

Live a lover's life, circumspect and exemplary, a life Jesus will be proud of: bountiful in fruits from the soul, making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God." (Phil. 3:10,11 Msg)

I thank God that when I pray they're not empty words, but I'm sharing my thoughts, hopes and dreams with the Creator of the Universe, who loves me more than life itself. Our prayers are not empty words because the God we are sharing life with isn't empty, but real, alive, active, passionate about us.

This is not an empty prayer because this prayer reflects Jesus greatest desire. He

wants us all to grow in love, the love which characterises him. He doesn't just want us to be loving to people but to have the nature of love, for God is love. God is far more than loving, he is love, so when he acts true to himself what will you see? Love in action.

Thank God that in Jesus, when we act true to the new nature he has created in us we'll see love in action. And when I'm not living true to my new nature, thank God he sends people refine me so that I can change, because I want to live true to my new nature in Jesus. I want to share Jesus' live with him and not be left wandering

aimlessly in the wilderness. Rather with Jesus I'm on a wonderful adventure as we trek home, seeing how many other people will join us so that God for all eternity will give exclamations of thanks for each one, for each of you.

Let us pray.
Heavenly Father, thank you that we can once again celebrate the birth of Jesus and remember the hope we have in him, our Saviour. Thank you for this wonderful new relationship we have to live with you as your loved children in whom you delight. Amen.

9 December 2012
WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN TO YOU?
THANKFUL



What does Christmas mean to you? Last week we looked at the theme; sharing. Which definitely lies at the heart of Christmas, God in the person of Jesus comes to share himself with us, to share his life with us. What a wonderful reason to celebrate and be thankful.

This reminds me that my thankfulness is a year long happening; because of all that Jesus has shared, my life everyday is an act of thankfulness to God, my Heavenly Father. An attitude of gratitude is a wonderful gift God shares with us, it's part of his character which I get to live out each day of the year. So Christmas is a celebration of thankfulness, a thankfulness which can

characterises our living, everyday of the year
In the three readings for today I found lots of reasons to be thankful.
The reading from Malachi reminds me to be thankful because our God is faithful. When he makes a promise you can build your life on it, because when God, our Heavenly Father makes a promise he always keeps it.

In John the Baptist we have the fulfilment of this promise. Thank God that he is faithful and doesn't make empty promises or try and win our favour bribing us with gifts. Thank God he is faithful; John came 'like a blazing fire that refines metal or like a strong soap that whitens clothes.'

What a wonderful gift; John didn't come buttering people up telling them what they wanted to hear. No, John spoke the truth. The people were in need of a saviour. They were in need of change, and that change was to begin, not with the other person but with me. So people came to John and were changed. Now that is something to really be thankful for. We can change.

When Jesus came into the world it was so that I could change and not stay the same. I could change and be re-born one of the Heavenly Father's children, whom he loves and delights in.

Just imagine what life would be like if we couldn't change. If once we made a mistake it was set in

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

concrete. No change possible. That would be a truly horrible life. Thank God in Jesus we can change. We can change and become more and more like our brother Jesus, because in Jesus that is now our new nature.

I daily thank God that I'm not locked into my mistakes or the mistakes of others. I daily thank God that I'm locked into his love, his grace, his mercy, his knowing me so that I can grow to be all that he dreams possible.

It is a wonderful thing to thank God for when he sends the refiners fire into our lives so the dross is burned away. I thank God that in Jesus he burns the dross away but doesn't burn me away.

Thank God we can change because he has been faithful and sent Jesus, our Saviour. So now our daily lives can be lived trusting Jesus

in the choices we make, the priorities we have, the way we spend our money. As we live this way our lives become that wonderful living sacrifice of love we daily can give to God, as we seek to join him in the life he lives, not keeping him at the edges, out in the cold. But thankfully in Jesus

Thank God, We Can Change.

our lives are now lived in the warmth of the Father's loving embrace.

I'm always thankful that Jesus still sends people into my life to refine me, because the last thing I'd ever want to happen is to have my relationship with God in Jesus grow cold and die. If I don't get rid of the rubbish in my life that's precisely what will happen.

So I'm extremely thankful that in Jesus I have the power and authority to forgive as I am forgiven. I can change. I don't have to be shaped by life's hurts and pain, but rather I can seek to give forgiveness and ask for forgiveness, so that Jesus character and nature grows to maturity in my life.

Another reason to be thankful from our readings is that John went out into the wilderness.

That makes me thankful because in that I see God coming to me, where I am. I'm out in the wilderness. I'm not perfect.

Just imagine if John had come into the temple, and only the holy people were invited. Only those who had their lives together were allowed to come. If that were the case, I'd be left out in the wilderness, always striving but never arriving.

Thank God he sent John out into the wilderness where I live, so that I can here and change. Change, not to become some idea of perfection that I have, but to change and become a mature reflection of Jesus. I can change and not think of myself first, but grow to love as I am loved, seeking to put other people first, see the gifts I have as resources to show love, not means to make my life comfortable and profitable.

Thank God we can change and reflect Jesus' image in our life.

In the reading from Philippians I find many reasons to be thankful. I love that fact that when Paul remembers the people at Philippi it is with a sense of thankfulness. "Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God." (Phil. 1:3

Msg) That reminds me that each time you cross my mind that I can be thankful. That I can break out in exclamations of thanks to God. Why? Because you're perfect – no. But because you are the Father's loved children. Because in Jesus we are brothers and sisters, who now have the

"Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks"

wonderful opportunity and privilege of sharing the Father's love together.

I break out in exclamations of thanks because you're not headed for hell. You're not lost in the wilderness, aimless wandering around, but you have heard Jesus voice, that you do hear Jesus voice, and follow him.

If I was expecting perfection, I'd be a grumpy old man, well before I got to looking at you, cause I'm not perfect. In fact I've been known to forget things; occasionally. I remind myself to give exclamations of thanks each time you cross my mind because you're loved children of the Father whom he delights sharing his life with. Isn't that a great reason to give thanks to God?

I'm thankful to Jesus for the wonderful blessings and prayers I've been rediscovering in Paul's writings. And today we have another stunner. I'd like to pray it for you now.

"So this is my prayer: that your love will flourish and that you will not only love much but well. Learn to love appropriately. You need to use your head and test your feelings so that your love is sincere and intelligent, not sentimental gush.