



November 2016

Dear North East District Family,

I love Thanksgiving! I have loved the holiday since I was a small boy and it meant a trip to my grandmother's home. I adored my grandmother, and even though she hasn't been with us for 17 years, there's often not a day that goes by when I don't think of her. Today, Thanksgiving is even more special because it makes me think of her.

One of my favorite passages of scripture to read during this season is Philippians 4:11-13. In that passage, Paul wrote:

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.

Paul was sharing that we can be content and thankful no matter what. When life is grand and full of blessings, we can give thanks. When life is hard and throws us plenty of challenges, we can still be content and thankful.

Paul faced some tough times. He was flogged with the skin ripped from his back. He was placed in chains deep in the bowels of several prisons. He was hunted by people who wished to kill him. Ultimately the Romans executed him. He was, however, content and thankful because he knew he could do anything through Jesus who gave him strength.

That's a message totally opposite to what we are constantly bombarded with in today's culture. Everywhere we go we're told if we just have more we'll be happy. If we have a bigger car, a better house, a fancier vacation, and a more fulfilling job everything will be all right. Then we'll be content! As the Christmas season begins at the end of this month, we'll see more TV commercials than we can count screaming that very message.

Paul's message is the lone voice in the crowd reminding us that we don't have to give in to that message of more, more, more. We can become content if we take a "time out" for just a moment and remember the source and strength of true happiness - Jesus.

I'm reminded of a Peanuts cartoon where it's obviously Thanksgiving and Snoopy is resting on top of his doghouse. Snoopy is upset because Charlie Brown, Sally, Lucy and Linus are off eating a hearty Thanksgiving meal and he's left with nothing to eat but a plain, ordinary bowl of dog food. He sighs out loud and the thought balloon over his head reads, "*It could be worse. I could have been born a turkey.*"

When it gets right down to it, we do have much for which to be thankful. I want to challenge you to spend time each day finding at least one thing for which you can thank God. I promise you'll find your attitude,

The North East District of the Florida Conference • The United Methodist Church • 1415 LaSalle Street • Jacksonville, FL 32207
Phone: 904-396-3026 • Fax: 904-396-6294 • flumc-ne@flumc.org

disposition, and ministry to be much happier and fulfilling. Don't let this month pass you by without following Paul's words from Philippians 4 and intentionally create a heart that is content and thankful. After all, it could be worse!

As you go through this month, please know this: I'm so very grateful to be your district superintendent, and at the top of my list of blessings is all of you. God bless you and Happy Thanksgiving!

All God's love,



Jay Therrell, Superintendent

