

December 21, 2023

Finding joy
[I Thessalonians 5:16-24](#)

“give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”

Giving thanks can sometimes be hard in tough situations, even in our daily lives our tendency is to complain about our circumstances: “it’s too hot today,” “the rain is messing up my plans,” “this traffic is slowing me down.”

This scripture in Thessalonians tells us to be thankful and to rejoice; how hard that is especially in truly difficult times.

On one of my trips to Old Mutare Mission Hospital in Zimbabwe I was visiting with my friend, Dr. Manyeza who is a missionary physician. We were discussing his work at the hospital and some of the good news he had.

He always had such joy as he described being able to see his patients and deliver babies even though the work was hard and the hours were long. Supplies and medicine were always running out. Inflation was going crazy; the x-ray machine did not work while they were waiting on parts for months.

There were not enough staff, and there was no hot water in the hospital. The list goes on of what was not working and what they did not have to work with that we would consider absolute necessities.

But that was all replaced by the absolute joy I witnessed in the ward with mothers and their newborn babies. How could there be so much rejoicing with such difficult circumstances?

In Dr. Manyeza’s case, it was his faith that carried him through; he was truly giving thanks in all circumstances.

My prayer for you and me this Advent season is that we look for joy, especially in the little things which many times we overlook even in a world that is full of pain and give thanks.

Prayer: *Lord help us to rejoice and look for the joy around us, help us to spread this joy to others as we anticipate the celebration of the birth of your son.*

Jeff Matheny
Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church
Mineral Wells, WV
Conference Secretary of Global Ministries