

*GOD'S GIFTS SURROUNDS US EVERY DAY*

PSALM 138:1-8  
in today's world

**MONDAY 8/28/23**

Psalm 138:1-8//: I give you thanks, O Lord, with all my heart; I will sing your praises before the gods. 2 I bow before your holy Temple as I worship. I praise your name for your unfailing love and faithfulness; for your promises are backed by all the honor of your name.

Romans 12:1-8// 1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him

**REFLECTION** A few days ago I had an epiphany (a divine thought). It was about God's continual gift of His Son. Let me explain. As Christians we are known to be the salt of the earth. (Matt. 5:13) If there is no salt there is no life. Every day we eat fruit, vegetables, meats, which all contain just enough salt to survive on. So, like salt, which is essential for survival, so are Christians necessary to announce eternal life. Every relationship Christians have is in some way to communicate the truth about God granting eternal life through Jesus Christ. We are to be living sacrifices for the glory of God. The problem is we do not understand this until we become immortal ourselves. How, by accepting God's Son as our Savior/ Redeemer, that is a result of being "born from above by the Spirit". John 3:5-8 "Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." That's right! Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection bring new life to all of God's people. Once "born anew" we begin living eternal lives. This profound truth causes us to live as a "living sacrifice" to those with whom we live, work and play. Let me explain. All my life, from the moment I was born, to this very time, I have been surrounded by Christians. Some I knew were Christians and others I did not. Someone once said, "Christians are like weeds, we multiply and are everywhere and you can't get rid of us." Yes, we are important for life itself for announcing immortality through Jesus Christ.

**PRAYER** As I come into your presence Oh God, I give you thanks. You are my God, my Lord, and my Redeemer who fills the world. You filled my heart, mind and soul with joy. I will sing your praises before all the people. In Jesus Name Amen!

**TUESDAY 8/29/23**

Psalm 138:1-8//3 As soon as I pray, you answer me; you encourage me by giving me strength.4 Every king in all the earth will thank you, Lord, for all of them will hear your words.

Romans 12:1-8// 2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

**REFLECTION** As Christians the very breath we take, every step forward we make, we are being transformed into the image of God' Son. It is by God's grace we have been saved, so no one can boast. St Paul says, to be "transformed into a new person" do not follow the ways of the world which are greed, manipulation, and abusing others. We change our ways, by accepting Christ and then begin to live an eternal life. As we learn to live a life with Christ we wait patiently for Christ's return. Our world is filled with obstacles and obvious wickedness that want to entrap us. The way to win these battles is to put on the armor of Christ. Eph 6:10 "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." Let us remove all doubt about God's goodness and be willing to submit to Him. He desires to help guide us by the renewing of our minds. That is why we have our private time with Him each day. We must set aside our own mind by reading His Word and praying through the Psalms. When we do, we receive the mind of the Spirit who is helping us grow in grace.

**PRAYER** God, you are amazing! For as soon as I bow down to pray, you answer me! You come to me and encourage me and give me an inner peace and power to fight against sin. You give me strength and hope in my life. One day everyone will confess with their tongue and confess you are God. In Jesus Name, Amen!

### **WEDNESDAY 8/30/23**

Psalm 138:1-8//5 Yes, they will sing about the Lord's ways, for the glory of the Lord is very great.

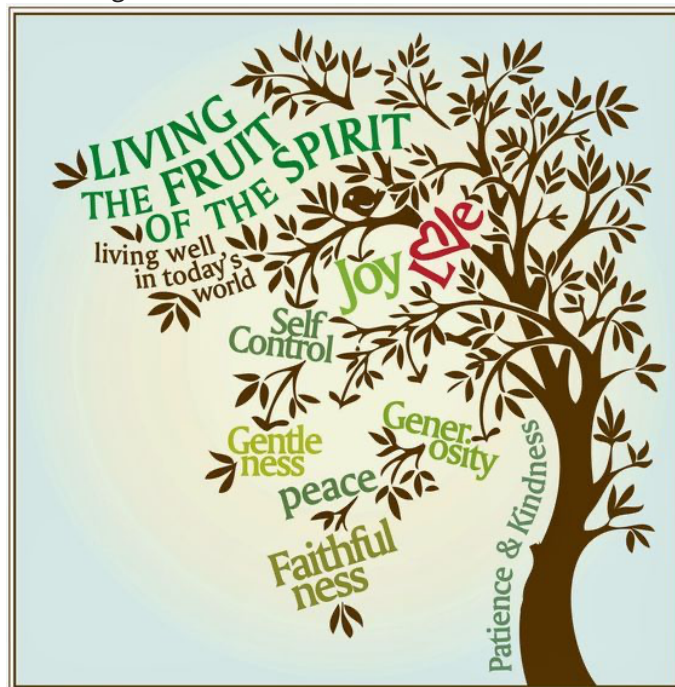
Romans 12:1-8// 3 Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.

