



Peninsula City Church

Thankfulness

Psalm 104

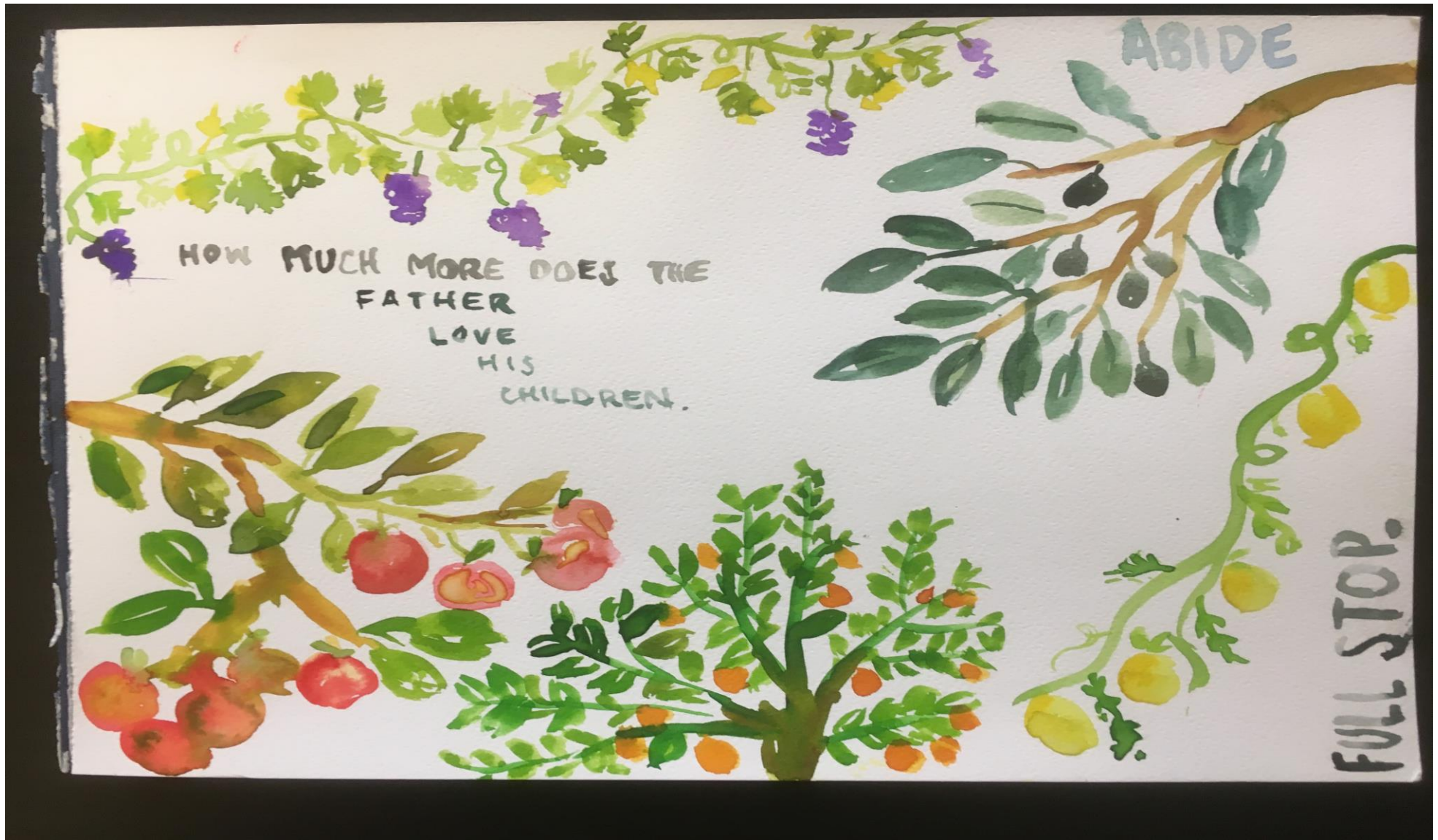
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This is a picture painted from the perspective of Ps 104 by Laura Pintur during the service. The painting highlights the abundance of God to provide, therefore we do not need to worry or be anxious, full stop. We simply need to abide in Him.



