

Gratitude... The Path to a Full Reboot!

Psalm 100

Wilton Presbyterian Church

Rev. Shannon White

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As I began to write the sermon for this week, I awoke to no internet service. Ugh. I had three Zoom appointments, all before noon, and Peyton, my daughter, was to begin class on Zoom at 9am. Rebooting the cable box didn't work. My guess was that the fierce storm from Sunday night was the cause. What to do? I had a choice... stew in frustration or reboot myself, in a sense, and go to plan B. At least we had power and heat. At least I have an office I can go to. At least I have my health and a job and the list could go on and on...

So, I want to do something different this week... as we begin to talk about gratitude as the path to resiliency, let's start with a breathing exercise. You might call it a chance for your own reboot~~

Take a deep breath in....and let it out

Take another breath in and let it out

This time breathe in a sense of peace... and breathe out any stress in your body

Breathe in peace and... breathe out fear

Let's do that one again....

This time breathe in a sense of compassion for yourself and breathe out judgement

Breathe in God's presence and breathe out any feeling of disconnection

Breathe in a your belovedness to God and breathe out any doubt....

Breathe... breathe in love and breathe out skepticism

Breathe in gratitude and breathe out anything blocking you... fear or anger or apathy

As you continue to breathe, rest or relax into that breath... knowing that the source of your breath is always near and knows you and loves you more intimately than you know yourself

Be at one... all is well in this very moment.

Breathe... in and out...

While resting in this rhythm, bring to mind anything for which you are grateful... it can be anything...

Thank God... the giver of all that is good for those things. As you continue to breathe in and out... go a bit deeper... beyond perhaps those things which came first to your mind and see what emerges... breathe in gratitude and breathe out annoyance....

You may continue to rest in this place, which is always available to you...

The psalmist knew full well that reminding God's faithful of the importance of being thankful and expressing it, not just to each other, but to God, was essential to their life together. And while God doesn't need our thanks and praise, we need it to remind us that we are not God.

I don't know about you, but if these last almost 9 months have shown us anything, it's that we are not in charge. Our human tendencies to do whatever we want to do regardless of how it will affect anyone else... our tendencies of wanting to exert power over others, of ignoring the needs of others out of our own sense of privilege... all of these things and more remind us how human we are. I certainly see it in myself.

And when I get a sense of that... and put it all in perspective... I giggle and have some compassion for myself. Oh, there I go again. My human tendencies... right out in front.

It's quite relieving to know we don't have to have it all together. To realize that we are not God and never will be. And in so doing, we can let go with abandon... and make a joyful noise to God, as the psalmist says... to come into God's presence with singing, and with joy! To enter into God's gates with Thanksgiving!

The other day, I found a Josh Groban song on his Christmas album, *Noel*, which I have on Spotify and on CD, called "Thankful." I blasted it in the car, and I sang with abandon... as loudly as I could... and I sobbed... I realized I hadn't been singing as much lately...

and the psalmist knew that singing praise and thanks to God reaches into our spirits in a way which words cannot. Our hearts need to sing... to break open to allow the Spirit to reach in so our hearts can express our gratitude to our loving God for all that we have. As the psalmist says:

We are God's people, the sheep of God's pasture...

it's natural for us to sing...

for God's steadfast love endures forever and God's faithfulness to all generations...

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## **THANKFUL**

**Music written by:** David Foster

**Lyrics written by:** Carole Bayer Sager, Richard Page

*Some days we forget to look around us*

*Some days we can't see the joy that surrounds us*

*So caught up inside ourselves*

*We take when we should give*

*So for tonight we pray for  
What we know can be  
And on this day we hope for  
What we still can't see*

*It's up to us, to be the change  
And even though, we all can still do more  
There's so much to be thankful for*

The song continues on... and I encourage you to listen to it either on YouTube or whatever way you like. The whole Christmas album is fantastic... I highly recommend it.

Oh, how I miss singing together with you in worship... Singing our hearts out together to God in praise and thanks. We will have a time to do that together again... hopefully soon, but in the meantime, how are you expressing your Thanksgiving to God with abandon?

Do you need a reboot today? There's so much to be thankful for!!