

Third Week of Advent
Tuesday 15 December 2020

Reflection 17 – Day 17

“Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

As you read this, Paul’s command to the Church in Thessalonica, how does it make you feel? If you are like me, you will be thinking: how on earth is this possible? How can someone always be joyful and thankful for everything? Is it even possible to never stop praying?!

Paul’s dramatic conversion as recorded in Acts 9 opened his eyes to the grace (unconditional love) and truth of Jesus Christ and thereafter he resolved to serve him wholeheartedly. He lived his day-to-day life in the knowledge that, one day, the Lord Jesus will return and that he and everyone else needs to be ready (1 Thessalonians 5: 1-10). This was his lens for viewing life and why he felt that, despite all of life’s very great challenges, we too can live in the hope of Jesus Christ. My sense with Paul is that he cultivated a new mindset, that he developed the daily habit of looking for moments of joy and things to give thanks for. I think he developed the habit of prayer too, which was not to be in continuous dialogue with God, but simply to provide more and more space throughout the day for intimate interaction with Him. What new habit could you try and cultivate this Advent?

Paul’s prayer for us:

“Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)

Amen.