



WEEK THREE

THANKSGIVING DEVOTIONAL

A Prayer of Thanks

Lord, I am so grateful that I know You - and I am learning more about Your character every day. You are holy and sovereign and righteous and just. You are loving and faithful and always good. When I know the One I believe and have a strong conviction that He is willing and able to help me, I can have more peace. You want to help me! My God will take care of me. Thank You, Lord.

"I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day." 2 Timothy 1:12, NIV

Sunday, November 15, 2009

Good Things

"I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice and to do good in their lives, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor - it is the gift of God." - Ecclesiastes 3:12-13, NKJV

When God gives us a good thing - a new house, a child, or a special job - do we hesitate to enjoy it? Do you feel guilty because you have something another person doesn't have?

When does the idea that Christians should not enjoy life come from?

Not from the Bible. Many scriptures often speak of the blessings God gives His people - and some are physical.

That doesn't mean enjoyment is our primary goal in life. We shouldn't mainly seek out wealth and fortune. God describes these things as fleeting, and putting our trust in them will only lead to sorrow.

But, my brothers and sisters that also doesn't mean we shouldn't rejoice when God gives us worldly goods or that we shouldn't make wise use of them. When we thank God for His blessings and use them properly - to help others and support our families in a responsible Christian lifestyle - those temporary things become blessings He can use through us. That's just what God intended. If you work hard for your money and are rewarded, you can appreciate God's gift and use it for blessing. Then you'll have done right and won't be the only one who rejoices. Amen.

Demetrio Beach

Nov. 16, 2009

Psalm 78:20

“Can God spread a table in the wilderness? God smote the rock so that water gushed out and streams overflowed. Can God also give bread, or provide meat for God’s people?”

How many times do we question God? God’s Power? God’s ability to take care of God’s People? God’s promise to provide us with what we need? The psalms speak about our human experience in such an honest way! Sure, we have questioned God. In the midst of circumstances, situations and things we cannot understand; in the midst of the fear, brokenness, and hopelessness that life brings we cry out wanting and needing balance and to relocate our minds and spirits in the heart and presence of God. Throughout the centuries when life got tough people have had trouble trusting and believing in God. But you know what happens in these circumstances - when people’s belief and trust faltered or failed - God helped them anyway!

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. God does not faint or grow weary, God’s understanding is unsearchable. God gives power to the faint, and to those who have no might God increases strength.” (Isaiah 42:28 - 29) Can God provide for God’s People? Will God provide for God’s people? The answer is, Yes! God made a covenant with us - “I am the Lord your God, and you shall be my people!” We can celebrate this with great thanksgiving in our hearts! Great is God’s Faithfulness! Amen!

Nov. 17, 2009

Psalm 96:6

“Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.”

Who is appearing before God? We are! God’s Creations! Created in God’s image! Pronounced, “Good,” by the Creator! God’s Grace abounds! We exist in the sanctuary of God’s creation and our beauty and strength is found not in us, but in God. Human beings tend to look at one another and see the flaws. But God looks at what God has created and sees human vessels - beautiful and good. God looks at us - injured, blind, and scarred - and sings, “You are so beautiful ... to me.” Let us give thanks and praise to our God! Amen.

Nov. 18, 2009

Psalm 41:1

“Blessed is the one who considers the Poor!”

As we journey through this season of Thanksgiving, remember to thank God for all the blessings God has given to you and your family. As you do this, ask yourself, “Have I done with God’s blessings what God desires?” God modeled for us the expectations for the blessings God gives. We see that most clearly illustrated in God’s Son, Jesus Christ. What did Christ model? What did Christ do? Christ gave abundantly! Christ gave abundantly to those who were Poor: poor in Spirit, poor in health, poor in the way of having shelter, food, and clothing, poor in the way of following the laws of the community and of God. Christ gave abundantly of his time and presence. Christ gave abundantly of his wisdom. Christ gave abundant prayers. Christ gave abundant care and healing. Christ gave abundantly of all he had. Christ gave himself, even his very life so that people would be enabled and empowered to know God and to hear God’s invitation to eternal life. In this season of Thanksgiving, “Have you considered the poor and done with God’s blessings what God desires?” Amen.

Nov. 19, 2009

Jeremiah 30:19

“Out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving, and the voices of those who make merry. I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will make them honored, and they shall not be small.”

