

081819

- I. My notes.... WWC message 8/18
- II. Series: Active Faith
 - a. Title: An Active Faith Lives Grateful
 - b. Text: Col. 2:6-7 CSB
 - c. Quote: Gratitude looks at what is there, not what isn't. Pastor Rick
- III. Introduction
 - a. We all have scars. Whether they are physical - from some kind of injury, emotional - from a hurt that life has brought your way, or even mental - the suffering that results from deep trauma. Great way to start a message and be positive, right??? Life happens to all of us. The way we continue to grow and keep stepping is with the support and encouragement of each other. Today, I want to make an observation - I want to ask you a question that may tweak your viewpoint. I'll get there in a moment
 - b. I'm grateful for who we are as a church, as a group of believers. I see people with a heart for others and learning to live in a way where the actions and attitudes they show are in line with their faith. I'm not talking perfection, that isn't the requirement. It's always been an issue of heart first - actions result from what the heart holds. Hold onto hurt - despair - unforgiveness, the actions that others observe are mistrust - anger - selfishness. Hold onto hope - grace - forgiveness, the actions you exhibit are kindness - compassion - understanding. Life that is marked by angst, anxiety, and anger pushes others away and shows little joy. Behaviors that show hope, help, and happiness (joy, delight) understand that each step we take is a privilege and we can choose how we are going to face them.
 - c. Are you facing a challenge right now? (No. this isn't the question). There are times that we will have difficulties and struggles. Remember the words of Jesus...
"I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world." (John 16:33)

CSB). Imagine the reality that peace (the absence of all confusion, disorder, and conflict) can be infused into each step of life. Jesus was telling His followers that there would be disorder and disunity. And we can choose to trust, choose to live different.

- d. This message and the next few are about living an Active Faith. The intention is to allow your faith, your trust in the Lord, to permeate every area of daily life. In that way, the things that others see in you will reflect the beliefs you hold in your heart. Let me share 2 scriptures with you.... (1) *“Because if you confess with your mouth “Jesus is Lord” and in your heart you have faith that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Trusting with the heart leads to righteousness, and confessing with the mouth leads to salvation.” (Romans 10:9-10 CEB).* (2) *“Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” (Galatians 3:11-12 ESV).* Our testimony is observable, it is practical. The way we live shows what we believe and who we trust. It starts with our words and continues in our actions.
- e. So, after all this, we get to the question. When you are facing a challenge, a difficulty, a trial, something you don’t understand and find hard to deal with, can you be grateful? Will you choose joy over despair? Now, many want to say YES... but the actions they show don’t exhibit that choice

IV. Text

a. Colossians 2:6-7 (CSB)

So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.

- b. Life begins, as a believer, when we first accept Jesus as Lord
- c. The continuation of our growth, of a deeper intimacy developing, is a continued dependence on grace... We grow toward maturity

- d. It's the definition of living by faith
- e. Understanding that results a life that is grateful
- f. Continuing to live "with", to live as, Christ is right there - next to you. Standing with you in the face of difficulty. High fiving you when there are victories. That's what we have been taught
- g. I talk to so many people that "profess" Jesus as Lord. They have committed (ok, that may not be the truth. They want protection without transformation) to Him. But they sure aren't grateful

V. Note

- a. So many believers have the attitude that we "have to get everyone saved".
- b. If salvation was the goal, then at that moment we would just go to heaven.
- c. In fact, I think we could understand the Great Commission better... **Matthew 28:18-20 (Phillips NT)**

"But Jesus came and spoke these words to them, "All power in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. You, then, are to go and make disciples of all the nations and baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you and, remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."
- d. Make disciples - invest in the life of another. Be that resource of grace, even when it pushes you.
- e. Instruct - not your words or wishes but the words of our Lord. Think about what He told the Disciples and those listening to do... He taught them to serve, to follow His example (see John 13:15); He taught them that loving God and loving others was the key (see John 13:34-35).
- f. Trust - He is with every believer, every person that trusts Him. (see Rom. 8:38-39; 1 Cor. 3:16)
- g. We need to become relationship builders

- h. It takes investment and responsibility
- i. Giving to others... show loving and being helpful. At times this will be challenging. But making the choice to rejoice, always, will change the view

VI. Gratitude

- a. There are places, in the life of a believer, that we can show gratitude and by doing so see the results in our daily life

- b. Romans 12:1-2 (TLB)**

And so, dear brothers, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy—the kind he can accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you.

- c. Faith must translate into practical actions
- d. Kindness and compassion are measurable. They are not the earmarks of behaviors today. In fact, when someone is kind it often makes the evening news
- e. When we understand what was done for us, what we have been saved from, we are going to live grateful - to have joy, no matter what - and to share that gratitude with those around us
- f. Faith in Christ is practical faith, it is tangible actions, and it demonstrates real love
- g. Let's look at some places we can live grateful...

