

Happy Thanksgiving! We have laughed and learned through ten weeks of classes at STP, enjoyed an amazing TTA show, **Curtain in Five!**, and surpassed our show fundraising goal. Isn't God's faithfulness astounding? When I see your children's smiles, hear their laughter, and enjoy their singing, I am reminded of the importance of youth and children's ministry. I am so thankful that STP can support your children as they grow in their faith and learn more about walking with the Lord. We have much to be thankful for, and it is good to pause and praise God for all that He is doing. Great is HIS faithfulness!

As we begin chapter 2 of James, take a moment to recall the themes that are the focus of much of the book. Pressing forward, we will learn about how to care for others, the importance of what we say, and come to understand more about the holiness of God. James will likely step on our toes a bit and cause us to examine our hearts. Read James 2:5-9.

Right out of the gate, James hits hard. We are not to look at others and judge them based on how they look or whether they are different from us. We are not to look at rich or poor. Scripture is clear – we are all created differently, but that should not affect our care and concern for one another. Read 1 Samuel 2:7-8.

Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving and dedication of her son, Samuel, reminds us that our circumstances will be different, but that God is still watching over us and caring for us. If God cares for all, then we need to be paying attention and follow His lead. Another mother prayed a similar prayer of thanksgiving and the theme is echoed again. Read Luke 1:51-53

Mary, the mother of Jesus, praises God for his faithfulness to all, no matter their status. She reminds us that God scatters the proud and lifts up the humble. He brings down those who hold on to their wealth and possessions and cares for those who are needy.

To love like Jesus, we need to see others as Jesus sees them. What does Jesus have to say about partiality? Read Matthew 5:2-10

Can you see the kindness in His eyes and hear the gentleness of His voice as you read His teaching in the Beatitudes? He challenges us to transform our thinking about how we see others, and then BE different. If we are to do the Word well, then we need to see others through the kind eyes of Christ.

The hope of the gospel is for everyone! The Good News of Jesus' sacrifice for our salvation is too good not to share! We are to BE a blessing to others – everything that we have has been given to us to bring others to Christ and to give God glory. We are called to be salt shakers and light bearers. Let's do the Word well and let His light shine by welcoming all and showing no favorites!

**In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see,
so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. Matthew 5:16**