



The following sermon was given by Pastor Wayne Flowers
at Smythe Street Church on Sunday October 11th, 2020

Rhythms – Gratitude as a Way of Life

We are in a series called Rhythms.

Finding and establishing good and godly rhythms and daily practices in our lives.

Question...Which do you think comes more easily...

- a) Learning to see and focus on the negative, difficult and bad stuff in life?
- b) Learning to see, celebrate and be grateful for the good things in life?

Obvious answer is A.

Why is this? Especially in light of the fact that:

The Bible – be example and by directive – instructs us to be thankful!

Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. 5:19,20

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1st Thessalonians 5:18

Why Gratitude?

1. Gratitude transforms everything it touches.

Gratitude is always a central component for good change in your life.

Let's dig into how this happens...

a) Gratitude shift's our focus!

From the nasty and negative to the good and encouraging.

Two components of shifting our focus and embracing gratitude are:

Noticing and Savouring!

Being aware and mindful!

I **remember** the days of long ago; I **meditate** on all your works and **consider** what your hands have done.
Psalm 143:5

Gratitude begins with noticing the good things.

Our goal is not to be blind to the difficult things.

Just to see the good things that are always present and be grateful for them!

This can change your life!

Make it a daily rhythm and prayer...Open my eyes to see your wondrous work!
Make it a spiritual, mental and practical habit of your life.

Savouring is Being in the moment. Soak it in. Treasure. Ponder. Sometimes it is the immediate moment. Don't rush through it.

Sometimes it is a moment of time from your past.

This is not about getting stuck in nostalgia and sentimentality.

This is about being thankful for the amazing times and moments in your life and being filled with courage to keep moving forward.

Could you therefore work miracles, you could not do more for yourself than by this thankful spirit, for it turns all that it touches into happiness. William Law

b) Gratitude is the cure for a toxic mindset.

We have a disease...It is this feeling that whatever we have, it is not enough.

We want *people* to be more than what they are.

We want *life* to be more than what we are experiencing.

We want *what we have* to be more than what it is.

This is a disease that is rotting our soul and eroding our spiritual stability.

There is a cure!!

Gratitude turns what we have into enough.

2. Life is incomplete without gratitude.

Illustration: A child who receives a gift or anything given to them even if it is small...“What do you say?”

We all know that something is incomplete.

Giving thanks brings completion.

There is a wonderful story in the Bible that points this out.

10 lepers who were healed by Jesus.

11 Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, 'Jesus, Master, have pity on us!' 14 When he saw them, he said, 'Go, show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were cleansed. 15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16 He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him – and he was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus asked, 'Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Has no one returned to give praise to God except this Samaritan?' 19 Then he said to him, 'Rise and go; your faith has made you well.' Luke 17:11-19

Jesus encountered ten men who were lepers. Go and show yourself to the priest.

They felt gratitude no doubt, but they did not express it.

Could it be that we are like the 9?

Vigorously moving forward. Life is good. Change has happened.

Why your even going to the temple and following the instructions of the High Priest. But....

Maybe you need to go back....fall at the feet of Jesus an say THANK YOU!!!

Maybe there is someone you need to thank. Stop...turn around...find them...say thank you!!

What are the enemies of gratitude?

First of all, they are not what you think.

Sickness? Poverty? Mistreatment at the hands of others?

None of these have the power to rob you of an attitude of gratitude unless you let them.

1. Entitlement.

The belief that one is inherently deserving of privileges or special treatment.

I deserve this because...I am better than most people....I work hard.

- We take people for granted. Where does that lead? Loneliness!

GRATITUDE NOT EXPRESSED FEELS LIKE INGRATITUDE TO OTHERS!!

Ingratitude feels like rejection.

Ingratitude may be a an outgrowth of an over-inflated view of self.

The antidote for unhealthy entitlement is gratitude expressed with humility.

2. Pride.

Pride kills gratitude because it refuses to embrace the fact that we both need and are blessed by God, by people and by things beyond ourselves.

What if we could experience life everyday by truly feeling and believing that we are getting more than we deserve and more than we expected?

Experiencing the joy of receiving a gift is enhanced when we truly feel that we did not deserve it or did not expect it.

The story of Simon the Pharisee shows us the ugliness of entitlement and pride.

When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is – that she is a sinner.' Jesus answered him, 'Simon, I have something to tell you.' 'Tell me, teacher,' he said. 'Two people owed money to a certain money-lender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love

him more?' Simon replied, 'I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.' Then he turned towards the woman and said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven – as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.' Then Jesus said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' The other guests began to say among themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' Jesus said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.' Luke 7:36-40

Simon felt like he owed Jesus nothing. No hospitality. No kindness. No gratitude.

He could only think of the following...

How this was going to look on social media...I have Jesus in my house.

How Jesus must be so happy to be in the home of a prominent religious leader.

Why is this sketchy woman coming in to mess up my party.

Grateful people are...

- A joy to know. - Foster feeling of gratitude in you.
- Grateful people attract good things and good people.
- Make great leaders!