**REFLECTION** Last week I wrote about pride and conceit and its effect on our lives. Pride eats at our souls by confusing our minds, and it destroys sympathy of the heart. We ought to understand pride is the father of all the other sins. In adultery we take another person's wife or husband because we want to. When we lie and cheat, we destroy integrity and trust. When we boast and manipulate others we are being crafty and deceitful. Even though the distribution

of God's grace is diverse for us, we still must protect ourselves within the boundaries of God's wisdom. We are to be kept within the limits of faith which has been freely given by the Lord. Therefore, be wise and restrain your behaviors within the confines of holy precepts. If we stray beyond these guidelines we will cause chaos, confusion and anxiety. If we do these things we will suffer the consequences of our foolish ambitions. We must not test these limits, nor go beyond the boundaries which God has clearly set before us. As we grow in faith we begin to accept our negative impact on others' lives. We must learn how to live sacrificial lives by surrendering ourselves to Christ. We must be willing to be teachable by the Spirit.

**PRAYER** Today and tonight Lord Jesus I sing praises for your ways because they are right, merciful and kind. I give you all the glory for introducing me to the most significant man who ever lived. In Jesus Name, Amen!

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### **THURSDAY 8/31/23**

Psalm 138:1-8//6 Though the Lord is great, he cares for the humble, but he keeps his distance from the proud.

Romans 12:1-8// 4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, 5 so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

**REFLECTION** Last week our family of faith welcomed a new member into the Kingdom of God. We all are a part of this blessed occasion. We are, after all the body of Christ in the flesh. We are "one body" and "belong" to each other and therefore we provide a safe loving environment for God to be accepted and honored. Ephesians 4: "4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it." The principles of God's grace, are shown to us as we read and study the scriptures. As we recognize God's grace actively working in our lives, our faith becomes deeper and richer. The truth is, the purpose of grace is the power that confirms our faith. Christ was ordained by the Father to create a fellowship of grace upon the earth. God elected Abraham's family to be firmly united to God by a covenant of grace (Gen 17). Now, Jesus Christ has extended this family for people "born from above". We become spiritually connected to Christ by the Holy Spirit. We are bound by the Spirit in a way that our flesh could never do. We literally are formed into the society of Christ.

**PRAYER** Through you Lord Jesus, Savior, help me to be grace filled and humble in my relationships with others. Help me to be aware of the prideful and not come under their influence. In Jesus Name, Amen!

## **FRIDAY 9/1/23**

Psalm 138:1-8//7 Though I am surrounded by troubles, you will protect me from the anger of my enemies. You reach out your hand, and the power of your right hand saves me.

Romans 12:1-8// 6 In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you.

**REFLECTION** Even though God has given us different gifts to unify Christ's body, let's have some humility in accepting them and understand these principles are given to moderate our lives. For example, pride and vanity are serious issues we face every day. If you think so highly of yourself you will not be able to connect rightly with God. Our pride stands as a road block on the road to heaven. We ought to be more serious about this defect. Let us also be conscious not to afflict this sin upon others. A grace filled community really cannot exist based on false pride and arrogance. To counter this nature God has given us spiritual gifts to share with one another. In using these gifts, do not let your pride damage the use of God's given talent. Let us be connected to the wise counsel of God and learn to use our portion for the common benefit of unifying the body. No one person is furnished with the fullness of all gifts. If a person thinks so, they are being arrogant and have no regard for their fellow Christian. So each of us must impart our gifts to the glory of God.

**PRAYER Sovereign God, Holy God, I pray you surround me with your wisdom and protect me from falling into the trap of pride and vanity. Reach out your hand of grace and heal me of my own pride, and bind up my spiritual wounds, and set me free to live in your love. In Jesus Name, Amen!**

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## **SATURDAY 9/2/23**

Psalm 138:1-8//8 The Lord will work out his plans for my life- for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. Don't abandon me, for you made me. The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.

Romans 12:1-8// 7 If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. 8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

**REFLECTION** Let's be reminded of what gifts we are speaking about. Some are apostles other evangelists, pastors, and teachers. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 "A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. 8 To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. 9 The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. 10 He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. 11 It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts." The Spirit alone decides which gift each person should have to use. Let's provide a safe environment for Christ's children to grow in faith by actively using these gifts. It is no small task to watch day and night over the flock. With the help of God we readily and willingly to do so.

**PRAYER Lord Jesus praise your holy name for working out your plan for my life. You have given me a special gift to serve other human beings in need. Give me confidence to use it so I may be a blessing to others. You are faithful, generous and care for me and my family. O Lord, your love endures forever.**

**In Jesus Name, Amen!**



PSALM 138:1-8 // ROMANS 12:1-8

Rev Bruce J VanDer Kolk