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*"Christ caring for People
through People"*

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Greetings and Blessings,

"Failure is an inside job. So is success. If you want to achieve, you have to win the war in your thinking first. You can't let the failure outside you get inside you. You certainly can't control the length of your life – but you can control its width and depth. You can't control the contour of your face – but you can control its expression. You can't control the weather – but you can control the atmosphere of your mind. Why worry about things you can't control when you can keep yourself busy controlling the things that depend on you?" (Failing Forward, John C. Maxwell)

The magi traveled from a far distance to pay homage to the baby Jesus. Seeking assistance in locating him they approached Herod who felt threatened by the newborn. The baby's life was put at risk. The wise men couldn't control the fact that Herod was an evil ruler, but they could control themselves. So they followed God's leading: recognizing the danger they chose to quietly slip away without reporting back to Herod as he had requested.

Joseph and Mary couldn't control the circumstance of the political requirement of a census that led to them having to seek shelter in a simple stable with a manger as a crib the night that Jesus was born. Neither could they control the threatening rage of Herod towards the baby Jesus. But they could control their response to God's dream, directions to Joseph to accept the unusual circumstance of the Holy pregnancy of Mary, and they could and did accept the warning dream to take the child and flee to Egypt for safety.

Circumstances and historical factual realities are not within our personal control. But how we respond to them certainly is. We may live during a time of conflict, or economic recession or pandemic. None of these fall within our control. But how we respond to them certainly is. Living with a peaceful and forgiving spirit we can be a blessing to others. Living within our means and continuing to reach out in charity to those less fortunate is still within our control. Taking health precautions and showing care and compassion for the sick is still a possible response within our reach. Filling all our days with love, kindness, and a prayerful heart of thankfulness can bring showers of blessing on ourselves and those around us.

Paul doesn't ask us to be thankful 'for' all circumstances, but to be thankful 'in' all circumstances. We can control the 'inside' where it really matters. Invite God in and find power to truly affect your inner world and to have a mission and a ministry that matters.

Amen.

(Rev.) John McGurrin