



## **Thank You**

Being thankful is hard. It's hard because it calls me into continual accountability. It calls me to acknowledge and recognize the blessings I receive. It calls me to release my ego and acknowledge that the 'good fortune' I receive in this world is not all or even mostly of my doing. It means looking at my gifts and talents and honestly recognizing the Beloved at work. It means being aware, painfully aware, of all the light that surrounds me, holds me, calls me, and blesses me. And offering thanks and praise to the one who creates all and calls it good.

It's also a hard part of my prayer because it has forced me to struggle with a very difficult theological principle, thankfulness for not just the light I experience in my life but also for the darkness in my life, for my wounds.

Standing at this place in my life, I can reflect on all the big wounds of my life and from this perspective, never in the moment, often years later usually, I can reflect back and almost always, I can see something new, some blessing that emerged out of that wound or that time of darkness.

Now let me pause here and say that I do NOT believe that suffering is in any way redemptive or has a purpose. I do not believe that. I do however believe that within this human life, we all suffer, and we all have our wounds. I've come to understand that while those wounds have no purpose, purpose can be mined from my wounds and my dark times and for that I am called into thankfulness.

Had I not known the despair and bleakness of depression as a youth, the beauty of a sunrise would not be as acute for me. Had I not come so close to ending my life in my darkest moments, I'm not sure I would recognize the gift that is life. Had I not known loss and grief from failed and troubled relationships, I am not sure I would have recognized the blessing of being loved in a beautiful and just way.

Again, in no way do I intend to celebrate our wounds, our suffering or our pain. I reject summarily the concept that suffering is redemptive in any manner. I do not believe we need to suffer as a part of life. I do however believe that suffering is a part of life and I do know that from my own life, within all my suffering, there has been something that has sprouted for which I am called into thankfulness.

I do not believe that God sends our wounds. I do not believe that God has a purpose in our wounds. I do however believe that God transforms our wounds and heals our wounds and out of that wound is often something new and blessed and for that my prayer calls me to offer my thanks. Suffering does not have a purpose. However, purpose can be found in suffering and for that, even for that, my prayer calls me into offering thanks.

God is Present  
God is Love

Beloved  
Thank you

For the past five weeks, I have shared with you my faith journey and my deeply personal prayer. That prayer includes my beliefs, my hopes, my aspirations, my challenges and my call in this world. It soothes me and it unsettles me. It also continues to draw me deeper and deeper into relationship and listening to the still-speaking God.

It is my hope that here, serving all of you in this role and walking alongside of you that I may accompany each of you in your own relationship with the still-speaking God, that I may offer witness to a God who is radically and intimately present in our lives and in this world, that I can teach and preach a God of love who offers us unconditional acceptance, forgiveness and welcome and asks us to in turn do the same for all we meet in this world and that I can try with all of my being to find ways to draw deeper into relationship with the Beloved, offering thanks and praise in all that is encountered along the way.

This I pray...  
God is Present  
God is Love  
Beloved  
Thank you

Amen  
Pastor Marci