

I Am Truly Thankful for This GOD-GLORIFYING GIFT



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #381 ~

I am very thankful for many things – for God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, God’s word, salvation, eternal life, my children, my church, friends, purpose, wisdom, protection, health, food, shelter, clothing – and Marsha, my wonderful wife.

Forty-two years ago yesterday (9/11/84), God saved Marsha and gave her eternal life. At that time, she knew she was forgiven of her sins and a new person in Christ. She was so glad to be a child of God, and told Him that she would do whatever He wanted. Two months later we met and shortly after that, she began coming to the church I was attending. As I talked to her, it was quite clear that she loved God, loved God’s word, and had a close relationship with Him, and was becoming a mature Christian. And this drew me to her. Prov. 30:18-19

Forty years ago tomorrow (9/13/86), Marsha and I were married. (**Marry Steve Hogan Always**). Our marriage verse was *"Glorify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together"* (Ps. 34:3). At that time, I had no idea of the plans God had for us, what would be taking place these past 40 years. As I think back over our lives together, I am truly amazed by the wife God gave me, and the great wife she has become. Prov. 18:22 is definitely true – *"He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord."*

I think of Marsha's love for God her Father, Jesus Christ, the Word, people, her children, her church, her friends, and for me. She's humble, a learner of God's word. She's loyal and faithful. She's giving, kind, and a blessing to both saved and lost. She's diligent, she's committed to her work and completes it. She perseveres, she doesn't give up, even in all the trials we have gone through. She's forgiving, patient, and compassionate. Of course, she's not been perfect, but she has been an excellent wife, the perfect wife for me. *"An excellent wife who can find? Her worth is far above jewels."* Prov. 31:10-12

I think of her hope. During that difficult time in the early 1990's, when Marsha's parents died within a 19-month span, she exhibited hope unlike anyone I had ever known. She was sad they were gone, but glad because she knew they were in a better place and that she would see them again. Her parent's gravestones display her hope of believers being glorified – *"raised in power"* on her Dad's, and *"raised in glory"* on her Mom's. (1 Cor. 15:43). During our marriage, we have had a heavenly hope, and a desire to learn all we could from God's word about the future He has for us. Marsha and I have talked openly about the blessings of dying, of death being the door to heaven and being with Jesus, and all our hopes being realized. We understand what Paul meant when he said, *"To live is Christ and to die is gain."* Phil. 1:21

I think of Marsha's spiritual gifts, and how she has served me, her family, her church, and the lost. She is an evangelist. She shares the gospel, from those beginning days when she worked in the law office, to

family members, neighbors, tech people, and workers she meets at stores. She's an encourager, a good communicator, a positive person with myself, our children, and Christians. She loves to talk about God's word, to give out promises, and to encourage people. She has written out and framed several verses that are hanging on the walls of our home, and she often writes uplifting notes to believers. She has faith in God, she trusts God, and she prays for me, our family, our church, our leaders, and others.

Marsha is a helper. Marriage is to be a relationship with a purpose, and God gave me a relationship with her so we could fulfill His purposes. She helped me by being a good mother, and helped me be a good father, in loving and training our children. Marsha helped me when I was a pastor teaching God's word and counseling and caring for people. As a lover of God's truth, she encouraged me to study and teach all of His word. She is also a wonderful singer at home and, for close to 30 years, on our churches' music teams. She's a great homemaker - she's a good cook and keeps a very clean house. She even cuts my hair. I can't tell you how thankful I am for all the different ways Marsha has served me. *"I will make him a helper suitable for him."* (Gen. 2:18). There's one more thing, and it relates to you.

In publishing these blog posts, Marsha has been a big help, a faithful helper, far more than anyone knows. I may write the blogs, but she does the rest. She loads the posts onto the website, picks and puts up the pictures, has made hundreds of calls to tech personnel, and fixes all kinds of problems. She is my IT specialist. She is also my personal secretary, and a good one at that. I can honestly say that you would not be reading these posts if it were not for all of Marsha's work over the past 10 years.

