

## Thankful that 2020 is Almost Gone?

Most of us use the end of the year to reflect on the year that is closing and project ourselves into the future. Read between the lines the well-known phrase “New Year’s resolutions”. But we have lived and survived the greatest challenge of our lifetimes, an incomparable pandemic that the whole of humanity has endured, a pandemic that has radically changed the way we understand life, our own existence. If there was a time when the concept of having a philosophy of life was needed, the year 2020 is the best candidate. We all have had to reconsider the purpose of our lives, the direction our lives are going, and the love we show to those we have in our closest circle and those who simply walk by us. We all can infect others or get infected by others.

This year has been challenging, disappointing, and exhausting beyond what anyone could have imagined. In addition to the normal highs and lows of life, we’ve endured the impact of living during a pandemic. We’ve all experienced setbacks, losses, and sudden changes. What this year has given us, though, is the opportunity to recognize and trust that God remains faithful and will be with us every step of the way. Since God is unchanging and always good, surely, there are ways that we as believers can give thanks this end of the year. Our gratitude this time of year ushers in hope, renews our faith and, can make a needed positive impact in the lives of others. Here are ten ways we as Christians can give thanks this season.

I find that Psalm 90 can give us a guideline of how we should understand our lives. The context of Psalm 90 is not a happy one. It was written in a time when the people of God are “consumed by [God’s] anger” and “overwhelmed” by God’s wrath (90:7) because of their “iniquities” (90:8). Nevertheless, beneath the bad news of God’s judgment lies a bedrock of confidence in God’s everlasting goodness. Rejoicing and prosperity will come again (90:14, 17). Psalm 90 reframes the way we think about time and its passing. The psalm begins with good news: “Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.” Moreover, God exists outside of time, “before the mountains were brought forth” (90:2). Indeed, the psalmist exults, “from everlasting to everlasting you are God” (90:2). Because God is timeless, God views the expanse of time differently than we see it: “For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past” (90:4).

The more we understand our limitations, the more we see our need to depend wholly on God’s power and grace. The same way the Law of God reminds us that we have failed to obey, the pandemic can also show us our frailty and our need for God’s mercy and love. Through Jesus Christ, God has extended his strong arm to save us. He has given him in order that through faith, we might receive forgiveness and life. But at the same time, the pandemic has taught us the importance of our social lives, the value of serving others, and the power of working together for a common goal. The church at large has been an instrument of blessing for many as they put together projects to serve the community in many ways. Prince of Peace/Príncipe de Paz in particular has been actively working to serve those around us in the midst of the pandemic.

We can confidently say that 2020 has not robbed neither our joy in Christ nor our faith in his power to save and sustain us. All this inspires in us a real hope for 2021. Christian hope inspires us to act in love for others, even as God has acted in love for us through his Son. Christian hope gives us resilient love that withstands the inevitable disappointments of this world. In His Name.

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