Thankfulness

Q. As a Christ-follower would those around me see me as being a thankful person?

An Introduction

1. The Psalm, what's it all about?

Q. What is the context of the Psalm?

To begin with, the Psalm of 104 is part of a group of Psalms, i.e. Ps 103-106 that praise God for various gifts. For example, Ps 103 praised Him for His mercy, 105 for His faithfulness, and 106 for His forgiveness. While Psalm 104 is about God's greatness and His ability to continually provide what we need.¹ We do not know who wrote the Psalm, but it was inspired by the Holy Spirit and included in the Bible.

The Psalm begins and ends with the phrase "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" vv1,35. It can be broken into three basic sections i.e.

- One: vv1-9: The Psalmist is singing about how great his Lord God and how good is His created order within the universe and on the earth. This is based on Genesis chapters one and two.
- Two: vv10-23: He now focuses on how the Lord provides for the created order to continue to function.
- Three: Part Three: vv24-35: He then ends by focusing on God's wisdom and ability to provide and, so praises Him.

So, the Psalm's focus is one that the Psalmist was trying to get the nation of Israel to have this perspective as individuals and as a nation. It was the perspective that an attitude of trust and thankfulness should flow from in everyday life. If they could see the greatness of God to create and hold things together and provide for all of the earth, then He can continually provide for them.

2. The thankful life and the Christ-follower

Q. How would you explain the influence of Psalm 104 on you/us as a Christ-follower?

So, having introduced the matter of the greatness of God to create and hold things together and provide for all of the earth and continually provide for Israel, this should impact you/our life. He is the same God now as was in the creation and who the Psalmist wrote about. He has not changed. He is still great, and He is still able to provide for our needs daily.

Remember that, Jesus Christ said to His followers at that time,

⁹ "Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name... ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread'" (Matt 6:9,11 ESV)

That is our daily needs for this day. This guide to praying to the Heavenly Father for our daily needs is still relevant today. Jesus then went on to say not to worry about our needs (vv25-34).

So if we are not to worry, what are we to do as Christ-followers? May I suggest that based on this powerful and insightful Psalm we are to be thankful. That is, continually thankful for all He gives us in life. Too many times our hearts and mouths are filled with worry and criticism. However, may I suggest that they need to be full of thankfulness? That is, He is in charge of the created order, but He has put us in control here on earth.

¹ Guthrie, George. "Hebrews." In *Commentary on the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament*. G.K. Beale & D.A. Carson (Eds). (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 933.

Paul in writing to the church in Thessalonica said to them,

“Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus” (1 Thess 5:18 NLT).

This is actually a command and not merely a suggestion. We should be the most thankful people on earth in light of what we have received through Jesus Christ. If someone were to walk with you for a day, just one day what would they see and hear from you? Would it be a heart and mouth that is full of worry and criticism or thankfulness?

Some concluding thoughts

So, coming back to the opening question,

Q. As a Christ-follower would those around me see me as being a thankful person?

We need our eyes opened to see:

- Who God our God is: Our Heavenly Father, Christ Saviour and Spirit who is always with me
- What He has done: Given a second chance at life, given all I need
- Who we are in Him: His child who is treasured by Him

So, what is your perspective on your life? Is it one of worry, criticism or thankfulness? We only have one shot at today, so what will we do with it? The choice is yours will we live in light of what we have seen above or from a perspective of worry and criticism? Why not attempt living a whole day in light of Ps 104?

It has been said on the issue of thankfulness (gratefulness or gratitude) that,

“To pray is to regain a sense of the mystery that animates all beings, the divine margin in all attainments. Prayer is our humble answer to the inconceivable surprise of living. It is all we can offer in return for the mystery by which we live. Who is worthy to be present at the contrast unfolding of time? Amidst the meditation of mountains, the humility of flowers – wiser than all alphabets – clouds that constantly die for the sake of His glory, we are hating, hunting, hurting. Suddenly we feel ashamed of our clashes and complaints in the face of the tacit glory in nature. It is so embarrassing to live! How strange we are in the world, and how presumptuous our doings! Only one response can maintain us: gratefulness for witnessing the wonder, for the gift of our unearned right to serve, to adore and to fulfil. It is gratefulness which makes the soul great.”²

Then in the words of Paul, we need to be,

“Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus” (1 Thess 5:18 NLT).

Stop and pause in His presence for a moment and think this over...

² Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *Man’s Quest for God: Studies In Prayer And Symbolism*. (Santa Fe, NM: Aroura, 1996), 5