

Lord, I thank You - 31/1/2016

"I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well." (Psalm 139:14)

Beloved in The Lord,

During the holiday break, Linda and I did a number of Jigsaw puzzles. As I was doing them, it caused me to reflect upon certain aspects of life, and our relationship with God and His eternal plan.

A jigsaw puzzle is comprised of many different pieces. The ones we are doing have 1000. None of the pieces are the same. Many look similar, but each piece has its own place in the puzzle. It cannot be placed anyway else. If any piece or pieces are missing, then the puzzle is incomplete. The same is true if a piece is in the wrong place.

When a jigsaw puzzle is made it is firstly a complete and whole picture. It is then cut out into different shapes and mixed up. The pieces vary in shape and size. What I want you to remember is that it begins as a complete and whole picture and when completed it is a complete and whole picture.

Now keeping these few things in mind we turn to our text. This passage is part of a beautiful Psalm, a prayer written by David. The title of this Psalm is "God's Omnipresence and Omniscience." This Psalm bears out this truth about God in a number of ways. David especially applies it to the individual person. For example:

"For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;¹⁶ Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them." (Psalm 139:13-16)

This truth is borne out in many places in The Word of God – The Bible. God had a plan for us and knew us before He created the Universe. For God, the picture always has been and always will be complete and completely clear. He knows the beginning and the end and everything in between. Paul writes to the Ephesians:

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)

It is important that we understand this. We are not an accident. We are God's own creation and each one of us was created for a specific purpose.

Back to our jigsaw for a moment. We are all like one piece in the puzzle. Each one of us is unique. Yes, there are similarities with others, but we are all unique. We are not duplicated. Every single person has their own set of fingerprints.

I cannot over emphasise the importance of understanding this truth. Not only that we understand it, but that we then live and serve accordingly. Problems often arise, because we try to be what we are not. Problems arise when we want to do something different to God's plan for us.

Each one of us has a place and a purpose in God's plan. You are not me, and I am not you. Do not try to be someone other than yourself. Don't measure your worth against someone else. Understand who you are. You are God's unique workmanship, created to do His will. You have your own place in God's jigsaw puzzle. If you try to be in a different place or to be a different piece than that which God intended, then the picture is distorted. If you try to force a piece into the wrong place, it inevitably gets broken.

Paul spells this out using a different illustration. He uses our physical body:

“For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵ If the foot says, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear says, “Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. “ (1.Cor.12:12-18).

I would like to emphasise the last verse: ***But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.*** It is God's will that matters. He is the one who decides what you are and what your purpose is. He has made us and placed us where He wants us. This is why Jesus taught His disciples to pray “Your will be done”. When we seek God's will and obey it, then we are blessed. It is as simple as that.

It is important that we find out what God's will for us is. We need to trust Him. The starting point is to offer ourselves to Him completely trusting in Him with a grateful and faithful heart. Be sure that God created you and He has a purpose and will for your life.

David prayed: ***“I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.” (Psalm 139:14)***

This raises the question: Does your soul know this truth very well? Do you thank God everyday that you are fearfully and wonderfully made by Him for Him? If not, it is time you did. Start now. This is the key to joy and peace. When we thank and praise God, we open up the well of blessings that flows. If we are ungrateful and complain all the time, we do not

experience God's favour. When we complain we separate ourselves from God. If we are unhappy with our life then we are basically saying that God made a mistake.

God never makes mistakes. You are a unique creation and you are extremely dear and valuable to Him. So valuable that God shed the innocent Blood of His Son Jesus to save you from sin and hell. He did it so that you could have your place in His wonderful Mosaic.

You need to thank God for all things on a regular basis. We read the Psalmists words: ***"Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous ordinances." (Ps.119:164)***

The Psalmist praised God seven times a day for His precious Word. How many times a day do you thank and praise God?

We need to train ourselves to have an attitude of gratitude. When we feel like complaining we need to turn it around and thank God. Just think about it. Almighty, eternal God knows you personally. He loves you. He has place for you. He has a purpose for you. Only you, and you alone can fulfil that purpose – no-one else.

God knew you, before you were born. He loved you before the foundation of the World. How can you be ungrateful and unsatisfied?

"I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well." (Psalm 139:14)

I challenge each one of you to begin everyday with this prayer. Start everyday with a prayer of thanksgiving, end each day with this prayer, and pray it throughout the day.

"I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well." (Psalm 139:14)

The more you practice this, the more your soul will know how good God is. You will experience greater joy and peace. There is no better place to be than in the centre of God's will. When you are fully within God's will, you are blessed indeed. When you are in the will of God, then to use the jigsaw again – you are in the right place and the picture is complete.

Regular praise and thanksgiving helps you stay in God's will, because it turns the focus away from you onto Him. Regular thanksgiving also keeps the ego at bay, and holds back foolish pride. This is vital. Where pride is, there comes a fall and pride leads to sin and all its horrible consequences.

As we begin a New working year, may we commit to regular praise and thanksgiving. May we daily seek God's will and walk in it, as individuals and as a congregation.

May we be thankful in all things and be blessed.

Amen.

Pastor Colvin MacPherson Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sydney.

All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.