

REFLECTION BASED ON 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Rejoice always – not just when we feel like it or things are going well but rejoice ALWAYS

So, what do we have to rejoice in? Life seems pretty hard for many people at the moment.

Well it's not what we have, or in what we've done or achieved (or not as the case may be) but we rejoice in an all-powerful, all-loving all-mighty God who loves us so much that he sent his Son Jesus to die for our wrongdoing so that by believing in him we can be restored to relationship with Him and begin eternal life. A life that starts now and continues after death.

That seems something worth rejoicing over!

Added to which we have all the promises of God – please see the sheet of just some of the promises I find helpful. I suggest you read them in context, as some of them are 2 way – we have our part to play too!

Pray continually – this is probably easier at the moment! Quote posted on Woman's Prayer Group:

'Worry is a conversation you have with yourself about things you cannot change, Prayer is a conversation with God about things He can change.'

Sadly, it's often when we've reached the end of our own capacity that we pray - It's the last thing we think to do - it should be the first!

However prayer is not just a list of requests, it is a conversation with the living God, how amazing is that!

I find a helpful acronym for prayer is **ACTS**.

In our prayer time we should spend time **Acknowledging** who God is, **Confessing** that we've messed up and need his forgiveness, giving **Thanks** for all that he has done and finally offering our requests or **Supplications**.

We certainly have lots of requests at the moment

- For God's mercy to stop the spread of Coronavirus
- For Governments and advisors
- For those in the frontline and key workers
- For those seriously ill
- For the dying
- For those who mourn

May I also add this prayer request from Bishop Joseph in Kirinyaga, the diocese in Kenya that includes St Thomas Cathedral:

'We have been ordered to stay home but with majority living from hand to mouth and with the government not offering any relief, it is becoming difficult. Our health system is not really prepared and the government is simply doing a lot of PR while testing is manual and takes about 24 hour for results to be known (only in one place in Nairobi), masks are not available even for purchase and cost of sanitizers have sky-rocketed. If the virus strikes, it will be dramatic. its scaring to imagine what it may turn out to be. please, pray with us that God is merciful.'

Give thanks in all circumstances - again one that's not quite so easy. Why should we give thanks during the Coronavirus, after all things are pretty serious?

I think it comes back to my thought on Sunday that today is a gift, a present and we need to look for the good in it and count the blessings we do have. We take so much for granted. At least during this time we have opportunity to re-assess what is important.

Things we could give thanks for:

- Jesus!
- Beauty of creation
- Our homes and gardens
- That this is a good place to live
- For the NHS
- for sound Government
- for benefits system
- For family, friends and neighbours
- For health
- For time with family (although this might be stressful for some)
- For positive effect on climate change

The list goes on.....

May we know God's blessing and peace as we *'Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances'*

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