Can you imagine what the church would be like if in all places and in all circumstances people were filled with songs of thanksgiving and merry voices! Psalm 100, in fact calls upon us to be a people who make a joyful noise! Do you know just how encouraging and empowering that kind of noise can be? Joyful noise encourages people to remain true to their course and life with the Lord. Joyful noise helps empower people to be present at the right time and with the right words to lift up chins, to cheer people up, or even pick them up. Joyful noise helps the followers of Christ to be the Good Samaritan, the big brother or sister, the prayer warrior, the person who could make someone laugh in the midst of the best and worst times, and the burden bearers. Basically, the contagious nature of Joyful noise helps all of us to be ultimate grade A encouragers! And just what would be the results of this kind of ministry? Well, God will multiply the people!

Considerable numbers would be brought to the Lord!

In this Thanksgiving Season, give thanks making a joyful noise in all places and with all people, and in all situations. Now is the time to strive to become a community of joyful noise makers! Amen.

November 20, 2009

Joel 2:21 - 27

“Fear Not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done great things”!

Fear not, you beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield. Be glad, O sons of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord, your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before. The threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will restore you the years which the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the Lord, am your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame.”

O Give Thanks to the Lord, for the Lord has done Great Things! Give Thanks for our God, the Creator of all things! Give thanks to the Lord for continuing to be in our midst. Give thanks to the Lord for the grain, for the water, for the fruit, for the oil. Give thanks to God for God’s abundant love and faithfulness. Amen.

Saturday, November 21

Reasons to Give Thanks

Two Hands to Perform Tasks

Whatsoever thy hands findeth to do, do it with thy mighty; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.
Ecclesiastes 9:10

Laughter to Express Our Joy

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.
Psalm 126:2

The Act of Forgiveness

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.
Ephesians 4:32

Thanksgiving Devotional

A Prayer of Thanks

Lord, I thank You for giving me hope. I don't know where I would be without You. I don't know what the future holds, but You give me the ability to be joyful even while I wait – even when I don't understand. Please help me to have a positive attitude and live with a mind-set of patience and courage as You work Your will in my life. Help me to remain faithful in prayer, Lord, and fully committed to You.

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

Romans 12:12, NIV

November 8, 2009

Make a Joyful Noise

“I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.”

– Psalm 9:2, NKJV

Did you know that God doesn't care how good your singing voice is – He still loves to hear it lifted in praise? Whether you're another new hit Christian singer or can't carry a tune in a bucket, God rejoices in the praises of His people, and that includes you!

So please don't worry how you sound when you lift up your voice at home or in the church. It doesn't matter if you can't read music or can sight-read perfectly. Don't waste time critiquing yourself or worrying what others may think. But, just give Him the praise because He appreciates every note that shows how much you love Him.

Let's make a joyful noise this week in our praise to the Master! Amen.

Betty M. Gooch



November 9, 2009

Wise Counsel

“I lead in the way of righteousness...that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance.”

– Proverbs 8:20-21

The story is told of a poor woman who called her children to her soon before her death. She sat them all down and told them, “I never had money or nice things, and I’m sorry that I don’t have good things to leave you, but I always tried to do what was right by you. If I brought you up right, so that you do what you know is right to do, then I have left you more than any amount of money.”

In this story the woman was right. The things money buys are temporal; they wear out, break down and often are gone before we know it. But, a good sense of values is worth more than all the money in the world. It is told that the greatest gift we can hope to share with others is wise counsel. Sometimes many hope that they can leave wise a legacy. But, if we make our lives an example of the truth of Christ, letting others see just how much Christ can change lives for the better. We have left a powerful gift. Amen!

Betty M. Gooch

November 10, 2009

Totally Blessed

“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.” – 3 John 2, NIV

When John the apostle wrote to his friend Gaius, he didn’t only wish spiritual blessings but he prayed for his health and that his life would go well also.

It is easy for many of us today to become so spiritually minded that we forget people’s other needs. We all know that faith is the most important thing, and we pray for a friend’s spiritual condition, but do we take the time to pray that physical needs would be met? When a new family arrives in the community do we ask God to help the family financially and emotionally, as well as spiritually? Or do we see that as the responsibility of others? Even if we know the family doesn’t know Jesus, do we reach out in concrete love that can touch their lives in other ways?

