny. Moses, I don't know where he is and God, I don't know where He is. I'll take care of my own destiny and future. The golden calf was a very good tool to hypnotize themselves with their own positive beliefs. We say to

ourselves, “Hey, I have money now. I can take care of my family and myself.” Didn’t you just say to the rich before who thought that I have enough food in my bar so let’s marry and enjoy my life. Jesus said, “your soul will be demanded tonight.” The golden calf cannot make their future. The golden calf can not make a way for them. My friends, we ourselves cannot create our own path for the future. I believe that God made a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. This is what Isaiah said, “I’m about to do a new thing. Now it springs forth. Do you not perceive it? I’ll make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. I cannot keep myself. It is God who keeps me.” One of my favorite psalms is psalm 121 and I told KSM members let us memorize this and maybe esm too. Memorize this. Let us try to memorize Psalm 121 that is beautiful psalm it goes like this. “I lift up my eyes to the hills from where all my help come. My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. He will not let your food be moved. He who keeps you will not slumber. He who keeps Israel, will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper. The Lord is your shade at your right hand. The Sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by the night. The Lord will keep you from all evil. He will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and you’re coming in from this time on and forevermore.” Isn’t it beautiful, Huh? No feeling so not even beautiful.

God is Right There

Oh my goodness it’s a beautiful psalm. So it’s constantly talking about keeping you. I don’t keep myself. It is God who keeps us. It is God who holds the key for your future. It is not you. You don’t have to worry about it just because things do not go well. Don’t be too discouraged. Your future doesn’t depend on you alone. Your God is right there with you. Don’t try to solve your life problems on your own. Trust in God. We have to destroy the idols of narcissism or individuality within us. It’s a fantasy. This world taught you. I can take care of myself. That’s a fantasy to me. When these idols take control of our lives, our lives will not get untangled. Sometimes these days. I mean, I told you, every morning I get up, read New York Times, Washington Times and Globe and Mail, and it’s for two hours I try to read what is going on in the world and I say to myself, we human beings cannot take care of humanity by ourselves. I feel helpless and hopeless many, many times, but I will move on. I’ll continue because I believe that there is God who takes care of the history, who sets a path for our destiny. I asked

you a question last week. Do you untangle your life or is your life untangled?

When I look back, so many things, they were not in my control and I don't know how these things were untangled over the years. I'm just thankful to God for taking care of my life and my family and my community. God will be with you in your journey. Trusting God and a new path will be opened up for all of us.

FOOLISHNESS AND GREED

March 11, 2018

Psalm 107:17-22

Becoming Fools

Today's scripture passage talks about becoming fools. Some became fools through their rebellious ways. Some became fools. Because they became fools, they suffered affliction, they even lost the appetite, and they were drawn near the gates of death. Because they became fools they suffer so much. The life is just full of suffering, continuous, repetitive suffering, struggle and hardship. Life is supposed to be enjoyed. Life supposed to be good, but because they have become fools, they don't even enjoy life. They just survive. They just persevere through life rather than really enjoying the fullness of life because they have become fools. And I wonder why people become fools. I think these people are not stupid. I think they're intelligent people, smart people. These are Jewish people. I think they are, have a high intelligence, and then why they have become fools and suffer so much. So meditating on this, I realized that becoming fool has nothing to do with your intelligence or the kind of intelligence or the level of education. We can be fools while we are being very smart. So that kind of intelligence does not really help us living a life. Being a fool is not lack of intellectual ability.

Different Kinds of Intelligence

I think there's different kinds of intelligence. There's intelligence that makes your life happy, enjoyable, and a good and all that stuff. But there's intelligence that has nothing to do with a that just performance, doing well in job or whatever, a technical stuff, but there's also intelligence that makes the whole life good and a happy and meaningful and all that. There are different intelligences. Sometimes we call it a wisdom. Being wise in that kind of intelligence is a combination of a ethical quality, intellectual ability, and even spiritual quality. That wisdom kind of intelligence consists of all of these three. But being smart is different from that. We see many smart people, I see many smart people around me but not many wise ones. It is that kind of intelligence that gives us. It gives our life good. So I wonder why? What makes smart people fools? What makes smart people fools?

What blinds their eyes not to see what they're supposed to see. I meditate on it and this word came up to me. That is greed. Greed. Greed makes a smart person a fool. Greed blinds our eyes not to be able to see what you're supposed to see. When greed works in people, even though they may be very smart, they will become fools. The result is very bad.

When greed is taken away from your eyes, only then you can see. But when is the greed taken off from your eyes? Only when you suffer. When you suffer so much and you tell yourself, I was so stupid, I was so fool. Only then the greed is taken off from your eyes and you see yourself. Greed makes people really fool. I believe that the smartest person in the world is Jesus Christ. He was the smartest person. When I read his writing and the wisdom and all that stuff, he was the smartest person. Deep inside of us, he was able to see through, but there's one thing that he didn't have. The smartest man in the did not have one thing. You know what? That one thing is?

Greed

Lack of greed makes you smarter. Jesus did not have one thing and that was greed. The cross is a symbol of no greed. Cross symbolizes it. All the greed of human humanity is crucified on the Cross. That's what cross is, lack of greed. That's what cross is, but smart people so supposed to be smart people called that stupid, foolishness. They say Cross is foolishness and in St Paul saw that, this is what St. Paul said. "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God."

