

Thanksgiving Day 2015

New Horizon United Reformed Church

10:00AM

Call to Worship

Confession of Dependence (In Unison)

Minister: Congregation of the Lord, in whose name is your help?

Congregation: Our help is in the name of the Lord, Creator of heaven and earth.

God's Greeting

†Hymn

313, We Praise Thee, O God

Responsive Reading

Psalms 147

Hymn

201, O My Soul, Bless Thou Jehovah

Thanksgiving Prayer

(In Unison)

Scripture Reading

Psalms 73:21-28, (Text 26-28) (Page 519- In Unison)

Prayer for the Word

Sermon

When There Is Not A Lot To Be Thankful For

Prayer of Application

†Hymn

316, Now Thank We All Our God

†Doxology

408, Great Is Thy Faithfulness

†Benediction

†Please stand if you are able.

We welcome you today to the worship of our God. Please stay for coffee and refreshments, if you are able.
If you are a visitor and would like to meet with Pastor Mitchell, please ask or call 416-335-0958, 647-389-2729

www.newhorizonchurch.ca, mapersaud@yahoo.com

Prayer Meeting: Thursday, 7:30PM. Fellowship Feast: Saturday 4:00PM.

Responsive Reading - Psalm 147

- 1 **Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.**
- 2 The LORD builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.
- 3 **He heals the brokenhearted And binds up their wounds.**
- 4 He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name.
- 5 **Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.**
- 6 The LORD lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground.
- 7 **Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; Sing praises on the harp to our God,**
- 8 Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who prepares rain for the earth, Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.
- 9 **He gives to the beast its food, And to the young ravens that cry.**
- 10 He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.
- 11 **The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, In those who hope in His mercy.**
- 12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!
- 13 **For He has strengthened the bars of your gates; He has blessed your children within you.**
- 14 He makes peace in your borders, And fills you with the finest wheat.
- 15 **He sends out His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly.**
- 16 He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes;
- 17 **He casts out His hail like morsels; Who can stand before His cold?**
- 18 He sends out His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow, and the waters flow.
- 19 **He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel.**
- 20 **He has not dealt thus with any nation; And as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise the LORD!**

Congregational Thanksgiving Prayer

Minister: We thank you, our heavenly Father, for your greatness.

Congregation: ...help us to rest on your almighty power alone.

Minister: We thank you for your glory and majesty.

Congregation: ...help us to respect your glory and majesty.

Minister: We thank you for creating us

Congregation: ...help us to act as children who are obedient and humble.

Minister: We thank you for rescuing us from sin, death, and hell.

Congregation: ...help us to work to establish your kingdom here on earth.

Minister: We thank you for your Holy Spirit who lives with us, guides us, and prays for us...

Congregation: ...help us to submit to you and repent when your Holy Spirit convicts us of sin.

Minister: We thank you for husbands and wives.

Congregation: ...help us to love them as Christ has loved us and how he gave himself for us...

Minister: We thank you for all our mothers and fathers

Congregation: ...help us to honor them, and provide for them as you give us opportunity...

Minister: We thank you for our children...

Congregation: ...help us to raise them, not for our glory, but for your glory and for their good...

Minister: We thank you for our pastors, elders, and deacons...

Congregation: ...help us to learn from their wisdom, to submit to them, and make their labor easier...

Minister: We thank you for our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ...

Congregation: ...help us to pray for them, encourage them, and support them using the abilities you have given to us.

Minister: We thank you for teachers in school...

Congregation: ...help us to learn the truths about your world and put them into practice for your glory.

Minister: We thank you for our education and our jobs.

Congregation: ...help us not to be selfish, but to provide for our families, give to you, and help the needy.

Minister: We thank you for our bosses and supervisors...

Congregation: ...help us to work hard to please our bosses even when they are not watching and work for their profit...

Minister: We thank you for a safe and peaceful country in which we may live.

Congregation: ... safeguard it from falling more away into sin and destruction by giving us godly leaders and wise judges.

Minister: We thank you that we are free to worship and serve you...

Congregation: ...help us not to ignore the opportunities but to worship you in spirit and according to your truths.

Minister: We thank you for food in abundance...

Congregation: ...help us to share with those who don't have and teach us not to waste what we do have...

Minister: We thank you for comfortable places to live...

Congregation: ...help us to worship you in our homes...and may love fill them.

Minister: We thank you for clothes to wear...

Congregation: ...help us to dress modestly...and remember to help those who have little or no clothes to wear.

Minister: We thank you for friends...

