

MAUPIN MESSAGE

Goodbye 2020—Why I'm Grateful

Admittedly, above I've written a potentially deceptive headline. You may naturally decide that I intentionally indicate my gratitude is summed up by the fact that 2020 has come to an end. I wrote it that way because there is an element of truth to that take. There is no denying that 2020 brought plenty of challenges/hardships/change to my family and likely to yours. You might naturally conclude I'm going to write a "good riddance 2020" piece. Honestly, if I put my mind to it, I probably could provide that spin without too much difficulty or time investment.

However, I've been asking God what He wants me to reflect on when considering all that 2020 contained. My first thought is "Wow! What a ride." I've long held a belief that gratitude is the anti-venom for every negative experience and thought. And gratitude is hardest to come by when your expectations are not met; when your plans get thwarted; when you face bumps in your road. Yet, gratitude is what God call us to—in the power of the Holy Spirit—because God has given us everything we need for life and godliness *in Christ Jesus*. When nothing here on earth seems to be working out well, God reminds me of Romans 5:8: **While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** That truth is always available when I need to "take every thought captive" and find a reason to be grateful. My circumstances, my sub-conscious, my enemy (Satan), all want me to live in the moment as if that is the sum total of who I am (did I win the game; did I gain their affection; did I get the job; do I really matter?). Yet who I am in Christ and how God sees me is the only true measuring stick—and He loves me! I have much for which to be grateful.

I'm now with FCA and I'm now serving Christ as a missionary focused on coaches and student athletes, making myself available to be used by Him. Serving here is a gift from God and came after my own expectations of "life after FamilyLife/Cru" were not realized. I am grateful God continues to use me in full-time Christian ministry. I don't want to miss His plans for me.

I'm also grateful for God providing a support team that prays and gives generously so that Susie and I can do that which He called us to do. I would not be in this role without the partnerships He has blossomed. You are a part of every changed life, every encouraged individual God reaches through the outreach of FCA.

So, as you wish 2020 a not-so-fond goodbye, ask God to show you how to put on an attitude of gratitude so you enter 2021 seeking all He has planned for you to be realized. That is our prayer for you!

