

WELCOME 20th November 2022 – Christ the King Sunday '22 C

James 1:17-20 & Luke 17:11-19

Welcome! It's great to be together again today! **Bible Study Qs** are there to equip you so God can lead you deeper into His word/work in your life, & so you can share that w/ someone else. We also use them for our **Zoom** Bible Study Catch-ups on Friday @ 1p.m.

As we move into this week...

The roar of the crowd when the siren sounds & **your** team wins. The thunderous applause as the **orchestral** finale stirs every heart. **Parents** cheering wildly as their child nails it as Elf #3 in the Christmas play. Praise is inherent in every one of us. We're created for it. It's an integral part of life.

This is the day the LORD has made!

We will rejoice and be glad in it!

Praise changes hearts...alters attitudes...reshapes perspective...causes a revolution in our souls.

Praise & its twin Thanksgiving shift our focus from the moment to the meaning, from the surface to the significance, from pain to promise...from the gift to the Giver of all good things. Jesus invites us past shallow lives into deeper living & heart-level transformation. Praise/Thanksgiving open the door to the wonder of all the gifts God gives through his Son...& the ultimate wonder of his redeeming restoring love for **us**.

*Whatever is good & perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father,
who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.*

He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word.

And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

Today...We'll talk...but more than talk... we'll open our hearts to thank & praise the One who has poured out his grace on us as a Church as individuals & as his agents of praise because He alone is worthy and in our thanks & praise we experience the power of the Cross & the life of Christ in all we do...Let's pray...

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Savior, you pour out your power for the powerless and your salvation for the lost. Come again to us today & build in among & through us your new creation. Send you Spirit deep into the recesses of our hearts so that we may live in peace with you & praise of the Father. Open our lives to all of your gifts Lord. Let us enter your presence with thanksgiving this moment with praise. Help us to hear & obey the call of Jesus in our lives, & to find faithful life-giving ways to return love for you through the lives of those around us. Let it be in us according to your word...Jesus in your Name... Amen.

Let's hear God's word...

FAITH CHAT: *as imbedded in the service*

Christ the King Sunday '22 C – TABLE TALK: PRAISE & THANKSGIVING

“Where are the 9?” While we’re never told...I can guess because I know where I’d be if I was one of them. To the priest as directed & then home to hug my kids...then some “quiet” time w/ Leonie. If I’d had a job...see my old boss & ask if I could come back. To the family farm & see if there was anything I could salvage & get going again. If I was young & single I’d find the girl of my dreams & start living ‘em. “Where are the 9?” certainly not standing around wondering what to do next...not slowing down on the road to having my old life back. Surely not going backwards in any way shape or form to the guy who said “Go that way.” “Where are the 9?” I don’t know but I can guess.

“Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” It didn’t take too long & we all had that “thing” for which we make the same plea...for a child...spouse...friend...neighbour...*don’t know* One burden you’re asking Jesus to lift; one hurt you’re asking him to heal & every one of us had a list...more than one most of us. “Where are the 9?” Right here trying to pick up the pieces of what’s left over from yesterday & banging on the door for tomorrow...looking for a brief respite & a shot at having something that looks like or feels like our old lives again...pick up where we left off...

“Where are the 9?” I know where I’d be...And there’s the problem...I...like the 9 & maybe like a whole bunch of people, too often live only @ the level of what bugs us most. **We** too often live only at the level of our current problem...We get stuck living today’s crisis...@ the level of our existing headache...I know Jesus said, “Don’t worry about tomorrow, tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble’s enough for today.” I’m not at all in favour of losing sleep or tears over what I can see or am told is coming...being pre-occupied by stuff on the next page of my calendar...But what happens is we live so caught up in today’s crisis/dilemma that we never see beyond or beneath it & our prayers are just one God please fix...God please fix...God please fix after another. Our pleas for mercy, which God loves to hear & loves to answer become a broken record...same thing different day under a different heading.

God...I don’t know where the \$\$’s gonna come from...God I don’t know what my kid’s doing with himself...God help me break this addiction...We convince ourselves, like the 9 that **if** we just had some new skin we could have our old lives back. Our praying stops at the level of solve my problem so I can get on to doing what I want. God please fix _____ so I can go on about my business & I’ll quit bugging you. God if you’ll take care of _____ I don’t need you for anything else... I’ve got the rest under control...I can handle everything else if you’ll just _____. “Where are the 9?” I reckon they’re just tickled to have their old lives back & are convinced that’s all they need. I’m afraid that’d be me too...maybe you?

