

‘I WILL BLESS THE LORD AT ALL TIMES’

St T's Weekly Devotional || Wednesday 1st July 2020



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Do you know that sense of reading something familiar and thinking, “Gosh. Have I ever read that before?” Or “Have I ever really thought about that before?”

Reading in the Psalms earlier this week, I had the latter experience with the opening of Psalm 34 : “I will bless the Lord at all times ...”

I must have read this – and heard it read – hundreds of times but suddenly it pulled me up. So I read it again. “I will bless the Lord at all times...” And it struck me as ... totally unrealistic! At all times? Really?

Our days are composed of numerous small moments, each filled with a variety of actions or happenings. Today I have done the ironing, weeded a bit of the garden, talked on the phone, waved a duster around, written some emails, read the news, made lunch... (Please be impressed!)

Does this verse really mean I should be doing all these while singing hymns and psalms and spiritual songs? I might be able to accompany some tasks in this way if I was feeling particularly holy but I rarely feel holy and I certainly couldn't hum while I was listening to someone on the phone!

But as we know, the psalms are poetry and poetry has licence to obscure its meaning ... so surely all is well? I can keep my prayers and praises to a set time and place and listen to the radio while ironing.

Or can I?

What might this verse mean for us ?

In his book, 'The Practice of the Presence of God', the c17th Carmelite Friar, Brother Lawrence possibly gets to the heart of the matter as he talks about increasing our awareness of the presence of God, with us at all times and in all places. It's the same idea the Welsh poet and priest George Herbert developed a few years earlier in his 'Elixir' of 1633, (sung by many of us as the hymn 'Teach me, my God and King, In all things Thee to see'.) Increasing our awareness of God sounds an apparently simple exercise but one that Henri Nouen, Dutch Catholic priest and writer described in the 1970s as challenging. " ... not just a nice idea for a c17th monk but an important challenge for [us]... today."

So how might we take up the challenge? St Paul tells us. "... Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your minds..." Romans 12:2

Being transformed stems from an act of will, asking the Holy Spirit, God's presence with us, to be active in us, to make us aware of God with us. To bless the Lord at all times is to deliberately allow God's presence to work in us continually so our minds are steadily transformed and increasingly we are aware of God with us, whatever we might be doing.

And while taking specific time each day to pray and praise God is a means of God blessing us, listening to the radio while doing the ironing can be a means of us blessing God.

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