



Living with Gratitude

“Living with Gratitude – Eyes on God”

Michael and All Angels
Saturday & Sunday, September 28-29, 2019
All Services
The Reverend Dr. Jack M. Horner, Jr.
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Daniel 10:10-14; 12:1-3; Psalm 103:1-5, 20-22;
Revelation 12:7-12; Luke 10:17-20

Grace and peace be to you from our Father
and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

There was once a rich man who was near death and he was very grieved because he had worked so hard for his money and possessions and wanted to be able to take them into heaven. So, he began to pray that he would be able to take some of his wealth with him.

The angel heard his plea and appeared to him and said, “Sorry, you can’t take it with you.” The man begged the angel to speak to God to see if he might bend the rules just this once. The man continued to pray that his wealth could follow him.

The angel reappeared and informed the man that God had indeed decided to allow him to take one suitcase with him. Overjoyed, he gathered his largest suitcase and filled it with gold bars and placed it beside his bed.

Sometime later he passed away and he showed up at the gates of heaven to be greeted by St. Peter. St. Peter, seeing the suitcase said, “Hold on, you can’t bring that in here!” And the man explained to St. Peter that he had permission and asked him to verify his story with the Lord.

Sure enough, Peter check it out, came back and said, “You’re right. You are allowed one carry-on bag, but I’m supposed to check its contents before you can bring it in.”

St. Peter opened the suitcase to inspect the worldly items that this man found too precious to leave behind and exclaimed, “You brought pavement?” You’ll get that. Do you know how hard it is to find a joke about angels and generosity?

We are continuing our sermon series on Living with Gratitude and today Eyes on God as we commemorate, celebrate the Feast of St. Michael and his Angels.

Angels are ageless, created beings, servants of the most high God. One person put it this way and I just love this. They are children of the infinite imagination of God.

Martin Luther said, “An angel is a spiritual creature created by God without a body, for the service of Christendom and of the church.”

They're servants of God that may assume a physical presence from time to time, and when they do it is an awesome experience to encounter. So awesome that usually the first thing that the angel says to the human being is "Do not be afraid."

The Bible says that God appointed angels over various realms: Fire, water, wind, individuals, churches, countries, and even weather phenomenon's like as snow and hail. Angels watch over the living and are present at events like The Resurrection and the Second Coming of Jesus.

Angels help the work with creation, they are the messengers of the Almighty God, guardians, protectors, signs of the living presence of God, fighters against the forces of evil, and their one primary activity the worship and praise of God in heaven.

Throughout the Bible we hear of people who have had encounters with these heavenly messengers. Abraham and Sarah who are told that they would be the father and mother of a mighty nation even both are very old. And Moses, an angel with a voice coming out of a burning bush before he received the Ten Commandments. And Isaiah the prophet, who was transported into the heavenly realms where he watches the angels and archangels worshipping including the 6-winged Seraphim and Cherubim flying around the seated Lord singing "Holy, holy, holy Lord, the whole earth is full of Glory." And Mary and Joseph greeted by St. Gabriel the angel about the birth of Jesus the Messiah.

But not all of them are good servants. Some are angels in rebellion who fight with the good angels and work to bring humanities downfall. One in particular is known by the Hebrew name, which is Satan, which literally means "accuser", "Troublemaker," "the Father of lies." "You will not die," he says, "You will be like God," he says to Adam and Eve. "You're not good enough." "Jesus can't save you" he says to us.

In John's Revelation however we see that these fallen angels are constantly defeated by Michael and his angel army. At times there are visions of angels whether it's Daniel with his vision of this divine assembly of angels protecting God's people in their time of trial, or Jesus in his vision of the angels after the 70 comeback having competed his ministry out among the people bringing healing and restoration. Even the disciples have the power of Jesus and his angels. And sometimes when we wait for revelations, when we wait for God's assistance asking, "Show me God what should I do?!" Sometimes it is the angels, the messengers, the fighters, the guardians who answer our prayers.

The Reverend John G. Paton, a 19th century missionary in the South Pacific told the story of how hostile natives had surrounded his mission one night threatening to kill both him and his wife. They prayed all night in the corner that God would deliver them. When daylight came, they opened the door and were amazed to see that the attackers had left.

A year later, after hard work at evangelization, the tribe was converted to Christianity, and Paton remembering what had happened that year ago, asked the chief what had kept him and his men from burning down their house and killing them. The chief responded in surprise, "Who were all those men that you had with you that night?" The missionary answered, "There were no men; it was just my wife and I." And the chief argued with him that they had seen many men standing guard, hundreds of big men in

shining garments with swords drawn in their hands and they seemed to circle the mission over and over again, so that the natives were afraid to attack.

Paton later wrote, "I had my nearest and most intimate glimpses of the presence of my Lord in those dread moments when musket, club or spear was being levelled at my life." When confronted with problems and trials and doubt, keep your eyes on God like the angelic hosts. **Do not be afraid!**

Focus on the source of life and his angel army, serve the Lord with all your strength to accomplish his purposes. And like the angels in heaven, with our eyes on God we will live with gratitude.

With our eyes on God, people will be inspired, and we will challenge our selves with gold dreams.

With our eyes on God, we will accomplish anything together.

With our eyes on God, the harvest is plentiful, faith is renewed, we move forward in mission and ministry and we bring healing and hope to the lost and forsaken.

With our eyes on God, demonic forces are cast out, sins are forgiven, God declares you beloved! And Michael and all his angels rejoice and sing in heaven, **"Holy, holy, holy God, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory, hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Amen!"**

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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