But the one understands there is no going back to his old life. **He** has been given a new normal...He can’t go back because he’s just received a gift *that even though he wanted it* he never knew what it meant to have it. To be chronically sick & to be made cataclysmically well...is to receive more than you asked even if it’s just what you asked. When I was a chaplain @ St Luke’s hospital, our Chief of Chaplains would always ask the heart transplant patients, “**What** are you going to do with this new life God has given you?” Christian or not that was his question. What are you going to do with this gift...this new life? For some it was the answer of the 9... back to work, back to my life, my favourite things...But once in a while, someone like the one, would allow thanksgiving to interrupt their lives...& there would be praise.

One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, “Praise God!” He fell to the ground at Jesus’ feet, thanking him for what he had done. This man was a Samaritan. Forget the Samaritan angle for a minute...let that go. He has been given a new normal...He can’t go back to the way things used to be **AND** he doesn’t want to. How do I know...at this moment where is he? *At Jesus’ Feet.* “*At Jesus’ feet*” is always always always a sign of devotion & discipleship. That always means this person quits their old way of living & abandons themselves to the way & life & presence of Jesus. They don’t want anything else. A few chapters back...Lk 9... Jesus calls people to follow & one guys says, “*First let me go bury my dad.*” Jesus answered... “*Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go & spread the news of the kingdom of God.*” Another said, “*...first let me go & say good-bye to those at my house.*” “*Anyone who puts a hand to the plow & then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.*”

The one can’t go back to the way things used to be **AND** he doesn’t want to. For many of us, **we** need to allow thanksgiving to interrupt our lives to create devotion discipleship & praise at a wholly new level. When we’re stuck living only at the level of our current problem we pour everything we are into the bottomless pit of that problem & if it never resolves favourably...the way we want it too...we lose everything. We can too easily become devoted to & devoured by the problem ...a slave in other words to the crisis. But when thanksgiving & praise interrupt our lives a new life bursts onto the scene...a life that is responsive to & in relationship with Jesus... “**Has** no one returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” And Jesus said to the man, “*Stand up & go. Your faith has healed you.*” The one now lives knowing something the 9 do not: Jesus not only restores life but **HE** is the one from whom all life comes. *Jn 1:3-4...God created everything through him, & nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created...In him was life...This Samaritan now knows the Giver of all good gifts...the Giver of life itself & new life in this moment.*

AND...He knows: The gift is great but the Giver is everything.

He could be content with new skin...that vast majority are...but instead he turns to Jesus for a new heart a new life a new way of living in this world a new relationship that redefines his very existence deeper & more eternally than new skin. He discovers **God** intends far more for our lives than we even desire for ourselves. Praise & its twin Thanksgiving shift our focus from the moment to the meaning, from the surface to the significance, from pain to promise - from the gift to the Giver of all good things. Jesus invites us past shallow lives into deeper living & heart-level transformation. Praise/Thanksgiving open the door to the wonder of all the gifts God gives through his Son & to the ultimate wonder of his redeeming restoring love for **us**.

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, & no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." – 1 Cor 2:9

Paul would write to the Ephesian **church**...*Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. – Eph. 3:20 ...more than we might ask or imagine...especially the gift of Jesus who would by his wounds heal the fatal wound of our sin...the lingering wound of death...& the stalking jaws of the evil **one**.*

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He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word.

And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession. You are God's prized possession. Whatever else is in play in your life...that never changes. Because of that...God intends far more for our lives than we even desire for ourselves. Praise/Thanksgiving open the door to the wonder of all the gifts God gives through his Son & to the ultimate wonder of his redeeming restoring love for us.

TAKE IT HOME -

What's one thing you can do each day to allow thanksgiving & praise to interrupt your life to be "the one" at Jesus' feet?

With whom will you share that?

Let's pray... Lord Jesus, you are infinitely generous but more than what we receive from you, give us all of you in our day. All of your love so we can share it. All of your wisdom so we can declare it. All of your promises so our hope is renewed. All of your strength so we can live solely for you. Use all that we are so those around us see all that you are...Let it be in us according to your word...Jesus in your Name... Amen.