



Dove of the Desert

Dove Tales

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“Increasing Love for God and Neighbor by Going Deeper, Reaching Farther, Transforming Lives”





Hello friends!

One of the deep roots of my own faith journey has been thankfulness. I'd like to share this essay with you on the experiences and learnings I have found in meditating on my own thankfulness.

I am good at being grateful in blips. A traffic jam strikes during a commute, and I am reminded to have gratitude that I own a car. However, when the jam breaks, my mind quickly moves to the meeting I am heading to, or the counseling session I'm facilitating. The moment of gratitude slips away faster than (insert your personal favorite slippery image here).

I can lament with the best when it comes to the stresses of air travel, but there is a moment when my body is being pelted with low-grade radiation at the x-ray machine that I do experience a moment of thanks for not having to drive 13 hours to my destination. But, not long after I am seated between two offensive linemen from a football team on the plane, does my mind quickly transition to frustration and questions about who actually gets to use the armrest (in this case, I get neither).

It's that pattern of thankfulness that I experience the most; a tool used against the frustration I reach when things don't happen the way that I want them to. In this way, I feel like my gratitude is cheapened some, in that I access it as leverage in a moment, rather than making it a regular rhythm of my life. If gratitude could be turned into a currency to pay the debt of impatience or frustration, then consider me the Warren Buffett of it.

And that is why I continue to seek a new rhythm to my thankfulness. I have found Thomas Merton's thoughts on thankfulness to be incredibly instructive.

"To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything He has given us – and He has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense graces from Him.

Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God. For the grateful person knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference." – Thomas Merton

Its that "every breath we draw" kind of thankfulness that I want to embody in my life. Doesn't that sound like such a radical approach to life? It becomes so easy to be drawn into the minutiae of the urgent, and to lose touch with the present and ever radiating gifts of life. It's the longer road to take, but to journey towards perpetual thankfulness is a move towards the heart of Jesus.

"Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights in giving you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to those in need. Make for yourselves wallets that don't wear out—a treasure in heaven that never runs out. No thief comes near there, and no moth destroys. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be too." – (Jesus in Luke 22:32-24)

What if our treasure was gratitude? How would that change our life's course? I get the feeling that our relationships and our calling in life could not help but be transformed if that were the case.

Consider this...

Walter Brueggemann described the abundance in which Jesus has invited us to participate as made up of thankfulness, contentment, generosity, and peacefulness. This counters what Brueggemann calls the narrative of accumulation, which starts with an ideology of scarcity that leads to anxiety, selfish accumulation, monopoly and ultimately, violence. Thankfulness is the cornerstone to the practice of abundance, and the extinction of the practice of accumulation.

And so, a rhythm of thankfulness leads to contentment.

This becomes obvious to all who practice it. When we take the time to "count our blessings," our eyes are opened to the abundance with which God has blessed us. Anyone can take part in this. Anyone can see it. From the deepest depths of the ghetto to the most pristine gated communities, all who practice thankfulness will realize abundance, and will find themselves in the practice of contentment. Scarcity says "there is not enough;" thankfulness says, "look how much there is!" Scarcity says "I need!" and thankfulness says "I have." A framework of scarcity results in discontentment whereas thankfulness propels towards fulfillment.



Pastor Dave (cont'd)



And so, a rhythm of thankfulness leads to generosity.

Because thankfulness directs our practice to abundance; because it emphasizes how much one has rather than what one is lacking, thankfulness leads to generosity. Scarcity instructs one to anxiety, in which someone does not have enough and must acquire more. This anxiety leads to accumulation. All eyes are on the needs, desires, and interests of themselves. Thankfulness, then, is the opposite. In realizing the abundance we are subject to, the contentment we experience as a result will inspire a sharing of that abundance. In realizing abundance, we realize that there is all that is needed and more. So, there is enough for others. Contentment and gratitude naturally inspire generosity.

And so, a rhythm of thankfulness leads to peacefulness.

This is the peace that moves us beyond the need to accumulate, or have, or chase. This is the peace of the divine, which is a counter to the clamoring of the world around us. In thankfulness we can find rest.

If you find yourself engaging in a world of scarcity, in which you think you do not have enough, in which you feel you are missing out, in which you focus on your wants and how you are going to acquire them, this is where you can begin the practice of thankfulness. If you have treated gratitude as a commodity rather than as a discipline to anchor your soul in, then you, like me, can begin a habit of continual thanks. Allow your moments of thankfulness to open your eyes to God's abundance, and then those moments become longer ones. Stretch them into new places into your life, and observe how the changes in your life begin to take place. It will lead you to contentment, generosity, and peace.

Most Holy God, thank you.

For everything. Every day.

Let me be a blessing and gift to others as you have been to me.

Amen.

Blessings y'all,

Dave

Nursery Childcare



SAVE THE DATE AUGUST 23!

