

Thanksgiving & Christ the King  
2 Samuel 23:1-7  
Psalm 132:1-13, (14-19)  
Revelation 1:4b-8  
John 18:33-37

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*May God's word be spoken, May God's Word be heard, and May that point us to the living Word who is Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

My favorite yoga teacher ends each class with an invitation: "You are now free to roam the earth in an attitude of gratitude." An attitude of gratitude - those are wise words. Might the world be a different place, might the kingdom of God be more fully realized if more of us lived into that invitation. Like most wisdom, that invitation is found across traditions, and most assuredly, we Christians can affirm that Christ invites us to live our lives in gratitude.

And there is no doubt that we have MUCH to be thankful for. As the community of St. John's we are thankful for all those who have pledged their support for St. John's in 2010- for the gifts that the worship, fellowship, Christian education and outreach ministries give to those of us gathered here and those beyond these walls. We are thankful for each other's company and the ways that we encounter Christ together.

We are grateful for our material benefits - our houses, our cars, our clothes, our electronic gadgets.

We are grateful for a roof over our heads, for meals to eat and beds to sleep in. No

doubt the list of things we are fortunate to have could go on and on.

And then there are the intangible gifts - relationships with family and friends, the gift of faith. There is that OH SO precious a gift that our Savior Christ has given us - the gift of salvation. Christ stretched out his arms upon the Cross, so that we might come within the reach of his saving embrace. So that we might understand more fully the depths of God's love for us. So that we might better see the path we are to follow. We do have so very much to be thankful for!

Today is a good day. It is a day of joyful celebration. We give thanks for the gifts in our life, and we celebrate Christ as our king who has freed us from the bonds of sin and death. And on joyous days it is easy to make a list of all the things for which we are grateful.

But then there are the not so joyous days. The days when we have physical aches and pains that hold us back. The days when sadness clouds our vision. Days when we are angry and despondent - days when we are much more aware of what is missing than what we have to be grateful for. What are we to do then?

Well, we have a choice. We can choose darkness. We can choose sin and

despair. Or we can choose light. We can choose gratitude. Yes, even in the midst of pain, we can choose gratitude. Because Christ's invitation to live with gratitude is not an invitation for sometimes - it is an invitation for always! We CAN live with gratitude each and EVERY day.

This invitation is not offered lightly. It does not disregard the reality of sin in the world nor the hardships we all face. Christ is not blind to the pain we suffer - he knows it only too well. Christ is inviting us to live with gratitude because he knows that there is always something to be grateful for.

Even if we lose our possessions. Even if we lose a job. Even if a dream is shattered. Even if we lose someone we love, there is still something to be grateful for. The love of God we have come to know in Jesus Christ. No matter what happens. No matter how life changes. No matter how our lives are turned upside down - God does not change. God's love for us does not change. There is nothing on earth - not even death - that can ever separate us from that love.

Interestingly, it is often in our darkest moments - the moments where the pain of life narrows our vision - that we are made aware of God's abiding presence and unfailing love. As the General Thanksgiving reminds us to give thanks for those

disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on God alone. We are dependent on God. Utterly dependent on God, and the marvelous truth is that he is always right there when we need him. When we fall he catches us. When we stumble, he helps us back up again. He is with us every step of the way. And that truth, my friends, is worthy of our thanksgiving!

And so on this day - and in this week of thanksgiving - let us give thanks to God for the gifts in our lives, for the gifts God has freely given us. For the comforts and blessings we enjoy, and for that most profound gift of God's abiding and sustaining love that is with us always. Christ has issued us an invitation to follow him and to live with gratitude. In following Christ, may we find ways to live with "an attitude of gratitude" this day and always.

AMEN.