

## **NOVEMBER 09, 2022, MIDWEEK DEVOTIONAL**

### **SCRIPTURE FOCUS: PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7**

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

### **BLESSED THOUGHTS: THE THREE MOST HEALING WORDS OF ALL!**

I hope you all have a pastor or other religious leader that is as God-infused as our family's pastor. To quote a phrase from long, long ago, Pastor Michael Kurtz is “The Bee's Knees” to our family. Anyway, it was on the Thanksgiving Long Weekend Sunday that Pastor Mike shared with us a message he had first preached six years before, and it boils down to these three words. “Whenever someone asks you how you're doing, just answer, ‘I am grateful.’” Pastor Mike then called on a member of our congregation who had heard that message back in 2016, and he shared how just replying to a “How are you?” with those three words, “I am grateful,” had made such a difference in his life. This gentleman shared how at a Sobey's checkout the cashier asked him how he was doing, and when he replied, “I am grateful,” she stopped and looked at him and replied at how wonderful it was to have a customer say such a positive thing! His ‘testimony’ got to me and started me doing a lot of thinking! (When was the last time a sermon did that for you, I wonder).

Later that day—still thinking over the power of those three words—“I am grateful”—I remembered an incident from when I was working in Behavioral Health Services in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, some fifteen years ago. The co-worker in the next cubicle must have seen my face because he, too, asked, “Hey, Barry, how's it going?” I shot back, “Life sucks, and then you die!” It must have been one of those days, I guess, when the stress of my three jobs and looking after my elderly father must have been particularly harsh, but my friend, Dan, really blew his stack. “That's no way to talk! You're a Christian and you have a God and life is great!” I admitted he had a point, but all of us can get snowed under by the problems and burdens of life. In fact, anyone who thinks that this is the best of all worlds needs an attitude adjustment. Case in point, the number one concern that people in Winnipeg feel on the Thanksgiving Weekend is a genuine concern for their own safety. They want to elect a mayor who will do something to prevent crime, not just hire more police to go after the bad guys. As I write this, Putin just ordered more bombing on civilian targets. Yes, often life does suck! But God still gives us these three healing words, “I am grateful!” And I am grateful God for the healing I've found in those three words!

So, what am I grateful for this day? Well, I really enjoyed having my three oldest grandchildren serve as my communion helpers at my last Sunday service in Brunkild. It was also a hoot having my two oldest grandkids read the Scriptures in both English and French—another first for that church! I am grateful, also, that after Pastor Mike's Thanksgiving Sermon, my soon-to-be nine-year-old granddaughter went to communion with me! I am grateful for so many blessings. A fellow retiree over coffee shared, “It's tough being a widower, but I am grateful for having had a wonderful partner for over sixty years.”

Now, believe me, we're into trying times. A lot of good people are facing their own Gethsemanes! Remember that when Paul dictated today's scripture he was in a Roman prison,

likely chained to a wall. Yet he knew the God-inspired power of those three words, “I am grateful.” Of course, he said it in other words, “but in all things give thanks,” but you and I all can remember that—whenever we are asked, “So, how’s it going?” our healing response—and this world needs healing—consists of three words, “I am grateful!” Try it, and in six years get back to me, will you?

**PRAYER: “THANK YOU LORD”—AN OLD FOLK SONG FROM THE 1970’S**

Thank you, Lord, on this day, For our many good blessings  
Thank you, Lord, on this day, For our many great friendships.  
Glory to God, may you hear our prayer, Guide us on forever  
Thank you, Lord, on this day, For our blessings and friendships

**—WRITTEN BY PASTOR BARRY BENICE ON OCTOBER 10TH, 2022**