Shower OUR Nursery with Blessings!

The Nursery childcare staff is throwing a shower to bless our precious little ones. Our Dove Nursery is an invaluable ministry for infants and toddlers and a reflection of serving Jesus, who loves all the little children.

We are in need of replacing and adding some new age-appropriate toys, diaper pails, books, CD's, and other items. So, we are throwing a shower at 12:30 - 2:00 pm on Sunday, August 23 and we want to invite you to join in the FUN. Helping us enhance the Nursery safety and engagement will truly be a blessing!

We will be providing more details about the shower along with gift registries and Scrip Card information.

P.S. Please know during this reconnecting period we are in, our intent is to have everyone share in this experience through prayers and/or gifts while we minimize the actual in-person shower attendance as a safety precautionary measure.

Pastor Louie



Where are we now? For me and I assume each of you, this has been a year of “Big Change.” Last June after it was determined that Dove could no longer afford a full time Associate Pastor, I was asked by Pastor George if I would consider coming on staff to perform the Pastoral Care duties for Dove. These duties entailed visiting our shut-ins and those who entered into the hospital. It was a wonderful blessing for me to be allowed to fulfill those duties. Then came Covid-19 and I was no longer allowed to visit in homes and hospitals. I know that is where your world changed, too. So the question remains, “Where are we now?”

I have been blessed once again, this time, in being allowed to call and pray with our Dove Community via the telephone. During those visits, we have talked, shared where we were at with our family life and then we always conclude in prayer. As time wore on I heard two main stories: We are making the best of it and we are grateful for our health and safety and we will do what we need to do. The other story was (I am/We are) ready to move on to a “New Normal.” Well, what is that “New Normal?” I am STILL NOT allowed to go into a hospital or care center to visit any of our folks that are there. My visits continue to be by telephone and much conversation and prayer has been and continues to be done by me in that way. So here comes the rub. The Governor and the President say it is safe to move forward but yet in my phone calls I have people telling me that when Dove opens up for in-person worship I will NOT be there because of my age or health situation. I have others telling me that unless you open up because the President and Governor said it was ok to do so, I will need to look for another church...

The above statement grieves me greatly dear ones. I have grown to know and love you all. When one hurts, I hurt. Do we all think alike? Of course we know the answer to that is NO, we don't all think alike. But, please know I respect your point of view and I pray that you too, respect my point of view. As United Methodist Pastors appointed to serve Dove by our Bishop, Pastors George and Louie follow the instruction of the Bishop. Bishop Bob cares deeply for each of us (YOU!) and he wants to make sure that we do all that is humanly possible to keep out of harm's way (Covid-19). As I write this, I am hearing the news being reported that the number of visits to ER and hospitalizations in Arizona has begun to go up again since many of the regulations have been lifted. Some believe this and others do not believe this. Well, this is where we are... We are living in a time of distrust (Events in Minneapolis, “Fake News” and a Political Divide and Mask or No Mask).

So I have a solution to all of this. That solution is trust in my Lord and Savior who I am giving all of this to. Scripture tells me to ask in Jesus' Name because through the Holy Spirit we have been made One with the Father... I am asking Him to bring us together as One and then help us to Listen to Him and not the outside influences... God's timing is not always our timing so I am praying for patience for each of us as we continue to move forward in our New Normal. I conclude by thanking Pastor George for giving me the opportunity to serve along with him at Dove and I thank him for all he has done for us during his time with us at Dove of the Desert. May your 2nd retirement bring all that you are hoping and praying for....

Where we are now is that we are waiting for a “Wonderful New Beginning” with Pastor Dave Wasson. Our prayers are with Dave and his family as they begin their ministry at Dove of the Desert.

Shalom,
Louie

Craft Bazaar



CALLING ALL CRAFTERS

Your talents are needed! All crafts and arts are welcome. Utilize your quarantine time to benefit your church. Dove's annual craft bazaar is scheduled for Sunday, November 8 and Sunday, November 15.

We have a Plan B if our church building is not yet open. If you have questions, call Doreen Borgmann, 602-859-0136, or Mary Patterson, 623-219-9679.



