

## Wake Union Baptist Church Sunday School Devotion



**Opening Prayer**

*Dear Heavenly Father,*

*Thank you for the love, mercy, help, and blessings of another week, and for another opportunity to consider your Holy Word. We pray for those that are sick to be healed, the grieving to be comforted, and for all to know the joy and peace of your Holy Spirit. Open our hearts and minds now to the truth of your scriptures. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

**Welcome and Announcements**

We would love to see you at our 11:00 am worship service.

Anyone that is interested in teaching/leading a virtual Sunday School class using Zoom, for our children or adults, please reach out to me.

**Memory Verses**

*<sup>14</sup>For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: <sup>15</sup>And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. **2 Corinthians 5:14-15***

We as a nation celebrated Thanksgiving on Thursday; perhaps with some restraint due to the virus. As we each reflect on all we have to be thankful for, our lists would vary; some possibly moderated by the trials of this past year. Today we'll continue our series on sharing the Gospel by considering what Thanksgiving means for us as Christians, the present trial of the virus, and how this all can strengthen and motivate us to tell others about Jesus.

**Thanksgiving to God**

*<sup>1</sup>Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever. **Psalm 106:1***

The Bible is filled with mighty acts and miracles that God has done. When we stop to think about this, the more we can appreciate all the things that He has done for us individually and the mercy He has shown us. God has been better than good to us and our list of things to thank him for are lengthy. Let us always praise and thank Him for his goodness.

*<sup>1</sup>I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will show forth (tell of) all thy marvelous works. **Psalm 9:1***

*<sup>7</sup>That I may publish (proclaim) with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. **Psalm 26:7***

*<sup>22</sup>And let them sacrifice (offer) the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing. **Psalm 107:22***

Consider when we come upon a great sale or unbelievable bargains, we naturally want to let our friends and family know about it. This pales in comparison to what God has done; so, a natural

follow up to praising and thanking God is a strong heartfelt desire to tell others about Him “*with rejoicing*”, to His glory and for the help and encouragement of others.

<sup>18</sup>*In everything (in all circumstances) give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning (for) you.* **1 Thessalonians 5:18**

<sup>20</sup>*Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;* **Ephesians 5:20**

God is continually blessing us and we deserve none of it, therefore thanksgiving through Jesus our High Priest and Mediator is our duty. Evil does not come from God, so we shouldn't thank Him for it; but we can thank Him for help and deliverance from the trials of life. We're not thanking God for the problems, but rather for the strength He is building in us through the difficult experiences, for “*we know that all things work together for good to them that love God*” (Romans 8:28).

### **Thanks for Trials?**

<sup>2</sup>*My brethren, count (consider) it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (face various trials);* <sup>3</sup>*Knowing this, that the trying (testing) of your faith worketh patience (produces perseverance/endurance leading to spiritual maturity).* **James 1:2-3**

Note James doesn't say “if” we face trials, but rather “when” we do. The key takeaway from this passage is that through these times it is possible for us to profit from them if we view them through faith and look to God. Generally, when we're in the valley we tend to look no further than our own shadow; but even then, God is still close by (Psalm 23:4). When we realize this, this is where the joy and thanksgiving during trials come in. Earlier this year the virus took us all by surprise and we're struggling to understand and from time-to-time fighting depression. May we trust God each day and when we emerge from this trial look back and see how God used the time to help us grow our faith and maturity in Christ.

<sup>15</sup>*For all things are for your sakes (benefit), that the abundant grace (that is reaching more people) might through the thanksgiving of many redound (abound) to the glory of God (bring God more and more glory).* <sup>16</sup>*For which cause we faint not (we do not lose heart, we do not give up); but though our outward man (physical body) perish, yet the inward (spiritual) man is renewed day by day.* <sup>17</sup>*For our light affliction (trouble), which is but for a moment, worketh (produces) for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;* <sup>18</sup>*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal (temporary); but the things which are not seen are eternal.* **2 Corinthians 4:15-18**

Paul faced trials and much suffering during his missionary journeys, but he focused on God's reward and the “*eternal weight of glory.*” In times of trouble it can be rather easy to become discouraged and think about giving up. This is when we must look to the Holy Spirit to give us inner strength (Ephesians 3:16), and focus on the ultimate reward for our faith rather than the present distress.

