

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

“We Do Not Lose Hope” 11/23/22

Indeed, everything is for your sake, so grace, when it has extended to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So, we do not lose heart. (II Cor 4:15-16)

Everything we face, happens for our sake. Through our endurance, grace is spread to others, there is the sound of thanks, and God is glorified. Isn't this the witness of a life lived for God? To face life, the ups and downs, knowing God has prepared us to face it, and God strengthens us to accomplish that for which He has created us. And because of this grace is spread to others and they, too, give thanks, living in gratitude to God.

It's easy to ask, "Why me?" Why does difficult stuff happen? Why do we get sick, lose jobs, face heartbreak? God doesn't DO these things to us. They're not a punishment. It's life. There are accidents, bad weather, our team loses, we receive a bad diagnosis', things don't go as WE planned, but we are told everything is for our sake, having been promised God is with us in all things, and being told to give thanks – so we will not lose heart.

We are to give thanks, having gratitude for all God does, for all God has given to us, so we don't dwell in depression. It's so easy to lose heart, to be discouraged, to feel abandoned, left out, uncared for.

It's easy to lose heart when we become jealous over what another has, when we feel like, "Oh, nobody knows the troubles I've seen, no... oh yeah, "nobody knows - but Jesus." God came to earth as a human, so He could identify with the troubles we've seen. So, we are told to increase thanksgiving for all God has done and, thereby, show more people the glory of God.

But somedays that's tough. How can I give thanks when my world has been turned upside down? How can I drum up gratitude? In scripture, giving thanks with a grateful heart is more than saying, "Thank you," it is responding to God's goodness and grace, by showing appreciation, by returning kindness. We give thanks to God for His presence, for His Spirit who comforts and strengthens us in and for a situation.

Because God loves us and because of how He works in our lives, we give thanks with grateful hearts, by showing God's love - in word and deed.

Thanksgiving comes from within, it shows who we are in God. The witnesses of our being thankful for God's love, for the gift of His Son, Jesus the Christ, is shown in our lives of gratitude.

Giving thanks in the midst of difficulties, during the dark of night, helps us to hold on to hope, takes our eyes off of self, and puts them back on God, where they belong.

All things work to the glory of God. God is good to us, and we honor Him though our lives, what we say and do. As we give thanks with grateful hearts, gratitude increases. All things happen to make us the people we were created to be, more grace is shown to others, thanksgiving increases, and we do not lose heart or grow weary through fear, we are renewed.

We will face tough times, but we give thanks, for God's presence, for the Holy Spirit who comforts and guides, for Jesus Christ who endured abandonment and death, who was raised to life eternal, going before us, showing us the way, so we do not lose heart.

Please pray with me. God thank You for Your presence in the difficult days we face. Thank You for sending Your Holy Spirit to walk with us, to comfort and strengthen us. Thank you for sending Your Son to guide us by the example of His life and death, assuring us of the promise of eternal life in You. With gratitude we give You thanks - so we do not lose heart.

Amen.

I bid you peace and a Happy Thanksgiving!