



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

November 12, 2023

"Grace and Gratitude"

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:24, NRSV)

Grace and gratitude belong together like heaven and earth. Grace evokes gratitude like the voice of an echo. Gratitude follows grace like thunder lightning. —Karl Barth

Let's Start With Grace...and See Where it Leads

Is Karl Barth right? Is grace the foundation of our relationship with God, and is gratitude our appropriate human response to God's grace? By grace God has given us everything, life, breath, a mind, talents, and so forth, so much so that what can we claim to be "ours"? Instead of thinking about what we "own" or "what we made," let's think about being stewards of what we have been given through God's grace. And we have been given much. Christians are called to live a life marked by thankfulness and to acknowledge that everything they have is a gift from God.

Being Mindful of our Blessings

It's all too easy for us to take the blessings we receive for granted. The air we breathe, the moments of quiet, and the support of loved ones often slip out of our awareness. Relationships, health, and the opportunities we have can become overlooked treasures. In the pursuit of goals amidst daily challenges and the busy-ness of life, gifts by grace can be unnoticed. It's in cultivating gratitude that we rediscover the richness of these seemingly ordinary moments and learn to appreciate the grace woven into the fabric of our lives. And becoming mindful of and giving thanks for even small gifts begins a cycle of building relationships, with God and our neighbors.

Gratitude Transforms Us

Gratitude begins within our hearts and extends into our actions. Gratitude is a reciprocal process. It involves both "inhaling and exhaling gratitude." It mysteriously motivates us to perform small, unnoticed acts of generosity, such as allowing others to go first in traffic or in the grocery store. These small expressions of gratitude can have a profound impact on our lives and the lives of others. These actions may go unnoticed by most but can change one's entire day and, by extension, their life. Having a bad day? Go do something for someone else and see what happens to you!



A Prayer of Gratitude

Heavenly Father, our creator and sustainer, we come with hearts full of gratitude for your boundless grace. You have given us all we have in this life. Help us respond with hearts overflowing with gratitude. May we be channels of your love and mercy in this world, as Jesus taught. Strengthen us to forgive, love, and extend grace to others, just as you have to us. We trust in your unfailing grace, even in difficult times. Teach us to sing songs of gratitude and praise, to be content, and to trust in your sufficiency. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
- Vance

Prayer box: let us pray for Liz and Maggie to have successful medical treatments; pray for those suffering in the Middle East and Ukraine; pray for those suffering from natural disasters; and pray for all those who work for peace. **Lord, hear our prayer!**