

Gratitude – Jim Anderson

As Christians we have something that the world does not have, and that is *gratitude*. We can be grateful despite the circumstances, especially now with the virus spiraling out of control. We are living on the edge of every day wondering what will come next. However, our hearts are still filled with gratitude for all that the Lord has provided for us during this time: friends, family, a roof over our heads, food (although I'm still looking for toilet paper provision), a great St. Michaels staff, abilities to keep connected to our church family via livestream, website, facebook, etc. Our God is a mighty God and loves to take care of us despite the circumstances. Below are some facts, quotes and thoughts for you regarding gratitude.....

- The brain experiences gratitude in the frontal lobes where the two hemispheres meet, the same place associated with social bonding and stress relief.
- Study after study has shown positive correlations between gratitude and health—specifically, lower levels of stress, depression, and anxiety.
- Levels of gratitude are generally higher in females than in males.
- McCraty and colleagues (1998), in one of their studies on gratitude and appreciation, found that participants who felt grateful showed a marked reduction in the level of cortisol, the stress hormone. They had better cardiac functioning and were more resilient to emotional setbacks and negative experiences.

Matthew Henry, the eighteenth-century Puritan preacher, was once accosted by robbers while living in London.

Perhaps you've experienced this yourself—whether by having your car broken into or coming home to discover that your house had been burglarized. It's among the most unsettling things that can happen to a person. I'm sure it was, as well, for a quiet, thoughtful man of letters like Matthew Henry.

Let me be thankful, first, because I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.

“Do not be anxious about anything,” the apostle Paul wrote, “but in everything by prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving* let your requests be made known to God. And the *peace* of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

To put it even more simply: In *every* situation ... *prayer plus thanksgiving equals peace.*

Max Lucado quote: “Gratitude gets us through the hard stuff. To reflect on your blessings is to rehearse God’s accomplishments. To rehearse God’s accomplishments is to discover his heart. To discover his heart is to discover not just good gifts but the Good Giver. Gratitude always leaves us looking at God and away from dread.”