Just as God recognizes the needs of this world, we should, too. We can’t separate the body from the soul, and often it’s the body’s needs that make people aware of a spiritual emptiness. God deals with every phrase of our lives, and as we offer Jesus to others, we can do that too. Then they can learn what it means to be totally blessed. Amen.

Betty M. Gooch

November 11, 2009

Closer Than a Brother

“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” – Proverbs 17:17

The story is told of a man who couldn't believe it. He had worked for the same company for almost thirty years, and suddenly they let him go. He had been a great employee, and he had never made any trouble in his thirty years with the company. Now he felt ashamed for no good reason. He didn't know what he would do.

When he saw his brother at his door later that day, tears began to come from his eyes. Whenever anything had ever gone wrong, his older brother had been there to make him feel better. No matter what happened, he knew he could always count on his brother. He had yet to face any bad situation without his brother giving support and as long as he could lean on him, he knew everything would be okay.

As children of the most high, we can be thankful that we have Christ to call a brother. He will be with us in every situation. He will be our support and our counselor. He will listen when others will not. He will never leave us by ourselves. He is as true as any brother could be, and we can take that to the bank! Amen.

Betty M. Gooch

November 12, 2009

Why Give Thanks?

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endure forever.” – 1 Chronicles 16:36, NIV

It's not hard to accept that even something God says once in scripture is meaningful. But what does it mean when He tells us the same thing over and over? The words of this verse appear dozens of times.

Thank God he tells us repeatedly that He is good and His love never ends, it's strange, isn't it, that every time a war starts, we start questioning that first assertion. Is God really good if bad things happen? Has His love changed? If life isn't going our way, we easily ignore the culpability of humans and throw the blame right on God. Maybe God repeated this scripture so often because He knows how badly we need it. Satan has such an easy time tricking us that we need to keep reality directly in front of us. So over and over, God reminds us of His true nature.

This is a good verse to memorize, because when Satan starts attacking, we can ask ourselves, Why should we give thanks to the Lord? And we'll have the answer. For He is good and His love endures forever. Amen.

Demetrio L. Beach

November 13, 2009

A Perfect Gift

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.” – Psalm 28:7, NIV

Have you ever felt as if you should give thanks, but your heart just wasn't in it? Perhaps at Christmas time you receive a gift or two that was somehow less than perfect.

Giving thanks on such an occasion becomes difficult. The giver may suspect you aren't thrilled with the gift. But you still try to express the appreciation you do feel. God never gives us the wrong gift. He never wraps up another item of clothing to fill our already overstuffed drawers. Instead, He recognizes the intangibles we never have enough of and presents them at the moment of need. When we lack strength or protection, He is there for us.

A much needed gift received at the perfect moment is always welcome, even if it comes at no special holiday. God knows that – and understands the importance of timing for everything He gives. His presents are always timely, always perfect, and are certain to be received with thanks by a heart that's truly His.

Your heart jumps with joy at His presents, doesn't it? Then, my brothers and sisters whether you sing His praises or just pray them quietly, make sure to thank Him for each gift. Amen.

Demetrio L. Beach

November 14, 2009

He Never Gives Up

“Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.” – Psalm 89:33

A mother tried everything she could to get her son to learn to tie his shoes. She had sat with him for hours. There was nothing she could do to make him understand. Finally, she lost all patience and walked off angrily. His shoe-tying education would have to come from someone else with a lot more patience and endurance!

We, my brothers and sisters may give up on each other, but it is comforting to know that God never gives up on us. His offer of forgiveness is open to us today and every day to come. Even though we sometimes may reject the offer or do things that are frustrating and displeasing to Him, He never gives up. He asks us daily to follow Him, until the day we finally do. Thank goodness His patience is without bounds. Prayer: Dear Lord, though I push the patience of others to the limits, I am glad to know that I have not push Yours, Lord. Continue to forgive me, Lord. I am weak and foolish, and only Your great love keeps me going. Amen.

Demetrio L. Beach

Reasons to Give Thanks

God's Promises

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward.

2 Peter 3:9



The Diversity of the Four Seasons

Thou hast set all the borders of the earth:
thou hast made summer and winter.