Congregation: ...help us not to take them for granted, but to serve them...

Minister: We thank you for being able to be witnesses for you in a world of spiritual darkness.

Congregation: ...help us not to be ashamed of Christ's Work, but proudly speak of your Fatherly kindness

Minister: Yes, we have much for which we must thank you, Lord, and we ask that you forgive us for not thanking you enough.

Congregation: May your Holy Spirit move us to thank you as we should, not only today, but throughout the year ahead.

Minister & Congregation: We ask these things through him who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the one only Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Psalm 73:21-28 Txt23-26 – When there is not a lot to be thankful for

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Gill, Geneva, JFB, Poole, Spurgeon, Henry, Handfuls, Barnes, Clarke, Trapp, Calvin
Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Let's take an adventure this Thanksgiving Day. Instead of going through a list of things for which you must be thankful – which is always proper- let us take time to examine this question: **What happens where there is not a lot to be thankful for?** How do you deal with that?

What happens when you can't have children but you really want to...when you did not get that raise in pay...when you did not get into the school you wanted...when you didn't get the spouse you wanted...when marriage isn't as good as you thought...when you struggle with your devotional life (灵修生活) ...or when your health isn't as good as you would like it to be? **For sure, it is easy to whine (发牢骚) and complain.**

If you whine and complain when there is not a lot to be thankful for, you are in good company...or rather, you are in bad company.

But God answered Asaph's complaints with 4 things he should have known. You will hear about those 4 things today.

Our headings are:

God is always present with you

God is always guiding your life

God is more desirable than all

God gives you courage to go on

Our goals are: **That you will always remember that there are greater things that you possess for which you must always be thankful.**

God is always present with you

23 Nevertheless I am **continually with You**; You hold me by my right hand.

1. Asaph complained that some things were missing from his life.

The **wicked were prospering**, but he was enduring poverty. V3

The **wicked died in peace**, he was sickly. V4

The **wicked were free of worries**, but he was being harassed. V5

He felt drained (耗尽, 抽干) by his lack of earthly things and benefits (especially when the wicked seemed to have them) and so he even wondered if God were aware that he had so little.

Psalm 73:10 Therefore his **people return here**. And waters of a full cup are drained by them. 11

And they say, "How does God know? **And is there knowledge** in the Most High?" (10 所以神的民归到这里, 喝尽了满杯的苦水。11 他们说: “神怎能晓得? 至高者岂有知识呢?”)

2. However Asaph had no ground for complaining because he had the greatest thing he needed: He had the presence of

God will all his attendant perfections and providence (神的护理). Earthly things pale in comparison to what he had.

Later, in Verse 22, he described himself and foolish and ignorant, even acting like a beast. **He forgot that God was with him** and so he wrote:

Psalm 73:2 But as for me, **my feet had almost stumbled**; My steps had nearly slipped.

3. But what does “I am with you” mean? This meant that God would always be with his child to make sure he has no need to

be obsessing about (时刻困扰于) health and wealth. A Christian child is the beneficiary (受益者) of God's presence.

So when a Christian is tempted (被试探), **God will hold him close so he could see what he has!** A Christian's unworthiness does not stop God's grace from coming to him and staying with him.

2Timothy 4:18 And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!

More specifically, the Psalmist was alive! He was alive in Christ. Jesus Christ was the means by which God came near to him. Christ's blood met God's requirement for the sinner to be able to approach him.

4. Lessons:

a. Do you find yourself complaining that someone has more than you (or maybe has better health), especially if that person isn't living a godly life? Do you find yourself being envious? Know you have more: God's presence.

b. There are times when you don't even tell your spouse what your struggle is because you know he will worry as well. But this is never the case with your heavenly father. He is there always. He knows everything you are going through.

c. Do you see how safe your salvation is in Jesus Christ? Even when fall into sin, God does not abandon you. He can't abandon you. This is assurance.

God is always guiding your life

24 You will guide me with **Your counsel**, And afterward receive **me to glory**.

1. God is not only present with you, but he is also a guide to you.

John Gill wrote that God's counsel (训言, 忠告) was "wise and prudent, wholesome (有益的), suitable, and reasonable (合时宜的), hearty (热忱的), sincere, and faithful, and which is freely given, and when taken, infallibly (无误地) succeeds..."

Jamieson wrote: "All doubts are silenced in confidence of divine guidance and future glory."

The counsel of the world to Asaph was that he deserved more because he was a Christian. God said: "No, not necessarily, especially in those minor things as health and wealth."

