

“Love and Loss: Prayer and the Pitcher”

There is an old adage that asks the question, “Is the water pitcher half full or half empty?” Do we see things positively or negatively? Are we half-full, or half empty? Are we thankful, or sad and worried?

However we feel, the apostle Paul commands us to **Stop Worrying, and Start Praying!** The antidote to worry and fear and anxiety is **prayer**. Read Philippians 4:4-7.

Specifically, we are commanded to **pray** about everything, all the time. That means that **praying** takes on many different forms throughout the day.

- Quick and long.
- Private and in Community.
- Prayer using words from Scripture (praying the Psalms was one of Jesus favorite methods) or other words.
- Prayer spoken and prayer sung

Whatever form prayer takes, whatever posture we put our bodies in, whatever place we find ourselves, the point is that we are to be **praying** – all the time – and we are to view every time as prayer time. After all, **God** is always present with us, wherever we may be, whether we like it or not, whether it is an embarrassing place to have **Jesus** with us or not!

Paul tells us that **prayer** begins with **giving thanks**. He writes, “with **thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to **God**.” Our life is like the **pitcher**, and we give thanks for the blessings that God puts in there. Sometimes they pour in like

on the day of our baptism. Other times they trickle in through a kind word or an answer to prayer. But we can always be thankful because God has named us children and God has claimed us by the blood of Christ.

It is all about being in relationship with God. After our **thanksgiving**, we can offer prayers of **intercession**. We literally **intercede**; we stand in the gap and connect the other person to God. When we know God and we know others we are able to stand in the gap between them and God, and hold them in the presence of the Almighty.

Sometimes this results in miraculous healing. Other times it results in the gift of faith, or peace, or the healing and wholeness of death and new life in Christ. We have recently seen both in the life of our congregation.

Did you notice that Paul does not say, “Pray, and your prayers will be granted.” Prayer is not like Aladdin’s lamp where the genie pops out and gives you three wishes. Instead, Paul says, “Pray about everything...Then because you belong to **Christ Jesus**, God will bless you with **peace** that no one can completely understand. And this **peace** will control the way you think and feel.”

Prayer gets very personal. It is an **intimate love relationship**. We are opening up the desires of our heart to God. Sometimes God will grant those desires. Other times God will change our desires until they match his will and desire. When that happens, the things we pray for will change. And most importantly, we will change. We may not get answers, but we

will always get **peace** that passes all understanding. This is the **peace** of Christ. Scripture tells us that this One, this Jesus, now offers **intercession** for us. The Crucified and Resurrected Jesus stands in the gap and connects us to God.



“As we see and send Saint Valentine’s Day cards this month, may they serve as a reminder to foster our intimate relationship with God through prayer.”

We are brought full circle. **Christ** stands in front of us, and we give thanks to God for this gift of salvation. We receive this joy like a **pitcher** receives **water**, and we do not **worry** about whether it is half-full or half-empty. To **worry** is to hoard the **water** – we become stingy with the gifts of time, money, and talents that God has given us to share. Instead, we simply go out and pour out the **water** in service to others, and return again to **Prayer** and **Word** and **Sacrament** to be refilled by God’s grace and mercy.

As we see and send Saint Valentine’s Day cards this month, may they serve as a reminder to foster our intimate relationship with God through prayer.

Peace be with you,
Pastor Chris