Now you may be thinking of your own life. But each situation, relationship, marriage, each person's gift and purpose is unique. To whatever degree you have had a difficult past, know *"that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who*

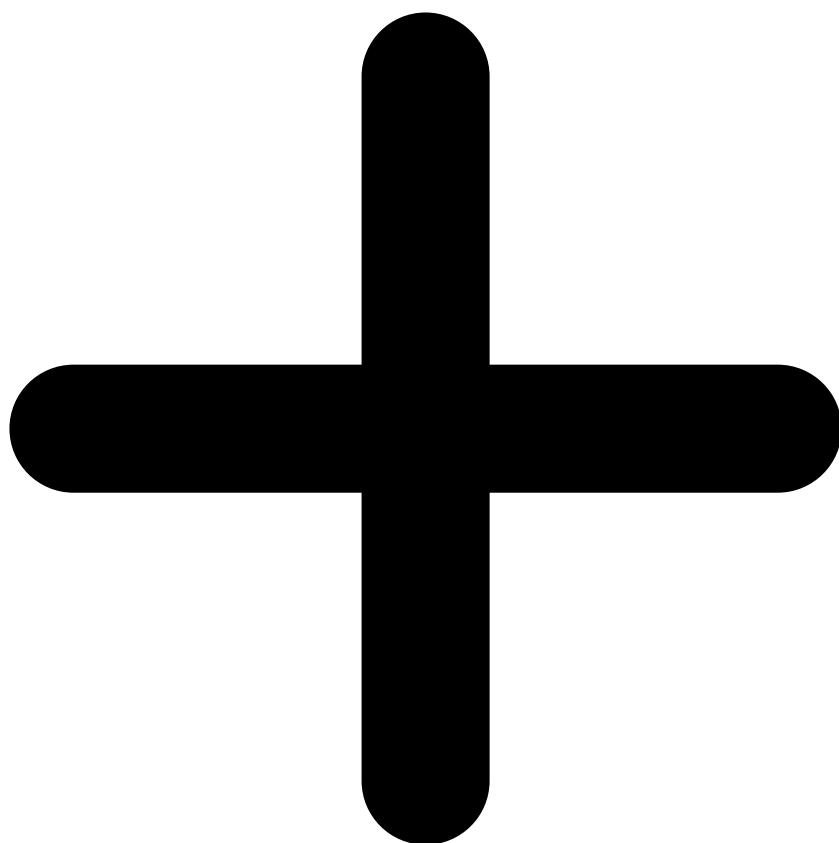
are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28), and that He has good plans for you. You have a reason to live, you have work that God wants you to do. “Let Your work appear to Your servants... Let the favor of the Lord be upon us; and confirm the work of our hands” (Ps. 90:14, Eph. 2:10). Be faithful to do your part, to use your gifts, to fulfill your ministry. “It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert.” Mark 13:33-34

I am extremely thankful that God put Marsha and I together for this time in history, and that He has specific plans He wants us to fulfill. As husband and wife, as co-workers, ministry partners, fellow servants, fellow-soldiers, and fellow members of the body, we are committed to carrying out God’s work. Through all the years, Marsha has been perfectly suited to help me fulfill the purposes God has planned out for us, and now also in these “retirement” years, as we draw nearer to the end of this age.

Many verses have motivated us to continue on for the Lord. Here are a few: *“How blessed is the man whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion! Passing through the valley of weeping they make it a spring; the early rain also covers it with blessings. They go from strength to strength until each appears before God in Zion” (Ps. 84:5-7). “They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him” (Ps. 92:13-15). “... having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you for your progress and joy in the faith.” Phil. 1:23-25*

Anything good that has taken place in the past 40 years, or will take place in the future, is only by the grace of God. *“I am what I am by the grace of God, and His grace did not prove in vain” (1 Cor. 15:10).* It’s by God’s grace that He led us, motivated us, and enabled us to serve Him.

And without question, it's all for His glory. *"How blessed are those who dwell in Your house! They are ever praising You" (Ps. 84:7). "To Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen."* Jude 24-25





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