

November 10, 2019 – Elmont Baptist Church

Text: Romans 1:18-22; Ephesians 5:3-4

Message Series: Be Thankful

Week 2: Sin-Crushing Gratitude

Introduction:

1. It's November and that means that Thanksgiving is close.
2. Like I mentioned last week, Thanksgiving has for a long time been my favorite holiday. It's not over commercialized, it's pretty laid back, and there's no shifting the meaning to something else. It just has a purity about it.
3. Our culture doesn't appreciate it because we don't want to recognize the need to give thanks, especially if it is inferred that we are giving thanks to God.
4. But for most, even those who are in Christ, Thanksgiving comes and goes without us giving it the attention it deserves.
5. Yes, we should be thankful all the time, but there are certain times where our minds should instruct our hearts to really focus in on a particular discipline or celebration of the faith.
6. We will do that in December with the historic church tradition of Advent where we look back to Christ's first coming to help us anticipate His return.
7. Last week we said that Thanksgiving is a great time to reflect on what it means to be thankful and work hard to discern if our gratitude is God-glorifying or closer to idolatry by wanting God's blessings but not wanting Him.
8. So we continue today and for the rest of the month looking to the Scriptures for instruction and asking the Spirit to empower us to Be Thankful.
9. Like I mentioned last week, coming into this series for me honestly, I was not as excited about Thanksgiving this year. There was just the reality that I was not where I want to be in this area of being thankful.

10. I wish I could tell you that one week later everything is well and I feel whole, but that's not how it works for me most of the time.
11. There are still struggles that I wish I didn't have. There is still suffering that I wish wasn't happening. There is still stress that I wish didn't exist but getting back to being focused on and naming specific things that I am thankful for have helped. Especially thanking God for who is He and who I am in Christ, which is the foundation of God-Glorifying Gratitude.
12. Today we're going to look at using gratitude as a weapon. We don't think of being thankful as a powerful part of our arsenal, but hopefully after today we will see it as a Sin-Crushing weapon that God has given us in our battle against the enemy and our flesh.
13. Sin is ultimately a trust issue; a matter of believing or not believing God. When we believe a lie of the enemy or a sinful desire of our flesh, we move our trust from God and His Word to the enemy and his lie, or the desire of our flesh.
14. This is why mental assent to historical facts is not enough to save anyone. Belief for salvation has to go to a heart level.
15. We sin because we believe that satisfaction or safety exists in something else other than God through Christ. We rely on ourselves and our way. We become prideful.
16. Gratitude is a great weapon against sin and the pride that produces it.
17. We experience gratitude when we understand that we have received something we didn't earn or deserve from someone with greater ability or resources than us.

Read Romans 1:18-22; Ephesians 5:3-4

Sin-Crushing Gratitude

1. **Not Being Thankful – Romans 1:18-22**
 - a. **Is the enemy's default position**

b. Weakens us, and strengthens temptation

- i. Rather than giving thanks to God, the One most worthy of it, for all He is and all He does, the enemy at some point decided he wanted to be God. That didn't work out well at all for him.
- ii. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were given free reign of all of creation with only one rule, one tree of which they were not to eat.
- iii. Rather than thanking God for walking with them daily after a great day's work, and for giving them all the food and pleasure they could ever imagine, they became convinced that they needed more.
- iv. In Romans, we read about the depravity of human-kind and some of the most perverse sins we can commit, but before that we read what was at the core of such heinous sinful behavior.
- v. It was that they did not honor God nor give thanks to Him. That was their underlying sin.
- vi. You can say that unbelief and pride fuel that, and that would be right, but Paul focuses in on thanklessness being a key in the downfall of those who will die apart from Christ.
- vii. One of the first out-workings of pride and unbelief, which are heart issues, is ingratitude.
- viii. In 2 Timothy 3:1-5, Paul includes ungratefulness in a laundry list of "big sins" that will be evidence we are in the last days.
- ix. In Luke 6:35, Jesus, in talking about God's kindness, speaks of the ungrateful right alongside those who are evil.
- x. When we notice that our thankometer is low, we need to understand that pride and unbelief is set in at some level and other sinful attitudes and behaviors will follow.
- xi. Most of the time we focus on the **visible** sin, but fail to use some very practical and biblical weapons to fight the sins that so easily entangle us.

- xii. Being thankful to God for all He is, has done, and promises to do is one of the most effective weapons to fight your sin.
- xiii. We're going to look at several sinful conditions that are common to us and fuel all kinds of other sinfulness. This list is obviously not exhaustive, but it covers many that are common to us.

2. How Gratitude Helps Fight...

a. Covetousness:

- i. *“Coveting is a desire, a motivation so strong that the one who covets something will have it if there is any way possible to do so, even if it involves evil. Coveting is a consuming desire, which is highly competitive. It is an evil attitude, which will likely lead to an evil act. Coveting is a kind of conspiracy in one’s soul to commit evil.”* – Bob Deffinbaugh
- ii. Thank God for what I have been given and entrusted with. Be specific about what is good about each thing you have in your life.

b. Discontentment: Thank God that He is a good Father and would not withhold anything good from His children.

c. Anger: Thank God for His unending mercy, and that in His way and time, He will vindicate you

d. Impatience: Thank God for what He is doing in you as a result of this current trial. Thank Him that it is temporary and that life with Him is eternal.

e. Worry/Anxiety: The American Psychological Association, which is about as secular as you can get, says that giving thanks helps relieve depression. There is medically documented proof that expressing gratitude improves mental and emotional health. We do understand also that anxiety and depression can be a clinical issue dealing with chemical imbalances in the brain. Medication is necessary at some points, but either way, giving thanks is a discipline we should develop. Thank God for all the ways He has proven faithful to keep His promises and taken care of you in the past.

Thank Him that He is sovereign and compassionate. Thank Him that no detail of your life escapes His notice or concern.

- f. **Unbelief:** Thank God that He love you and cares about every detail and will work ALL things together for your good. Recount His past faithfulness and find hope in His guarantee to keep His promises in the future.
- g. **Pride:** Thank God that you have been given countless things that you do not deserve. Most of all, God Himself through Jesus Christ.

Closing

1. What are you thankful for? Nothing wrong with listing physical or material things, but are you honestly more thankful for those things than the God that gave them to you?
2. Are you struggling to be thankful right now? Take a minute now and then several later to ask your Father, who is “good, for His steadfast love endures forever” help you see Him better and be thankful for who He is and who you are in Christ.
3. Let’s pray and then confess to the Lord the honest condition of our heart and mind today.