



First United Methodist Church of Hanford

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.



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What is the world view that you will choose today?

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

James 1:17 (NIV)

It all started this morning with my Máté (Argentine drink)¹ and getting ready for Zoom bible study, and I was struck by the happiness that filled my heart just looking at my Mate. Filled my heart-really, no exaggeration! "What's going on here," I wondered, and then I realized what it was. That Máté and the whole preparation all seemed so normal. So routine. In a world where things are changing so dramatically from day to day, that Máté gave me a shot of constancy and consistency. The same shot I get when I consider how steadfast and solid my God is.

Reminding myself that God is steady when life around me is not seems to be my primary coping strategy right now. As more and more people get sick and lives are lost, as unemployment soars, as church is temporarily closed, and as my tendency to withdraw into the isolation increases, I realize how important it is to fan the flame of Christ deep within myself. The light of Jesus, the internal "knowing" of the Spirit, needs to be regularly uncovered and visited, and one of the ways that I keep in touch with my Center is by appreciating what is around me right in the moment.

Seeing God in the blessings of nature, and Creation's beauty, is definitely one of the ways I continue to remind myself that God is present and near. Even the less than natural-like my Máté, are pushing my thoughts to the Light these days.

¹**Máté is a traditional drink in Argentina.** The drink, which contains mateine (an analog of caffeine), is made by an infusion of dried leaves of yerba mate. It is usually drunk with friends and served in a hollow calabash gourd with a "bombilla", a special metallic drink straw. It is traditionally made of silver or alpaca. The gourd is known as a *mate*. Even if the water comes in a very modern thermos, the drink is traditionally drunk from *mates*.

Like other brewed herbs, *yerba mate* leaves are dried, chopped, and ground into a powder called *yerba*. The *bombilla* is both a straw and a sieve. The end which is placed in the drink is wider, with small holes or slots that let the brewed liquid in, but block the chunky matter that makes up much of the mixture. A modern *bombilla* uses a straight tube with holes, or spring sleeve to act as a sieve. *Bombilla* means "light bulb" in Spanish, but locally it is "little pump" or "straw".

As I consider a prayer shared over the phone. . . a card from a friend that comes in the mail in the middle of a pile of bills. . . I see an abundance of goodness in simple everyday things. I see joyfulness peeking out of the moment that is right there in front of me. Do I accomplish this every single moment? I wish I could say I did, but the harder things around me are, the more I think it helps me to try.

To some people, thinking like this might seem at best to be silly, and at worst to be sacrilegious. Am I advocating for a denial of reality? No, to the contrary. I know I need to see where there is pain and sorrow and need, but as God's child, I have an invitation to be aware of the good, the blessing, and the gift! That is the hope that life in Christ gives us! I think of it as choosing a generous and open view of and belief in God's love, provision, and communication with all God's people. A "yes/and" world view rather than a "no/but."

What is the world view that you will choose today?

Let us pray: Lord, teach us to offer you a heart of thanksgiving and praise in all the experiences of life. Teach us to be joyful always, to pray continually and to give thanks in all of our circumstances. Amen

“Be a Channel of God’s Grace”

Pastor Pablo

July 22nd, 2020

Online Devotionals

To grow in your relationship with God and others, it is important to have some spiritual disciplines in your life. Below are some helpful websites that will lead you to read scripture, pray, and focus on God.

UPPER ROOM DAILY DEVOTIONAL <https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals>

A daily devotional including scripture lesson and story.

UPPER ROOM DAILY REFLECTIONS <https://upperroombooks.com/neweverymorning/>

Daily words of wisdom and faith including quotes, scripture, questions, and the lectionary bible readings.