2. Where does God guide you? He guides you in the road of righteousness. Who can say this about his friends, for they will sometimes lead you in ways of wickedness...or even about his parents – they may mislead you?

3. When does that guidance end? Gods' guidance ends when he takes you to glory. What a contrast with the wicked whose only hope is temporary comforts and temporary joys in this life. In glory you will enjoy the city whose builder and maker is God, a kingdom with glory! And **he guides you even to your eternal rewards**. So don't envy the poor who only has earthly things.

1Peter 5:10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

4. How does God guide you? He guides you by his Word and his Holy Spirit. There is no ambiguity like there was before – when men relied on dreams, visions, and tongues. Make his Word your study, and you will be fine.

5. Lesson:

a. No person in this world will guide you perfectly and guide you forever, especially if they don't get something from you? Most people might be nice for a while, but often because you are benefit to them. Not so with you God!

b. Only God's counsel is a guide that you can trust!

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

God is more desirable than all

25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.

1. God is not only always with you through the good times and bad, and God not only guides you in the way of righteousness, but God is the one you desire to be around always. Yes, you may desire good things on this earth: food, health, wealth, clothing, comforts...but none can be compared with God. And sometimes you get tired of the things, the food, and the people around you. But God never gets old.

Psalm 89:6 For who in the **heavens can be compared to the LORD?** *Who* among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the LORD?

People are intoxicated with (陶醉于) the accumulation of stuff, but what is more desirable that to sit beside God?

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward.

2. What makes God even more desirable is that he is a Trinitarian(三位一体的) God– the true God. So all their benefits accrue to you.

a. God the Father, as his only covenant God and Father who elected you.

b. God the Son- Mediator(中保), Savior, and Redeemer(救赎主), Head, Husband, Advocate (代言人, 辩护者), and Intercessor(代求者).

c. God the Spirit – sanctifier(使...成圣者), Comforter, earnest (预付定金者), and sealer (盖印者).

Psalm 142:5 I cried out to You, O LORD: I said, "**You are my refuge**, My portion in the land of the living.

Jehovah is so much sweeter than anything this world can afford.

3. This one true God whom you desire, you worship. Sometimes you have to meet someone for business, but you have no interest in them because you know how nasty(糟糕的) he could be. Not so with your Lord.

4. Lessons:

a. Henry: Our desires must not only be offered up to God, but they must all terminate in him, desiring nothing more than God, but still more and more of him.

God give you courage to go on

26 My flesh and my heart fail; **But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.**

1. God is present with you to comfort you. And while you are alive, he will guide you in the way you should go, he is great to be around, and he is the one who gives you courage to go on even when your body or your spirit wants to give up. The Psalmist literally said that God is the “rock of my heart.” “Rock” is used to show that the heart doesn’t palpitate (跳动) when troubles come...but your heart could take the stresses of life.

Psalm 18:2 **The LORD is my rock** and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

God provides his sovereign relief and comfort in times of suffering.

2. God knows that times to make tough decisions can be challenging. Remember the context of this passage.

Psalm 73:14 For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning.

He was plagued with disease and despondency(意气消沉), and sadness and suffering. But God encouraged him.

Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?

Psalm 61:2 From the end of the earth I will cry to You, When my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

3. Can you buy this strengthener with money? No. It comes free from God.

4. Lesson:

a. So you lose your job or your investments. Your spouse might die or leave you, your children will be gone, the car will get old...but God will give you courage to go on. Dig another well like Isaac did. Write another resume. Deny giving in to your own feeling about stuff.

b. It means that though you waste away (日渐衰弱) and die...get a heart attack...God is your reward. Jesus secured a new name, a new record, and a new life for you when he died on the cross.

Conclusion:

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: So God is present with you. God is always guiding you. God is always more desirable than everything you can accumulate in your life. God always gives you courage to go on, regardless how bad things get. All of these 4 things came to you because Jesus made your life right with God by his death in your place.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Be thankful for all this extraordinary gift of the presence of God when you wonder about little things that are missing in your life – things like health and wealth.

2. And when you do get a child, when you get raise in pay, when you get in the school you want, when you get the spouse you waited for, when your marriage improves, when you are able to focus in your devotional life, when your health improves, remember that these are the lesser gifts. **Be thankful for these things too, but keep the perspective.**

Finally: If you are not a Christian, then you are just living for the stuff (东西, 物品) of this world and you will be disappointed in the end. Hell waits for you. But why not look to God, and ask him for that which truly matters...having him as your Father. He will become your Father if you ask him to accept Christ’s death as yours.