



SAINT JAMES'
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Fremont, California

SERMON

26. November, 2009. Thanksgiving

Title: "Thanks-Living"

Text: I Timothy 2:1-7

J.J.



When I grew up, it was sort of a “give me” kind of world . . . and my parents did give to me. Even before I could remember, I would cry, like most babies, and I would be fed . . . I would pout, and I would get attention. I quickly learned how to play the game. To be sure, it didn’t always work—my parents were smarter than that—but it worked much of the time. I would “ask” . . . and very often, I would “receive.” And yes, I was taught to say “thank you”—and reminded about that when I forgot—and I must confess, I had to be given a lot of reminders: “David, what do you say?” . . . and David would shyly respond, “oh . . . thank you,” and mom would say in a somewhat more stern voice—I suspect it was her “teaching voice”—“you’re welcome, David” (My mother was a Kindergarten parochial school teacher for over twenty years). But even today, I

find “asking” comes natural; And “thanking,” well that comes usually with some kind of a reminder. And I find that’s also to be true in my prayer life . . . and maybe you do too: It is easier to “ask” than to “give thanks.”

The second reading today, from I Timothy, caught my attention, as the writer urges that supplications, prayers, intercessions, AND THANKSGIVINGS, be made for every one (in my sermon manuscript, I purposely wrote “and thanksgivings” all in capital letters . . . not so much for you, but for me . . . well, I guess for you too. We are pretty good at the “supplications, prayers, intercessions” part . . . Just look at “The Green Pages.” Under “Special Prayers,” we engage in supplications and intercessions for the Transition Team, the Search Committee, for those who need continued healing, for those who need comfort and strength, for those who need guidance and direction, for those suffering economic hardship, for families expecting children, for those who have died, for those in the military . . . But, where are the “Thank You’s.” Oh, we do find “thank you’s” under “Altar Flowers” and “For a Birthday or Anniversary,” but that is just a very few of us. It’s not that we don’t say “thank you,” it’s just that we might say it a little more often . . . at least I need to and want to.

And in many ways, that’s what this day is all about—Thanksgiving. And First Timothy says it very clearly: I urge you, says the writer, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and, yes, AND THANKSGIVINGS, be made for everyone, and especially for kings (and presidents and world leaders) and for all in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. Well, how do we do that? How do we remember to say thank you? Well . . . I think today’s Gospel reading gives us a clue: Do not worry about your life, says Jesus . . . but strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness . . . in other words, engage in “*Thanks-Living!*” Every day, God takes care the birds of the air and the lilies of the field . . . and God will take care of you and me. Trust God. And live thankful lives.

We’re going to practice that today. In the prayers of the people, I have chosen Form II (BCPp. 385). We don’t often use that form, because we don’t know exactly how to use it. The rubric reads: “*In the course of the silence after each bidding, the People offer their own prayers, either silently or aloud.*” On this day of our national Thanksgiving, I want us to encourage when the Eucharistic Minister makes each of the bids, for example, when she says: I ask your prayers for God’s people throughout the world; for our Bishop Marc; for this gathering; and for all ministers and people. Pray for the Church” . . . I would ask us, today only, I would ask the People to offer their own prayers, beginning with these words: “I am thankful for . . .” What I intend to say at that point is that “I am thankful for the Episcopal Church, and especially our presiding Bishop, Katherine, and her Spirit-led insights.” And I am asking you, today only, to begin your prayers, either silently or aloud, “I am thankful for . . .” That is what “*Thanks-Living!*” is all about. Amen.

S.D.G.

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