

Youth Takeover August 12/13

Intro:

Share the Gospel story

The fill in the blank is: Grace inspires Gratitude

My name is Pastor Cliff and I am the High School Pastor here, hasn't youth takeover been awesome?

I have entitled my message today "The Power of Gratitude." Gratitude is a concept we know about but the beauty of it can sometimes get lost in our daily lives. And it all starts with the gospel

Gratitude is good for us and there are plenty of examples of gratitude in the Bible

1. 1 Samuel 2 after Hannah has been praying for years to have a child she gives birth to Samuel, and she takes a whole chapter to thank God saying, "My heart exults in the Lord, my mouth derides my enemies"
2. 10 lepers are healed by Jesus in Luke 17 but only one comes back to Jesus to thank him, he "praises God with a loud voice giving him thanks." this one leper stands out to Jesus and at the end of the story he tells the leper that "his faith has made him well." His gratitude made him well.

Let me tell you a couple reasons why gratitude is powerful

CREATE THE NEED- **Something about me not being great at this**

Gratitude opens the door to healthier relationships

Positive gestures benefit you by releasing oxytocin. When oxytocin is released it has the power to control our emotional response

Gratitude can increase sleep and mood

Gratitude increases empathy and lowers aggression "If you don't care about that, the people that spend time with you do."

Gratitude lessens anxiety and depression- why? Because you get the focus off yourself for a moment.

We have an opportunity to choose gratitude but what do we choose instead?

What destroys gratitude?

1. Entitlement

Entitlement is the opposite of gratitude and creates unhealth in our lives.

When everyone “owes me” then there isn’t much sense of personal responsibility.

When we feel like you deserve stuff it’s hard to be thankful

No one says “I Love how entitled that person is”

2. Envy

We have heard the cliché that comparison is the thief of all joy. It is a cliché for a reason

When we compare ourselves we often leave ourselves feeling inadequate and unhappy. WE FOCUS ON WHAT WE LACK RATHER THAN WHAT WE HAVE. Therefore we become dissatisfied with our lives.

We are envious of people without knowing the full story.

Sometimes gratitude can be simply, what do I have that I need.

3. Grumbling

Grumbling is really easy, I can always find something to grumble about. It is a heart issue.

Reminds me of the Israelites in the desert?

We must stay away from the cycles of complaint and turn our focus to praise, testimony and thanks

Illustration: “ I am a little late to the party” Ted Lasso scene where he talks about being curious or being judgmental? Dial this in

By not being curious this man missed something pretty important about Ted’s life. In the same way when we are entitled, envious and grumbling we miss the wonder and delight of God’s creation

How much am I missing because I am not paying attention to what’s going on around me?

When we choose these things we give up on all the benefits of gratitude. I’d rather grumble than sleep better

I have another example.

Illustration: Opening gifts Christmas morning loved ones

When we give a gift we just want them to be happy.

Why are gifts and gratitude linked?

Showing gratitude towards the one who gave you a gift honors the giver and encourages them to continue.

Talk about the challenge of gift giving or the power of it-

The donor of a gift and the recipient of said gift are forever entwined. When we take care of this gift it shows respect and honor to the person who gave it to us.

Part of gratitude is being willing to receive.

Body:

What does the Bible say about gratitude?

The apostle Paul says a whole lot about gratitude. But why does he focus so much on this? Because he learned that sometimes deep affliction and joy may go together.

Colossians 3- when talking about what it looks like to live as a new believer he ends the section in verse 17, “and whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him

- Paul is encouraging the Colossians to pursue maturity.
- It doesn't matter what we are doing whether it be watching the kids, doing accounting, teaching etc. Do everything by giving thanks to the Father.
- Paul is encouraging this church to seek things from above and one of those things is gratitude.

1 Thessalonians 5:16- In Paul's final instructions (he does this a lot) he says, “rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

The Thessalonians are asking questions and Paul is answering them. They are newer converts. Paul likes what he is hearing about the church but he wants to encourage them to move forward.

Prayer inspires gratitude

This prayer is not the words that come from our mouths but the spirit of prayer realizing our dependence on God for all that we have and are

Romans 8:28, “ in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[a] have been called according to his purpose.

It might be hard to see the bright side of a tragedy but if God is over all then he is working through that trial. This doesn't mean we just look at the bright side, but when trials come we know who is walking through them with us.

When he writes the letter to the Philippians Paul is in prison responding to a letter and a gift that the church had given to him. He writes in the final chapter...

Philippians 4- in verse 4 Paul says “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand

2 parts to this:

1, When tough things come your way, rejoice. Nothing is beyond the Lord's help.

We do not rejoice because of our changing circumstances, we rejoice because of who does not change.

Gratitude comes from knowing Jesus

2. Gentleness connects to gratitude.

What combats entitlement? Gentleness towards other people

Genuine Christian joy and gratitude is not inward looking. It is not by concentrating on our need for happiness but on the needs of others that we learn to rejoice.

Our gratitude blesses others

“Our Thankfulness to God is shown in the care we give to one another and to our enemies” Christine pohl “Living into community”

gratitude is countercultural

We have many reasons to be ingratitudes

Gratitude makes us feel uncomfortable because it’s a reminder that we need other people and our lives are dependent on their gifts and generosity.

Gratitude is uncomfortable because it means we are indebted to someone else.

Which means we need to have some perspective

Gratitude involves knowing that we are held secure by a loving God, and that the God we worship is trustworthy, despite the nearly unbearable sorrow we might encounter along the way (Psalm 13).

During this Psalm David is being persecuted by Saul because Saul wants to kill him. David demonstrates true gratitude here. He doesn’t shy away from his emotions, but at the end of the day he knows who is in charge and he “sings to the lord”

Gratitude is all about perspective-psalm 23

Psalm 23 expresses calm confidence in Yahweh

Who is the good shepherd? In John 10:11 Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

Illustration:As I mentioned to you before gratitude is not one of my biggest strengths and perspective is a huge reason why. I can spend so much time focusing on the negative that I miss that there are other things to look for. MY STUFF GETTING STOLEN A COUPLE YEARS AGO.

WHAT ARE WE GIVING OUR ATTENTION TO? IF WE DEVOTE OUR MENTAL ENERGY TO WHAT GOD HAS DONE TO ME IT DOES SOMETHING TO US.

Gratitude and celebration is an essential part of community life.

WORSHIP Team COME UP

Closing:

What are things in your life that you have received as a gift?

Where has grace abounded in your life?

I have seen families that have put a “Thanksgiving board” on their refrigerator.

Or its a question you ask around the dinner table “share something that you are grateful for.”

Hit pause on your life to see what you are actually thankful for.

What do you have the opportunity to thank God for today?