

Grace Woven In

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

Colossians 3:17

September is a season of new beginnings. Fields move toward harvest. Students and teachers return to the classroom. Choirs lift their voices once again. Families settle into familiar routines, and many of us embrace fresh opportunities to serve God and one another.

These opportunities are gifts from God and part of the calling He has entrusted to us. As we worship, learn, serve, and encourage one another through the life of our church, we participate in God's gracious work among us. We then carry that same calling into our daily lives. Tending a field or livestock, teaching a classroom, repairing an automobile, working hard at the office, caring for a family, serving a neighbor, or faithfully carrying out other forms of daily work all become opportunities to honor Christ.

Yet woven among these amazing gifts, God is always doing something more. While we faithfully carry out the responsibilities He has given us, He is also strengthening hearts, preparing conversations, granting wisdom, deepening faith, opening doors, and creating opportunities we could never have arranged ourselves. Faith invites us to look expectantly among the responsibilities God has entrusted to us, trusting that God is accomplishing far more than we can presently see. As we begin to live with that expectancy, we discover gifts of His grace and opportunities to share that grace with others that may have been there all along.

Sometimes we discover that God's grace has been at work in ways we simply had not noticed before. It may be finding the strength to take the next step when the whole day has felt overwhelming. It may be realizing that a burden feels lighter after prayer, or discovering that a difficult conversation goes better than we expected. Sometimes it's the wisdom we need arriving just in time to make a decision, the realization that we are not carrying a struggle alone, or an unexpected reminder that God has been faithful before and will be faithful again. At other times, it is discovering joy even though our circumstances have not changed, or experiencing a moment of thanksgiving that catches us by surprise.

God also weaves opportunities to share His grace into the fabric of our everyday lives. We may notice someone who has been unusually withdrawn. We may have the chance to welcome someone who is new, thank a person whose faithful work often goes unnoticed, or celebrate someone else's success. We may be given the opportunity to speak words that calm rather than increase anxiety, to choose patience over irritation, or simply to be fully present in a conversation. We may never know how deeply these familiar moments touch

another person's life, but God often accomplishes extraordinary things through opportunities we might otherwise have overlooked.

Throughout Scripture, God often surprised people by bestowing unexpected acts of grace in the midst of everyday life. A widow did not know what God would do through her small jar of oil (2 Kings 4:1–7). A little boy could not have imagined what Jesus would do with his simple lunch (John 6:1–14). No one looking at a tiny mustard seed would expect it to become a place of shelter for many (Matthew 13:31–32). Again and again, God accomplished far more than anyone expected.

This characterized much of Jesus' ministry. He continually recognized the Father's work in ways others overlooked, inviting people to share in the abundant blessings God was already bringing to harvest. As His disciples, we are invited to cultivate that same expectant way of seeing.

Paul speaks to this in his letter to the Colossians. He writes, *"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus."* The word translated "whatever" is wonderfully comprehensive. It means everything, every conversation, every responsibility, every moment of our lives. As Presbyterians, because we trust in God's providence, we can trust that He is faithfully at work in our lives and in His world, often accomplishing far more than we can presently see. As we faithfully live out the calling God has given us each day, we can trust that He is doing far more than we can presently imagine.

As we journey into September and embrace the responsibilities God has entrusted to us, it's my prayer that we'd also remember that His grace is woven throughout them. Every conversation, every task, every challenge, and every joy may become another place where His faithful presence and gracious purposes are revealed.

What gifts of God's grace might we discover in the days ahead?

How might God use even the most familiar moments of our day to bless us, and to bless others through us?

My prayer is that, together, we will learn to see our days more as Jesus did, recognizing the Father's work in ways we may once have overlooked, and joyfully sharing in the abundant harvest of His grace.

There is so much to celebrate as we discover God's Kingdom already at work among us!

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Jonathan