

## Pastor Roy's Wed PM Thanksgiving Sermon at Mt. Zion

Colossians 3:12-17, Luke 6:27-38

Here are a few key phrases from Colossians. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. You are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved. Love each other. Forgive each other. And be thankful. Do everything in the name and Spirit of Jesus.

As I was working on this I was writing God is gracious, and instead I wrote, God is crazy. And I chuckled, why did I write that? Then I stopped and thought. We sometimes think of God as a big human being, acting and thinking like a big human being. But God is so beyond anything we can think or say or even be. And the Grace of God is crazy. Not in God's terms, but in our terms. Because we aren't even sure what grace is. What if you raise children with too much grace? Might they turn out to be spoiled? What if we forgive too much, will the forgiven come to not take seriously the need to make choices seriously, to pull one's share of the work in this life, to be faithful and true?

Are not People of grace crazy? Grace goes against our instincts, our anxious thoughts and plans for our own wellbeing. It feels that way. But if we think about it, what has made the difference for us, someone or some institution's love for us? Or another's judgment of us? Of course there is always a balance of grace and discipline. Without discipline children and adults cannot succeed. Discipline pushes us to reach deep within and do what needs to be done to overcome the challenges of our lives. But without grace as a foundation, we will struggle to find peace. For even the most disciplined soul, life without peace is a broken life indeed.

Perhaps gratitude is the lock that opens the door to grace. Gratitude is personal. No one can make us grateful. They can be gracious and kind, but unless the receiver of grace is grateful, there cannot be growth in grace.

So Thanksgiving is a crucial day for our faith. We learn grace from God with us, God incarnate in Jesus Christ our Lord. We learn the extent of God with us in Jesus' journey to the cross to demonstrate the far reaching power of God's love and the love of God's son.

Does Grace flow from gratitude? Or does gratitude flow from grace? Or will true grace always be grateful, even as the grateful will always know grace.

So that is my simple message this evening. Grace and gratitude are holy and inseparable. A gift of God.

Thanks be to God.