<sup>3</sup>*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope* (caused us to be born again into a living hope) *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,* <sup>4</sup>*To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,* <sup>5</sup>*Who are kept* (protected) *by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* <sup>6</sup>*Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations* (distressed through various trials): <sup>7</sup>*That the trial of your faith, being much more precious* (of greater worth) *than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried* (refined) *with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:* <sup>8</sup>*Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:* <sup>9</sup>*Receiving the end* (outcome or goal) *of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.* **1 Peter 1:3-9**

All our blessings are owing to God's "abundant mercy," not any merit of our own. Our "lively hope" through Jesus our Savior allows us to look beyond the pain of this brief life to eternal life in a home without sin or suffering. Meanwhile we are kept and protected "by the power of God through faith" that the lessons learned from trials can refine and strengthen our faith and make us more useful in God's service. Trials will come to an end and praise, honor, and glory will last to eternity.

### **Thank God for the Greatest Gift**

<sup>15</sup>*This is a faithful* (trustworthy) *saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief* (the worst). **1 Timothy 1:15**

Here Paul summarizes the good news. Jesus came to save sinners and none are beyond His saving power. God forgave Paul for persecuting Christians (Acts 8:3, 9:1-2) and used him mightily to spread the Gospel. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). This truth is faithful and worthy to be told, and we pray received by all.

<sup>13</sup>*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* <sup>14</sup>*How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?* <sup>15</sup>*And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written* (Isaiah 52:7), *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* **Romans 10:13-15**

Whosoever will call upon Jesus will be saved! We must take this message of salvation, the glad tidings of the gospel of peace, to others. God has assigned us this work of proclaiming "the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:" (1 Peter 2:9).

<sup>14</sup>*Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth* (leads) *us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour* (sweet aroma) *of his knowledge* (knowing about Jesus) *by us in every place.* **2 Corinthians 2:14**

He uses us to spread the Good News wherever we go, like a fine perfume that others can't help but notice. Thank God for this opportunity of ministry.

*<sup>9</sup>Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage* (invite them to the wedding feast or marriage supper of the Lamb). **Matthew 22:9**  
May we be found faithful in this assignment and may those we tell be receptive to the invitation.

### The Unexpected Storm, by The Perrys

From out of nowhere the blue sky grew dark,  
And without any warning, it seemed your whole world just fell apart;  
Right now you're wondering, does the Master even see,  
Does He know where I'm standing? Has He forgotten about me?

For the unexpected storm, it hasn't caught Him by surprise.  
Right now He's watching you, I know He'll bring you through, safe on the other side.  
You don't have to be afraid, through the thunder and the rain;  
In the shelter of His arms, He'll keep you safe from harm,  
Through the unexpected storm.

Every storm has a reason though it's hard to understand,  
Every trial has a purpose, It's all a part of God's plan;  
Through all of your questions, He will never leave your side,  
But He'll be your refuge, until the storm passes by.

For the unexpected storm, it hasn't caught Him by surprise.  
Right now He's watching you, I know He'll bring you through, safe on the other side.  
You don't have to be afraid, through the thunder and the rain;  
In the shelter of His arms, He'll keep you safe from harm,  
Through the unexpected storm.

### Closing Prayer

*Dear Heavenly Father,*

*Forgive us when we don't thank you enough for all that you have done for us. Forgive us when we're so easily discouraged. Please help us to stay close to you and choose praise during the difficulties of this virus and other trials of life. Help us to mature in our faith and embolden us to share the Gospel with all of those around us. Prepare hearts to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord and may they respond to your invitation and experience the love and peace that only you give. Please keep everyone safe and well until we meet again. In Jesus' name, Amen.*