

## **Pastor's Corner November 2019**

In Colossians 3:15, in the midst of a series of instructions about how to live as Christians, Paul writes these words: And be thankful. To be a Christian is, among other things, to be thankful.

And not just when things are going great, either. When Paul writes these words, he is, as he says later in the letter, in chains. He is in prison, arrested for being a follower of Jesus. His life is literally on the line. And he writes, be thankful. He writes this, because even in that moment, in what must have been a very dark, troubling, scary situation, he was himself thankful. Not that he was in chains, no, but that he was still held in the loving hands of God. That he was still a beloved child of God. That even in that situation, he was still able to feel God's love, God's grace, God's mercy, and God's presence.

The call to being thankful can seem challenging to us at time. Not all our times are wonderful and joyous times. Not all of our moments are filled with light and warmth. Not all of our times are perfect and beautiful. We struggle, we hurt, we worry, we doubt, we feel alone, we feel angry. Our emotions control us, the world seems against us, we feel like everything is one great struggle. In the words of a comedian long ago on the Johnny Carson show, we feel like the world's a tuxedo and we're a pair of brown shoes.

And yet, Paul says to us, be thankful. Always and in all situations and circumstances. In every moment, good or bad, light or dark, happy or sad, be thankful. Be thankful because in all times, and in all situations, wherever we are, whatever we are facing, we know that we belong to God. We know that God is with us, beside us, ahead of us, within us. We know that, as beloved children of God, we are always loved, unconditionally

loved. We know that God will never leave us, and never fail us. We know that nothing can separate us from God's love for us in Jesus Christ. We know that God is faithful, and God's promises are sure and certain. We know that in baptism God claimed us forever. We know we are forgiven and free, wonderfully made and eternally beautiful. We know that we are made new and made whole, cleansed and renewed. We know that there is mercy and grace, freely given, without limit and without condition and without end.

We are thankful, not because we are perfect or because life is perfect, but because God is perfect, and God loves us perfectly and eternally. We are thankful because of all that God has done for us, is doing for us now, and will yet do for us going forward. We are thankful because love wins, and life wins, and God wins.

As we look forward to Thanksgiving Day, let us commit ourselves to being truly thankful every day. God blesses us every day, in countless ways. Let us strive to see those blessings, recognize those blessings, and be thankful for those blessings. May Thanksgiving Day be not just one day, but every day. Be thankful.

I do wish all of you a very happy Thanksgiving, filled with an abundance of joy and love (and great food). I also hope to see many of you at the annual Turkey Supper on November 23<sup>rd</sup> (noon to 6PM). And, as always, I hope to see you in church!

Peace,

**Pr. Paul**