

Bermudian Church of the Brethren

WEDNESDAY's WORD – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler
to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week
November 23 in the year of our Lord 2016 - #673 **THANKSGIVING EVE**

Thank-Full

“O my soul, bless God. From head to toe, I'll bless his holy name! O my soul, bless God, don't forget a single blessing!” Psalm 103:1, 2 The Message

I love Thanksgiving! It's a holiday that hasn't been overrun by other thoughts than those that shaped it. Although I must admit, the media emphasis this year on “*friendsgiving*” kind of disturbed me. No ... it's not “*friendsgiving*” it's “*Thanksgiving*” with the implied thought that we are expressing “Thanks” to our God & Creator!

So begin the day with the parade on TV. Then bring on the laden tables! Turkey, mashed potatoes, ‘pilgrim’ corn, good rolls, ‘Aunt Somebody's’ green bean casserole, cranberry relish, Margaret Lee's frozen fruit salad, and pumpkin & pecan pie ... “*Yes please, I'll have a piece of both, with whipped cream please!*” And surround the table with family & friends, young & old ... and let us pause before we dig in and pray ... truly pray ... in Thanksgiving to the Lord who loves and provides. And hey! There's Steelers football on TV Thanksgiving night!!! If you are blessed to be able to share in a gathering that looks at all like this ... you are truly blessed!

But I'd like to ‘*count my blessings*’ with you a bit today. Here are eight things I am especially Thank-Full for. And after reading my list ... take a few moments and reflect on your own ... and talk to the Lord with a Thank-Full heart!

1. **My Lord Jesus.** How blessed to be born into a Christian home. I didn't do anything to deserve that. And I've done plenty in my life that should “disqualify” me from God's love. But my Lord suffered on Calvary for me! That my sin could be forgiven! That my relationship with Father God could be restored! He's loved me, forgiven me, intercedes for me, filled me with His Holy Spirit ... and has called me to share the Good News with others! Amazing!

2. **My wife Cathy.** I am so blessed to have been given the gift of my dear Cathy as my life mate for these 34 years. I've often said that she is the one of us who should have been called as a minister. Her relationship with the Lord has always been an inspiration to me. I love & cherish her. While I was in seminary and then with young children she sacrificed a lot for me! Now with her many health problems I'm privileged to sacrifice for her and help her. It's not a burden ... it's a privilege.

3. **My children Jes & John, and Erica.** Cathy and I dreamed of a family and for a long while it appeared that would not be so. Then the miracle happened and the door opened for us to adopt Jessie, and then 15 months later another miracle and John was born. Jes is an incredible woman! She's not had an easy road, but she is a hard worker

and a great mother. She can make me laugh ... and sometimes makes me crazy ... but oh what an incredible blessing she is to me! And even though we share no DNA ... how can she be so much like my Mom, whose name she carries? John is more than a son, he's a friend. We enjoy being together & working together ... even though there is usually blood when we work together. He is strong willed & hard working. I see both Cathy's gentle heart and faith, and my work ethic in him. He's a great step-dad and a wonderful father. And his chosen career as a firefighter/paramedic makes me proud and I so often think how my Dad would be popping his buttons at John. And now John has given me the gift of another daughter, his wife, Erica. What a joy and blessing! She is a great mother and such a hard worker. Vibrant! She blesses me.

4. My grandchildren, Mason, Amber, Jericho & Natalie. Who knew what a blessing it would be to hear a voice call me "Pap?" Mason is growing into such a fine young man! He makes me so proud! Amber is full of life and vitality like her mother. She warms my heart. Jericho, who has lived under my roof for most of his life, my buddy, brings me such joy! And now Natalie ... mini-John ... she makes me laugh and my heart overflows with love! You know that Bible verse about "the full quiver?" I'm blessed!

5. My calling to ministry. I wanted to be an architect. I was sure I would work in that field. I went to college for architecture. I had a dream job in architecture. But in one of the darkest times of my life the Lord revealed that He was calling me in a different direction. I'm not worthy to be a minister. In many ways I'm not very good at it. But when I feel His Holy Spirit stirring in me it still, after 44 years, lights me up! Preaching & teaching, comforting folks in their trouble, sharing in their joys, watching them grow in Christ ... what an honor! And when I stand in the cold water of the Bermudian Creek and baptize folks into the Kingdom of Christ! It doesn't get any better!

6. The Bermudian Church of the Brethren 'Church Family.' Twenty five years in one congregation is pretty rare. I often say to my folks that this tenure is more about them than me! The Lord sure made a good match! This congregation has loved me and allowed me to be me in ministry with & to them. Hard working! Incredible giving! Bible hungry! Diverse! Loving! Welcoming! We're not huge, and we're not perfect ... but oh how I love these folks!

7. God's Word ... The Bible. Only time and study and moments in Israel have allowed me to begin to fully, fully grasp what an incredible miracle I hold in my hand when I hold the Bible! Under attack today ... unfortunately even by some in the church ... the Bible stands strong against every false attack. Warm with God's breath, a miracle in the way God inspired the writers, the way God has preserved it through the centuries, the way it still changes people's lives!

8. You ... the WEDNESDAY's WORD reader. When I started this weekly devotional 673 issues ago, I envisioned a simple mid-week devotional thought & prayer update just for the Bermudian family. Wow! Did the Lord ever have a bigger plan! WW now goes all over the country from coast to coast, from north to south. Along with the Bermudian family it is received by friends I've met along the way; friends of friends of friends;

employees whose employers forward it to their people; persons I've never met; and now Facebook readers. And it never fails, I'll have a week when I feel the devotional is weak, and then I'll receive an email saying, *"That was just what I needed this week!"* It's an honor and true privilege to be invited in to the hearts of so many each week!

Count your blessings & have a truly wonderful Thanksgiving!

Pastor Larry <><