



***"Rejoice always. Pray continually.
Give thanks in every situation
because this is God's will for you in
Christ Jesus." (CEU)***

***"Giving Tuesday, November 28,
2023***

"Giving Tuesday, 2023"

***"Do What You Can,
With What You Have"
Where You Are!"***



November 8, 2023

Be Grateful for Yourself!



"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).

I have four degrees, two masters, and two doctorates. The first three were for professional accreditation and sought under the law of guilt, but it was my Doctor of Ministry five years ago, I received with joy, and knowing that I was on the journey of salvation by grace, the journey of being grateful for life.

Paul tells us to "work out our salvation," and there was one night

many years ago, this hit me square in the face.

I came to San Francisco, full of guilt over my sexuality, my years of prostitution. I worked my ass off ministering to my young sex workers, trying to absolve myself of my own guilt.

One cold night Sean, was standing on the corner looking for a date, and needed clean harm reduction supplies, and some food. As we talked, he simply blurted out, "River you really must have done a hell of a lot stuff wrong to hang out with us, to care for each one of us."

These words from Sean, a young street kid, hit me in the face, and in the days, months, and years since have stayed with me. Those words have lead me on my own journey of gratitude and grace.

And in this journey, the grace of Jesus of Nazareth, and gratitude has blossomed.

As I walk this journey I thank God for the wisdom of Sean, and the care he gave in those moments. Sean reminds me that every homeless person I minister to have words of wisdom. They are so valuable.

I thank God for being with me as I "work out my salvation" in gratitude for his love, so much gratitude, as the Apostle Paul best expresses in these words from Romans 13:8-10 (today's lectionary Scripture):

"Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another fulfills the law.. .the commandments are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of law."

Life is the greatest gift we have from God, however we came to be, and God calls us to "love one another", and in that loving we find

**grace and gratitude. Deo Gratias!
Thanks be to God!**

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Let Love Ache

Father, give me the courage to keep on loving.

when others keep on hurting.

help me to live an achy love, a gritty,

persistent and emptying love;

a love that's not afraid to flow toward the other

who has little left to offer in return.

*And may I tread faithfully with heaven
through the unfinished work that surrounds me.*

Commoners_Tom