

Daily Devotional, December 15, 2021 Grounded in Gratitude, Living in Grace

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the Lord was my support. He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me. Psalms 18:2, 16-19 (NIV)

This year, more than ever, I am doing the best I can to focus on my blessings and find gratitude in each day. This is not an easy task. It is easy these days to worry, stress, or be frustrated in many daily moments. However, in the midst of uncertainty, I cannot help but thank God for His hand in my life. My daily gratitude includes the bigger, more obvious blessings, like a roof over my head, food on my table, good health in my family. However, I must focus on the little things too.

For example, when a friend reaches out with an unexpected encouraging word at just the right moment, or the small periods of peace I feel that I know must come from above. Like when the sun is shining brightly after a snow flurry, the sound of my son's voice when he calls from half-way around the world. I really want to savor these small moments more than ever. Those little things that I usually take for granted, and need to file away in the deep recesses of my mind under happiness..

I tend to make a habit of reading a lot of Psalms because I love the poetic cry of joy and sorrow, pain and healing, despair and hope. They remind me that our God is a God of comfort who will light up our darkest days.

A bit further into Psalm 18 we read: You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.
Psalms 18:28

This verse of Psalms 18 reminds us of its promises on days when I am feeling doubtful, overwhelmed, or just plain exhausted with this year and all of the stresses I have endured. I constantly remind myself – I can use my words and attitude to spread light or darkness—my choice. This Advent season, I hope to spread the Light to others that God brings to me and to remind myself to stay grounded in gratitude.

I am so grateful for Hope Lutheran Church and all that our members have done to be a light in a dark time. Many have stepped up to make Thanksgiving and Christmas a much brighter time for those less fortunate. There are many opportunities available for each of us to step up and shine a light. If you find yourself stuck in a rut you can't climb out of, I encourage you to find a way to reach out to one of Hope's many ministries. Help is here if you need it. But if you're instead a bit lost on what you can do to be a light to others that our God of peace is to us, let this family of faith help you to shine brightly what is within you. Let God and the church recharge your light!

Prayer: Lord, thank you for always being a light in the dark places of the world and the dark places of our lives. Our hope is in You, for You are the light of the world and You call us to be lights for others. May Your light and love blaze in us and in all the world. Amen.