

Sunday, August 15, 2021 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – Ephesians 5:15-20
“Giving Thanks”**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes) In pairs or groups of three, have participants share five things they are thankful for right now.

Ephesians 5:15-20. Context. After encouraging his readers to “imitate God” and love one another as Christ loved us, the author commends a number of ethical precepts, and concludes with this week’s reading. Here he contrasts the foolishness of self-centered gratification with the wisdom of seeking to do the will of God.

Read Ephesians 5:15-20

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Ephesians 5:15-20 again.

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Why and how do commercials and advertisements try to create within us a constant need for more products?
- How might listing things we are grateful for on a continual (daily) basis be a beneficial spiritual practice?
- What might it look like for you to be “careful” about how you live? How might mindful or spiritual practices like prayer, Scripture reading, journaling, and other practices develop a “careful” or attentive way of living?
- What might Paul have in mind by observing that “the days are evil” (v. 16)? [This probably includes things such as not living carefully or being inattentive to God and what God is doing in the world. To be wise, then (v. 15), is to live more attentively to the values of God’s kingdom.]
- How might intentionally noticing and expressing gratitude be a core discipleship practice that builds up us as individuals and becomes a unifying feature of our community life in the church?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Loving God, you invite us to a new way of being – a way of self-giving and generosity that seems scary. It is a way of life that radically trusts your provisions. Help us to experience true life in giving instead of through getting. Help us to live in such a way that others experience new life that comes solely by your grace. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.