Strange, isn't it? We think they are foolish people, but they think that the cross is foolishness, but the smartest person in the world, Jesus chose the way of the cross. I believe that he chose the way of the cross because he was smart because he was smart. He chose the way of the cross and I wonder why did he choose the cross? Why did he choose the cross? The smartest man in the world chose the cross. Why? When all the smart people say the cross is foolishness and I realized that Jesus knew that the only way to experience God's power is to let go of greed. That's only way you can experience God's power. If you don't let go of greed, you cannot experience God's power. God's power can be only experience when you let go of greed. I thank God for that. What if God gave the God's power to the

greedy people? What the world would that be? But somehow God hid his power to the people who are greedy.

The power of Resurrection, is hidden in the cross. Only through the cross we can experience the power of the resurrection. People who live with greed will never experienced God's power. Rather they all become victims and slaves of their own greed and the result is destruction. The result is destruction. They think they are so smart they can take care of their lives, but at the end that is the end is destruction.

On one side of the coin you see greed, but on the flip side of the coin, what you see is fear and insecurity. You have fear to see your own emptiness, your own bankruptcy within yourself. There's nothing inside you. This fear you replace with greed having more, keeping more, being better than others. There's a fear that what if my kids fall behind? What if I'm not loved and liked by others? What if I don't make it? What if I don't have enough? All this fear, they fill it with greed, so behind the greed, I see fear, worries, mistrust of oneself, anxiety about life comparison and so on. Greed will never give us true satisfaction. Greed by nature is insatiable. We'll never understand the truth that if you lose it, you'll find it. If you'll find it, you'll lose it. That's the life truth that Jesus taught us. You try to gain it, you will lose it, but if you let go, you'll find it. That truth of life, they'll never understand what it is and they'll never be content. In other words, still never be happy. Living with greed, we can never be happy. It doesn't matter how much money you have, how big your house is, how great your car is. It doesn't matter what it is, but you will never be happy. As long as you live on greed, you replace the happiness with all these things I call that I call this stupid. St. Paul's life was very different from the life of greed. This is what he said, "not that I'm referring to being in need for. I've learned to be content. He learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little and I know what it is to have plenty in any and all circumstances. I have learned the secret of being well fed or of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need." I called that smart. I call that happy life. He's happy and he's so big that circumstances don't determine his happiness, he's so satisfied. He's so content. Doesn't matter whether he has a lot or not. I call that real smart. Greed will lead us into dissatisfaction, complaints and corruption ultimately. There's a lot of whatever is going on in Korea right now, not only North America, all the big guys are just. They are taken into prison. There are

smart people. They are smart to get to the top of the society and yet greed swallowed them up. The end is destruction.

The Psalms

The Psalms warns us today, becoming fools, we suffer affliction, lose appetite, and draw near the gate of death. My friends, living with greed is not fun. It's not fun. It's very difficult. Always tends. Always not fulfilling. Always dissatisfaction. Always complaining. From the mouth of the people with greed. All we hear is "I wish." We don't hear, "Thank you." From their mouth, we don't hear. "Thank you." All we hear is: I wish. I wish better house. I wish better car. I wish more money. I wish more promotion. Always. I wish. Doesn't matter where they are. They will die with I wish. Let us not feed our greed. Culture that feeds on greed is not a good culture. I don't think we live in a such a good culture. Capitalism is not really the best thing for humanity. All the commercials they just create more cravings, more greed, so the kind of world that we live in, the kind of culture we are in a really good culture. We have to be aware of that. We have to be smart enough to see that it's not a good culture.

Letters in a feed on greed. Let us discipline our ourselves of letting go of our greed. Learn to let go of you greed. Let us be satisfied with small things that we already have and if we enjoy. Our children. Our good home. Good weather. Good people around you. Good community. It doesn't cost that much money. They are there. Just beautiful as they are. With thanksgiving let us enjoy our lives and live the best we can ever have. Live the best life we can ever have. As we let go of our greed, somehow we've regained the appetite. That can be the problem for me. Too much appetite. Too much food. Too much eat. But as you let go of greed, appetite comes back not only appetite of food but of life. We'll find new energy that comes from within us. If we live our life with fear before now, we can live with love. Don't be awaken after you lose everything. Now be awakened and change lifestyle. You know, once you let go of greed, you know what happens. Greed turns into vision and dream. Wonderful. Greed is for myself, but the vision and dreams are for others and you start having this vision and dream for living for others.

We may be busier but we'll experience the joy and satisfaction we never experienced before. St Paul and Jesus, I mean talking a little bit, busy life. They live a busy life probably busier than any of you. They live a busy life and yet they were filled with satisfaction and joy and peace. The other day in, New York Times. This hedgefund trader. He wrote an article, he said he got \$3.5 million as a bonus and then he was complaining that he didn't get enough and then he wrote it. "This is crazy. I'm addicted. This is not good." So he wrote his article repenting about his own situation. That's not a good life. I mean \$3.5 million bonus. You complain about that? Then that's real foolishness. Greed is not good. 1987 movie Wall Street, the Gekko, that guy, "greed is good." Greed is what moves us, and then he gives us a new civilization. All that stuff. BS. Greed is not good. Greed makes us blind, takes away the energy and oppresses us, but once we let go of our greed, new life will begin. We will see the brighter side of life. I guarantee that. Future will look promising. We'll be able to see clearly the purpose of life and meaning of everything comes alive. Life comes alive. Greed is like dirty poison. It doesn't kill you right away, but it slowly kills you. It comes in and slowly permeates through all throughout all existence and we've just become greedy people and unhappy people. It always lies. It always gives false promise that I'll make your life happy. No, it will never make our life happy; is lie.

Let us be Wise

Let us be wise by letting go of our greed and finding the true beauty of life. That's what smart people do. Be Smart People. You have intelligence, but be smart people, really smart people. Only when you let go of your greed, then, only then, we'll be smarter.