

I read a news story of a woman who was getting ready to jump off a 44 story building in New York City.

Witnesses said that she did not look like the type of person who would do such a thing. She was very distinguished and well dressed.

All the attempts made by the police to get the woman off the ledge had failed. One of the officers asked if he could call his pastor in to see if he could help. When the pastor arrived, he asked permission to go to the ledge and talk to the woman.

As the pastor neared the edge the woman screamed, “Don’t come any closer or I’ll jump!” The pastor took a step back and then said, “I am sorry that you believe no one loves you.”

This got the woman’s attention and it got the attention of the police. That was something that you don’t usually say to a person who is threatening suicide. The woman took a step towards the pastor and said, “My grandchildren love me and so does my children. My whole family loves me! I have 8 wonderful grandchildren and they love me.”

The pastor took a step towards the woman and said, “Well then, you must be very poor, maybe that is why you want to take your own life.” The woman who was a little overweight said, “Do I look like I go without any meals? We live in a very nice apartment. I’m not poor.”

The pastor took another step closer to her and was now 3 feet from her when he asked, “Then why do you want to kill yourself? I don’t understand.”

The woman thought for a moment and then said, “You know, I don’t really remember.” The story ends with the pastor and the woman walking towards the elevator as she shows him pictures of her grandchildren. Eventually this woman becomes a volunteer on the city’s suicide hotline, helping others choose life.

What did the pastor do to help this woman?

He helped her get her eyes off her problems and onto the many ways that God had blessed her. She learned a valuable lesson that day. She learned that thankful people are happy people.

If you don't learn anything else today, I hope you learn this valuable lesson. Thankful people are happy people. I can hardly believe that 2019 is nearly gone! The next time we get together as a church it will be 2020!

I said at the beginning of 2019 that this year would be a year of untold potential. That could have meant a multitude of things. To be sure, 2019 was an interesting year.

There were many good things that happened and there were some not so good things that happened, but through it all God remained constant.

Sometimes people lose sight of all that God is doing for us, in us and around us. We lose sight because we get so caught up in our own lives that we miss God's activities. When we miss God's activities, we tend to be less thankful.

I want you to turn your attention to Psalm 95. We do not know who wrote this Psalm, but I think that this person was a happy person. This Psalm teaches us that **THANKFUL PEOPLE ARE HAPPY PEOPLE.**

Let me read again Psalm 95:1-7,

O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! ²Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! ³For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. ⁴In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. ⁵The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed. ⁶O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! ⁷For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

The author of this Psalm did not allow his own situations to change his decision to be thankful to God for all that God has done and for all that God is going to do. That is good for the author of Psalm 95, but what about us? We all have a lot going on in our lives, right? How can we make sure that we are always going to be thankful people so that we can be happy people throughout life?

The key for us today to be thankful people is to keep our eyes on Jesus Christ. The author of Hebrews tells us to do this in Hebrews 12:1-3. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners,^[e] so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.

It is through Jesus Christ that we have the ability to be called the people of God’s pasture, the flock under His care.

It is through Jesus Christ that we can have access to the heart of God.

It is through Jesus Christ that we have the promise of eternal life and the forgiveness of sins.

It is through Jesus Christ that we can be healed.

Jesus is the key to our thankfulness and our happiness.

As 2019 comes to an end and 2020 begins let us keep our eyes on Jesus.

By keeping our eyes focused on Jesus and by being thankful for all things, we will be able to take our eyes off our own situations and trials and troubles, and focus on that which is eternal.