

**“Sing and Give Thanks” - Ephesians 5:15-20 – Pastor Jeff Childs**

**Sing.** There is an old saying, “people who sing, pray twice.” Not only do they sing the words but they also sing the tune. They not only sing with their voices but also sing with their hearts. And depending on the song it sure can be a prayer. Many words of scripture have been turned into song lyrics, but some Bible passages are actually songs. One of the things we are asked by the letter writer to do is to sing psalms. The book of 150 psalms in the Bible seems to be the ancient form of a hymnal or song book. The first song in the Bible is the Song of Moses (Exodus 15.) Before Jesus and disciples left the Upper Room for the Garden of Gethsemane they sang songs of praise (Matthew 26:30.) The writer here encouraged the young church to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. How might we praise God as a singing church? Keep singing or humming after you leave church. Sing God’s praises every day. Methodists have always been a singing church. We have these words in the front of the hymnal:

John Wesley's Instructions for Singing 1761

- I. "Learn these Tunes before you learn any others ....
- II. Sing them exactly as they are printed here without altering or mending them at all ...
- III. Sing ALL. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can ...
- IV. Sing lustily and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength ...
- V. Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony ...
- VI. Sing in Time. Whatever time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it ... and take care not to sing too slow...
- VII. Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself or any other creature."

**And Give Thanks.** Each day during your times of prayer with God, pause and remember and give thanks; not just for the things of that day, but for everything that comes to mind. Can we do that today, what do you thank God for today?

The fascinating idea in the lesson today is to give thanks to God at all times and for everything. It is easy to give thanks for the good times and the great memories. But the writer is pushing us here to give thanks to God for the not-so-good times and memories, too. And we do sometimes give thanks, or we sort of do when we say, “Thanks a lot!” Paul sounded that way when he wrote, *Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.* (2 Corinthians 12:7-9) Paul had a problem he called his, “thorn in the flesh.” He was not thankful about it. It was not a “Joy”. It was a “Concern”. Now, we do not know if it was a physical problem, some biblical scholars have speculated it could have been one of

those people we might euphemistically describe not as a “thorn in the flesh” but rather as a “pain in the neck.” Whatever it was, Paul had this problem for which he was not thankful, but rather he wanted God to rid him of it! But instead of its removal, God gave Paul a new understanding that in fact this problem was really a blessing for which he could, and ultimately did, give thanks. This particular problem showed Paul how God makes us strong in our weakness through our reliance on God’s strength. Can you give God thanks for everything including the problems that bring forth new insights and new solutions? This week I invite you to sing, pray and give thanks. Alleluia and Amen.

### **The Old Saying**

Jeffrey B. Childs 8/13/2024

The old saying is surely true,  
“People who sing, pray twice.”  
Once with words and with the tune too,  
But with soul make that thrice!

In ancient times people did sing,  
The Bible tells us so,  
When through the sea with rejoicing,  
They were saved from their foe.

Then David sang psalms to the Lord,  
Offering prayers and praise,  
Singing to the One he adored,  
In both good and bad days.

Today with joy we sing the song.  
With heart and soul we sing.  
With thanks and praise we pass it on,  
As our love offering.