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#1 (Lead-in) *Psalm 116 is a psalm of thanksgiving for recovery from illness. Feelings of thankfulness are connected to a response of action—what offerings can we give, to represent our thankfulness for God’s care and presence?*

Psalm 116:12-19 (NLT)

¹²What can I offer the LORD for all he has done for me? ¹³I will lift up the cup of salvation and praise the LORD’s name for saving me. ¹⁴I will keep my promises to the LORD in the presence of all his people. ¹⁵The LORD cares deeply when his loved ones die. ¹⁶O LORD, I am your servant; yes, I am your servant, born into your household; you have freed me from my chains.

¹⁷I will offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD. ¹⁸I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people—¹⁹in the house of the LORD in the heart of Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

#2 (Lead-in) *Living our faith, even in times of suffering, increases our holiness and sanctification. When we live in a state of peace and reconciliation with God, the Kingdom gains ground, and makes grace visible..*

Romans 5:1-8 (NLT)

¹Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. ²Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory. ³We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. ⁴And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. ⁵And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. ⁶When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. ⁷Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. ⁸But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

#3 (Lead-in) *As recipients of the grace of God, who is the good shepherd, we are called to a life of presence, to work, and to witness. Baptism and communion lead to a life of challenge, not frivolous comfort.*

Matthew 9:35-38 (NLT)

³⁵Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷He said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. ³⁸So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.”