

A TIME OF REFLECTION

[Pastor Gene Henderson with edits by Pastor Pier]

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever. (1 Chronicles 16:34) Such a great sentiment – perfect for the end 2021 and the beginning of 2022.

Except 2021 is the year we'd all like to forget. How many millions of our fellow Americans have lost their jobs, their businesses, their futures? How many have had their weddings or graduations messed up? Their vacations destroyed? That doesn't begin to touch how many are enduring the grief of those who have passed this year.

So, while we want to give thanks sometimes it doesn't feel like God's love endures forever. Sometimes it feels like God's love took a few months (or the whole year) off. All respect to the Holy Scriptures, and absolutely no disrespect to God, but sometimes these quotations seem out of place with reality. How do we raise thankful hearts in the middle of confusion and grief?

David of Bethlehem found fame young. Who knew an undersized teenage boy straight from the family farm would turn out to be a warrior? And a poet-musician playing at the royal court. And who would have predicted that he would lose it all just as quickly? 14 years with a price on his head, living in caves, surrounded by bandits, he wrote:

Let us come into His [God's] presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise! (Psalm 95:2)

A thousand years later Saul of Tarsus, a rising star in the elite circles of Jerusalem, fell from grace and was chased all over the Roman Empire. Finally arrested, he found himself in a jail cell where the only thing he had left was a quill pen. From his captivity, he wrote:

Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:19-20)

Seriously? *...always giving thanks to God the Father for everything?* Maybe **some** things. But **everything**? What planet are you living on? Is your jail cell still in this world? Both of these guys tell us to sing, make music, make a joyful noise, from our hearts! When you are in a bad place, that's tough advice to follow. But, given what we know about their lives, we cannot say, "*You don't understand. You're not living in my shoes.*" Neither one of these guys was Mr. Perfect, and neither lived lives untouched by trouble.

Conclusion? Giving thanks is a choice, not a reaction. Sometimes a very difficult choice. Sometimes a painful choice. Sometimes a choice disconnected from reality. Sometimes we wonder, "*Do I really mean this? Can I sincerely say, 'Thank You, God?'*"

Happy New Year!

January 2, 2022



"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so they can have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way."

SERVICES

Sunday Morning Worship: 10:30 AM

Unity in Prayer: 6:00 – 7:00 PM

Wednesday – Bible Study: 7:00 PM;

Youth & Kid's Club

Prayer ½ hour before services

THEOLOGICAL SEED

Isaiah 43:18-19

¹⁸ "Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old.

¹⁹ Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness *and* rivers in the desert.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Sunday Evening Prayer – 6 to 7 PM.

Wednesday Bible Study – John 17. Come as we learn how Jesus prays for His own.

Kid's Club & Youth in the basement, learning about

the Lord.

Men's Ministry – Saturday 8:00 AM, January 7th at the Schodack Diner, the corner of Routes 9 & 20.

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SERMON NOTES

THE FACT OF COMPLETION

TEXT: Philippians 1:3-7; Isaiah 30:18 (The Message); Psalm 138:8

- I. _____ – Hebrews 11:23-27
- A. _____ – Exodus 1:15-17; 2:1-10
- B. _____ – Exodus 2:11-15
- C. _____ – Hebrews 11:27; Matthew 17:3
- God _____ us, knowing _____ about us.
- God has a _____ for us – Jeremiah 29:11
- God never _____, He will accomplish His plan.
- II. _____ – Acts 13:22
- A. _____ – 1 Samuel 16:3, 7, 12
- New _____ of Israel.
- _____ of a giant.
- _____ dweller. Romans 8:28
- B. _____ – 2 Samuel 11:2-5, 15, 27; 12:7-12; Hebrews 4:13; Numbers 32:23
- C. _____ – Psalm 51:1-17
- III. _____
- A. _____ – Matthew 4:18-20
1. A _____ man part of Jesus' inner circle. Luke 5:8
2. He _____ who Jesus really was. Luke 9:20
- B. _____ – Matthew 26:34-35, 69-75
- C. _____
1. _____ of the disciples to the _____ along with John – John 20:1-8
2. _____ – John 21:15
- God has _____ us.
- God has _____ us.
- We are His _____.