

Harvest Thanksgiving 2018

And what thou most desirest, a humble, thankful heart.

- What kind of person lifts your spirits, puts a spring in your step?
- What kind of person do you find most dispiriting, drags you down?

You're probably not too different from me!

- The person who lifts my spirits is the one who greets me with a smile, who is positive about life, grateful to be alive.
- The one who gloomily looks at the weather and tells you it's never going to be any better – the glass half-full person.

I tend to be a glass half-full sort of person. It's something God is working on quite hard in me. I probably learned it from my Dad. My Dad was not a ray of sunshine. Before we went to bed we would say Good Night, Dad, see you in the morning. His usual response to that was Hope so!

And yet, God says to us all, even those who struggle with matters of faith:

- Be grateful, be thankful. Life is a gift.

Are you just living or are you enjoying your living?

Enjoying life is a compliment to the Creator!

And if you struggle with prayer, Meister Eckhart who wrote about 'my bread' in our service says: *If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.*

Often it feels as though there is little to be grateful for.

- Summer was hot and dry.
- Then, there are times of too much rain.

And of course, there is

- Brexit....
- Worries about health and family.
- Concerns for crops and livestock....

What does worry do to you? Constant worry brings on health issues. Constant stress does things to us - affects our minds, and the way we interact with others, making us irritable and crabby and not-nice-to-be-with.

Negativity closes us down.

Being grateful opens us up, initially just a crack, it lets the sunshine in to the gloom. And ultimately it turns things round for us.

Being grateful helps us to recognise that there is

- Someone bigger than ourselves who cares.
- Someone to thank.
- Someone to talk to when the going gets tough.
- Someone to be angry with and ask the hard questions. And it becomes dialogue.

Author Walter Wink once said that prayer is not the polite prayers we say in church. True prayer is more like haggling in a market, noisy and sometimes messy, but true to who you are.

Take time to be thankful – when something good has happened, no matter how small, for your food – thank God that you have more than enough to eat, for love, for a smile.

And share your gratitude with someone who has less of it – someone who is looking down – share a smile; someone who might be lonely – a cup of tea; someone who needs help – give a hand.

Take time out in a busy life to think about the good things. And if the not-so-good, the difficult, the painful and the worrying things overwhelm, talk about them to

- God,
- a trusted friend,
- someone in Farming Community Network,
- even your vicar.

Time out is important.

That's why God gave us the Sabbath,
time **not** to work, or do the normal everyday stuff, but to
have time
for recreation – re-creation, re-making ourselves,
recovering ourselves.

If you can't not work for a whole day, take a short break.

In a world of pressure and hurry and getting everything done, it's a risk.
But take the risk – you will find yourself pleasantly surprised!

So, said Jesus,
you can't make yourself an inch taller,
or
your hair less grey,
or
live a minute longer by worrying.

Worrying just doesn't work!

Gratitude does!

Try it – and see the difference it makes to your life, and where it takes you!