Fellowship Opportunities



We will let you know when Fellowship Opportunities Resume



The **LUNCH BUNCH** meets the 1st Thursday of each month for good food and fellowship. Please call: 623.931.4283 for reservations or information. Newcomers are always welcome! (Currently not meeting)



DOVE MEN'S BREAKFAST meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month for a time of devotion, prayer, and fellowship. Please join them at 7:00 am on Saturday, at the Black Bear Diner, 6039 W. Bell Rd. To R.S.V.P., call Louie Lyon, 623.238.8455 or Dove at 623.572.7334. Dove Men, including Fathers & Grandfathers, Sons & Grandsons, age 13 and up, are invited to come and bring a friend. A great way to make some new friends! (Currently not meeting)



PRIME TIME LIVE! is the Dove of the Desert adult fellowship group and includes all Dove adults: married, single, young and young at heart. We meet the 3rd Friday of each month at a member's home and enjoy the evening together with food, fun and Christian fellowship. The host supplies a main course, attendees bring sides and dessert. (Currently not meeting)



PRAYER SHAWL GROUP meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 9:00 - 10:00 am in Room 7. The group knits or crochets shawls, baby blankets, lap blankets, prayer squares, and other items to be given to Dove members and others in need of comfort. For information, please call *Mimi Griffiths* at 602.762.6709 or at mimig7852@gmail.com. (Currently, working on projects from home)

OTHER FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Many other opportunities exist for fellowship at Dove, including Adult Sunday School classes, Tuesday Talks, Women's Bible Studies, and Dove's musical groups including Celebration Singers, Dove Notes, Folk Group, and the Bell Choirs, plus many more. Please check the weekly Announcements included with the Sunday Bulletin, as well as the calendar that you can find on the Dove website. Please join in the wonderful fellowship!



Special Prayers



Condolences to:

Ann Garwood on the death of her brother, Howard

Ted & Georgia Nelsen on the death of her cousin, Rod

John McQueen on the death of his brother, Ricky

Joy Brown & family on the death of her father, Ed Brown

For these churches:

Lakeview UMC, Sun City

Liberty UMC, Buckeye

Maranatha UMF, Phoenix

Mission Bell UMC, Glendale

Prayer Line



For a daily prayer and devotion from Rev. Louie please dial **602-375-PRAY (602-375-7729)**

Please send all prayer requests to Rev. Louie at carePastor@doveofthedesert.com

Missions



Please deliver directly to the Mission

**Donations for St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance
Pet Food & Supplies to Animal Shelters
Justa Center Donations
UMOM Donations**

Care Ministry



Dove's Prayer Shawl Ministry

Dove's Prayer Shawl Ministry continues in their dedication to work during the Covid-19 lockdown. In the past 14 years, this mission has completed over 2,000 prayer shawls, lap blankets, afghans and baby blankets.

These items are given to those experiencing illnesses, loss of a family member, and celebrations such as confirmation and baptisms. The Dove congregation has been so blessed to have caring, talented and generous volunteers to knit and crochet.

In addition to our Dove members and friends who benefit from our Prayer Shawl Ministry, several organizations beyond the walls of Dove and throughout our community receive them: local hospitals, nursing and care facilities, Justa Center, Florence Crittenton Center, StreetLightUSA and others.

During the "normal" times for Dove, individuals who knit/crochet meet for fellowship and prayer on the second Tuesday of each month at 9:00 am in Room 7.

If you would like to be a part of this group now while we're making items at home, please feel free to contact me.

Mimi Griffiths, Coordinator, 602.762.6709



Medical Equipment available for loan

Over the last several years, numerous items have been generously donated by many of our Dove members and friends.

Dove's Care Ministry Team has wheelchairs, walkers, knee scooters, transport chairs, crutches, shower chairs, etc., for loan.

If you need to borrow an item, please contact:

Don Trotter – trotterdon@att.net 623.376.9506, and he will let you know if the item you need is in the inventory.



Finance Committee



Our church continues to be blessed by an amazing, faithful, and giving community. This has been true not only for the offerings being made to support regular church operations during these unprecedented times, but it has also been demonstrated by those who have generously supported the Roof Repair Fund and the COVID-19 Frontline Mission fund. We thank you for your continued financial support of your church and all that it has enabled Dove to sustain through these very challenging times.

Year-to-date giving through May exceeded expenses by \$18,390 which was driven by the faithful commitment of sustained giving as well as lower expenses as a result of reduced church operations in our physical space (e.g. supplies, utilities, etc.). The YTD totals are more favorable than the original approved budget expectations and a great start leading into the summer months in which giving is generally lower due to "retreats" to cooler climates, summer vacations, and increased utilities to support church facilities.

The Roof Repair Fund continues to receive gifts for which we are extremely thankful as well. Total gifts received to date are \$20,502.49 vs. the cost of the roof repair of \$26,500. Gifts to the Roof Repair Fund continue to be welcome and can be made via check or online with the appropriate designation.

Thank you all so much for your continued blessing of financial support.



Dove Author



"Secret Passages" written by Ed Opstein under the "pen name" R.D. Hathaway.

The website is <https://rdhathaway.com/> Some Dove friends know of it and are eagerly reading it, but the larger membership is likely unaware.

Ed has expressed an interest of leading a book study or Sunday School class on topics such as how Christian fiction is different from other types of genre, the writing process, publishing, and even an open discussion when services resume.

P.S. The sequel to the book will be out next month!



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Dove of the Desert

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Return Service Requested

Sending July Blessings to:



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