VII. Grateful for conversation

- a. Can you be grateful for the hard times?
- b. Isn't it a great thing to know that your requests are heard by the Lord God?

c. We can talk to Him about anything.... And it results in peace and a better viewpoint on life...

d. Philippians 4:6-7 (CEB)

Don't be anxious about anything; rather, bring up all of your requests to God in your prayers and petitions, along with giving thanks. Then the peace of God that exceeds all understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus.

e. Talking with the Lord relieves stress... I just needed to get that out there

f. God wants to be involved in the conversation. Are we foolish enough to think we have to “pray” to inform Him of what is going on?

g. This passage is used a lot to tell us to relax, that God is listening

h. We should be very grateful that the Creator of the Universe wants to chat with each of us

i. One of the great contradictions of our faith, as believers, is that God wants us to talk to Him about everything. He wants to be involved in a conversation with us about life... even though He already knows everything. So why pray?

j. We pray for grace in times of need (Heb. 4:16), we pray for strength to resist temptation (Eph. 6), we pray for help (James 4:2), and we pray for peace

k. Now, I'm not talking about the response given in the Miss America Pageant... “World Peace”. What we are assured of, due to prayer, is a peace that Christ gives - a peace that doesn't make sense to those who don't believe

l. Most of the time, when we are stressed - when we worry, we aren't thinking about being thankful.

m. Being grateful, in the face of adversity, is a sign of trust... Trusting the Lord

n. Being grateful leads to being joyful. And that joy is our strength

VIII. Grateful for Love

- a. “My deepest awareness of myself is that I am deeply loved by Jesus Christ and I have done nothing to earn it or deserve it.” Brennan Manning
- b. What an incredible realization!
- c. God loves us - you and me - because of who HE is, not who we are or what we have done.
- d. Only in the Bible do we find this, “*God is love*” (1 John 4:8, 16). God showed His love among us in this: “... *He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him*” (1 John 4:9).
- e. On an unplanned delay Philip Yancey tells a story about a conversation he had, with a lady who was waiting for the same flight. He was miserable (sad, down) and negative. After listening for some time, this lady asked a simple question... “Philip, do you ever just let God love you?”
- f. After thinking about her question, he came to this realization... “I realized with a start that she had brought to light a gaping hole in my spiritual life. For all my absorption in the Christian faith, I had missed the most important message of all. The story of Jesus is the story of a celebration, a story of love. It involves pain and disappointment, yes, for God as well as for us. But Jesus embodies the promise of a God who will go to any length to win us back. Not the least of Jesus’ accomplishments is that he made us somehow lovable to God. “(The Jesus I Never Knew, pg. 269, Zondervan, 2002).
- g. Because of God’s love, we can be grateful
- h. **Psalm 118:29 (NLT2)**
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever.
- i. Are you thankful for God’s love? Most people would shout YES!
- j. Then why do we live and love with conditions?
- k. God’s love is freely given, without condition.
- l. Love and acceptance are key to healthy relationships and that is just what the Lord God gives us by grace

- m. God's love is serving - it is strong but gentle at the same time
- n. God's love is understanding - it has standards but it strengthens people so they can live by those standards
- o. God's love is kind and compassionate - knowing that we, people - man, are broken. We have been hurt and have ever evident flaws. This kind of love is what we long for and dream about
- p. And we get to experience it.... Grateful??? Absolutely

IX. Last Words

- a. Gratitude grows (and flows) from our relationship with the Lord God. It's a result of His presence in our journey
- b. It gives us a reason to communicate, to celebrate, and to contemplate.
- c. **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (CSB)**
 Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- d. Gratitude, always, in the midst of any and every circumstance, is God's will for believers
- e. God is with us... always. He promises to accomplish good things in our lives - He will meet our needs
- f. I don't know if you every read the book or saw the movie The Hiding Place. It was the story of Corrie Ten Boom, her family, and what they went thru hiding Jews during WWII. There were a lot of challenges - difficulties - hardships. Gratitude was hard to find. Let me share one of those stories and what Corrie learned...
- g. Ravensbruck was known as one of the worst German concentration camps during World War II. When Corrie ten Boom and her sister Betsie found themselves imprisoned there, they were disgusted to discover that their barracks were infested with fleas.

When Corrie began to complain, Betsie insisted that they instead give thanks, quoting 1 Thessalonians 5:18, “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” With some persuasion, Corrie finally joined her sister in thanking God for the fleas.

Several months later, the two sisters expressed their surprise that the camp guards had never come back to their barracks to disrupt or prevent the evening Bible studies they held for their fellow prisoners. It was then that Corrie realized that the very fleas which she had so despised had actually been a God-sent protection from the cruel guards.

- h. Let's Pray
- i. Life can be challenging; may you find grace and peace. Life can be painful; may you find healing and hope. Life can be hard; may you find reasons to be grateful for the storms
- j. Grace First... Grace Always
- k. Live simple, live practical, love eternally