

April 3, 2020 ~A Prayer of a Gratitude in The Midst of Adversity-

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Merciful and Gracious God, each day you are worthy of our gratitude and thankful praise. In our present suffering and adversity, help us remember who you are and what you’re doing in the midst of the widespread, biological scourge that’s crept around the world you created. In your mercy, not giving us what we surely deserve, you offer us forgiveness for our sins and salvation purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ. By your grace, you give us so much we do not deserve. From our birth, your kindness and favor has been lavished on us and all of mankind. This pandemic doesn’t change you, Father God, and for that we are thankful.

Even as we our hospitals are full of suffering and death, we are thankful for those who have been healed and those who offered care and compassion in treatment and healing. We mourn every lost life, yet our grateful hearts find peace knowing complete healing comes in eternal life. For helping meet overwhelming shortages of medical and protective equipment, medicines, testing kits, beds, childcare, and food for medical caregivers, we give thanks for the leadership, manufacturers, our military, faith ministries, and people sewing in their homes. You filled your people with initiative, ideas, and a unified spirit that has begun to produce and provide for medical treatment. We are grateful for unity and a renewed desire to be your people working for the same purposes.

God, we give you thanks and praise for healing on earth and in heaven, and for the unified support of hands still working day and night to heal and to help healers diagnose and treat their patients.

Even when schools across our nation are now closed before final lessons had been taught and mastered, we are thankful for all professional educators and staff who scrambled to quickly modify instruction for at home learning. Knowing their students were confused and needing encouragement, they arranged long parades through neighborhoods where children and their families were waiting to wave and see their teachers’ faces. We are grateful for technology that reinforces learning

and brings children together with their teachers and classmates in real time. Father God, for every parent who has become a teacher at home, we bow our heads in prayer for how you're using them to teach their children.

God we give you thanks and praise that when COVID 19 stopped classroom teaching, your chosen educators and determined parents continued education at home for your precious children.

Even when it seemed impossible to fill empty shelves and refrigerated cases, your provisions of food, essential supplies, and medicine has again become available at pharmacies and large and small grocery stores. The food and needs of your people are harvested, processed, packaged, transported and stocked by people who are filled with your strength and determination. You poured out patience in abundance when they were exhausted and demands by customers were beyond what they could provide. Their long hours at work, risky exposures, and purpose of meeting our daily needs are reasons for thanksgiving.

God, we give you thanks and praise for everything and everyone helping feed us, prevent infection, and care for of our daily needs.

Even in the restrictions that have brought our busy-ness to a screeching halt, we have found time to reach out to our family and friends. There's less texting and more calling, FaceTime, Skype, and Zoom rooms. Father, did you know that the pandemic would not only draw us closer to people we love, but also to you? When church doors were locked, the technology developed by the minds you chose brought us together to worship you while in our own homes. We are thankful for the time we have in the morning or during the day to go to a quiet place where you're waiting and meet you to offer up our our prayers and be filled with your teaching and truth in our Bibles. Not only in our own church family, but all across the United States, people who haven't had time for you are reaching out to you. We are blessed by the renewal you've given us. How thankful we are for new opportunities to share your promises with those who don't know you or those who'd forgotten the sweet relationship they've found with you again.

God, we give you thanks and praise for technology, staying connected and for reconnections, not only with ones we love, but with you.

Even as the familiar routines of our lives a month ago have changed to this strange, new normal of sheltering, safe distancing, and isolation, we see the natural world's plants and animals changing as they always do. Though there are shortages and restrictions, the order of your cycles and seasons are dependable. In your world outside our windows, we see buds and blooms, green grass, and new growth. The birds are busy nesting, and their songs wake us in the morning. We thank you for rains that water the earth and fill our rivers and lakes. The sun rises, and we wait all day for beautiful sunsets and the heavenly lights in dark skies that seem brighter without traffic and so many city lights. God we give you thanks and praise that Spring doesn't know about the virus, and that each day's sun and the moon and stars just keep doing what they do.

We have reasons to rejoice and pray with thanksgiving in our hearts. We know you are with us and for us. In our struggle and anxiety and in worry and fears, we see your presence and your provisions. We welcome our changed relationships with others and the changes in our relationship with you, Gracious God. Hear our prayers in the midst of this adversity, Lord, and accept our love and gratitude for who you are and all you've done in Jesus' Holy Name. Amen