Psalm 74:17



A Voice to Sing Songs

I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will
sing praise to thy name, O thou most high.

Psalm 9:2



Week One – Thanksgiving Devotional

November 1, 2009

God's Bounty

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.” Psalm 23:5, NRSV

As Christian disciples God sets us before his banqueting table, we are anointed by the Holy Spirit; God gives us so much it is pressed down and overflowing. Why, does God give us so much bounty? It is not so we can stuff ourselves, but so we can give ourselves away to our enemies freely in ministry. As you give thanks for all God's bounty, pray: “Lord, of all the enemies that surround me, with whom do You want me to invited to your table as my guest?” Amen.

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

November 2, 2009

Praise

“Let the heavens praise Your wonders, O Lord, Your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones.” – Psalm 89:5, NRSV

Slow down today and join in the praise of God going on all around you. Add your praise to God with the sun as it rises in the east and as it celebrates God's goodness as it sets in the west. Take the time to notice the praise being raised up by the great trees rising up around us and by every bird and insect flying around us. Take the time today, to join the faithful assembly of God's holy ones and join them in filling the earth with God's praise. Right now open your mouth and praise God for five of His wonders. Amen.

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

November 3, 2009

Sacrifice

“Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High.”
– Psalm 50:14, NRSV

A sacrifice always costs you something. Our God desires our best when we sacrifice, never anything second hand, or something we can live without. God wants our first born, our first fruits, that which we have waited patiently for given to God before it even has time to get a spot or a blemish. Thank God for your education with a sacrifice of a scholarship. Thank God for your good health with a sacrifice of a thousand bed nets so babies can grow up healthy in the name of Jesus. Today choose to make a sacrifice of praise, “Lord, I want to make a sacrifice of praise, a gift I have patiently waited for, for a long time, You deserve to enjoy its pleasure first.” Amen.

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

November 4, 2009

Opportunities

“A gracious person earns respect; a ruthless person earns money, but nothing more.”
– Proverbs 11:16 B

Money is only potentially a good thing. Money is but an opportunity. We can struggle our whole life building up a bank account full of potential and opportunities yet never do anything that would bring God glory and praise. It is how we use our potential and opportunities that make all the difference. It is the grace of sharing a meal with the hungry that gains God thanksgiving, our opportunity alone gains God nothing. Today let us not store up our opportunities, let us pray: “Lord, show me today, how I can turn my potential into your praise.” Amen.

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

November 5, 2009

This is the Day!

“This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”
– Psalms 118:24, NRSV

We have a choice of living in the real world or a fantasy world. We can try to live in the fantasy of the past and dwell on the good old days. We can live in the fantasy of what the future may hold, or we can live, now, in reality. Now is the gift God gives us to enjoy. Now is the only time our righteousness matters. Now is the only time we have to give thanks to God. Now is the only time we can serve Him. Now is God’s gift, let us say to God together: “Lord, help me live now as your witness.” Amen.

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

November 6, 2009

Every Grace

“Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!”
– Psalm 150:6, NRSV

God deserves our praise. We need to live lives of praise. We should fill every place we go with praise. We should use every talent we have been given to give God praise. Every grace filled word we share, should cause others to say, “Praise the Lord!” Every grace filled act we perform, should cause others to exclaim, “Praise the Lord!” Every grace filled thought racing through our heads, should cause us to breathe, “Praise the Lord!” May this be our breath prayer today: Let us inhale the word “Praise” let us exhale the words “the Lord”. Let every breathe praise the Lord! Amen.

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

November 7, 2009

God's Greatest Joy

“Just so, I tell you, there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.” – Luke 15:7, NSRV

God's greatest joy is sinners coming to repentance. Heaven is filled with thanksgiving. When the church is only concerned with itself, heaven is almost dead quiet. All of heaven is waiting for a cause to rejoice, waiting for the lost to be found, the filthy to become clean, the diseased to be made well. There can be no joy felt for the ninety-nine as long as God has to worry about some lost soul. God cares little about anything else. The church has only one reason for being, to care for those outside the church in need of God's grace. We are called to make heaven ring with thanksgiving by helping others find their salvation. Our prayer is “Lord, use my life today, to bring your grace to those in need of you.” Amen.

Bishop Peggy A. Johnson