

Small Group Guide: The Grateful Church

Colossians 1:3-14

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Share about someone who shared the gospel with you or significantly influenced your faith journey. How has that person's faithfulness impacted your life?

Sermon Overview

This message explored how gratitude springs from the gospel and spreads infectiously from person to person—from individual believers to congregations and ultimately to the world. Using Colossians 1:3-14, we examined three key areas of Christian gratitude.

Key Points from the Sermon

Point 1: Christians Should Be Grateful for Those Who Live Out the Gospel

Scripture Focus: Colossians 1:3-4, 7-12

Discussion Questions:

1. Paul expressed gratitude for believers he had never even met. Why is it sometimes easier to be grateful for people who directly bless us than for believers we don't know? How can we grow in this area?

2. The sermon mentioned that "love for the saints is a true mark of genuine faith." How does our love (or lack of love) for other Christians reveal the authenticity of our faith?
3. Epaphras traveled to tell Paul about the Colossian church. When was the last time you shared with someone else about how God is working in your church or in another believer's life? What holds us back from doing this more often?
4. Paul didn't just thank God for the Colossians—he also prayed for their continued growth. Who in your life are you both grateful for AND actively praying for? How can we be more intentional about this?

Personal Reflection: Take 2-3 minutes of silence. Think of three believers (in your church or elsewhere) whose faith and love encourage you. Commit to praying for them this week.

Point 2: Christians Should Be Grateful for the Hope Found in the Gospel

Scripture Focus: Colossians 1:4-6, 12-14

Discussion Questions:

1. The sermon stated that "the gospel is the gas that feeds the flame of Christian gratitude." How does remembering the gospel message fuel your daily gratitude? When do you find yourself forgetting this connection?
2. We explored what God has saved us FROM (domain of darkness, slavery to sin, hell) and what He's saved us TO (heaven, inheritance, eternal life with God). Which aspect of salvation do you tend to focus on more? Why is it important to remember both?
3. The sermon described our heavenly inheritance as "beyond description, better than anything we could hope or dream." How

does meditating on this future hope change the way you face current trials or disappointments?

4. Verse 12 says the Father "qualified" us for this inheritance through Christ alone. How does understanding that salvation is entirely God's work (not our own merit) increase our gratitude?

Practical Application: This week, spend time each morning reflecting on one aspect of the gospel—what you've been saved from or what you've been saved to. Journal about how this truth should impact your day.

Point 3: Christians Should Be Grateful for Those Who Spread the Gospel

Scripture Focus: Colossians 1:5-7

Discussion Questions:

1. The sermon emphasized that "none of this hope or gratitude is possible if people don't first hear the gospel." Who shared the gospel with you? Have you ever thanked them or told them how their faithfulness impacted your life?
2. Jonathan shared how his father came to faith through someone who invited him to hear a recorded sermon. What "ordinary" opportunities might God be giving you to share the gospel with someone?
3. The sermon challenged us to "focus on, to meditate on, just imagine, what if they did accept it?" How does fear of rejection keep us from sharing the gospel? How can focusing on the possibility of transformation motivate us?
4. Paul says in Romans 10:14, "How can they believe in him if they have never heard about him?" Who in your life needs to hear the gospel message? What specific step could you take this week to share with them?

Group Challenge: As a group, commit to each sharing the gospel with at least one person this month. Report back at your next meeting about the experience—whether the person accepted or rejected the message, what you learned, and how the group can pray for that person.

Key Takeaways

1. **Gratitude should be contagious.** When we see God working in others' lives, we should share that gratitude with fellow believers, which stirs up even more worship and thanksgiving.
2. **The gospel is the source of all Christian transformation.** Our faith, love, hope, and gratitude all flow from understanding and believing the good news of Jesus Christ.
3. **Growing in knowledge of God's will is foundational.** Through Scripture and prayer, we understand God better, which leads to walking worthy of Him, bearing fruit, and increasing in Christlikeness.
4. **Gratitude should lead to both praise AND petition.** When we're grateful for other believers, we should both thank God for them and pray for their continued growth.
5. **Gospel gratitude should overflow into evangelism.** Our thankfulness for what the gospel has done for us should motivate us to share it with others.

Practical Applications for This Week

Individual:

- Identify three believers you're grateful for and pray for their spiritual growth daily
- Spend 5 minutes each morning meditating on one aspect of your salvation

- Reach out to thank someone who shared the gospel with you or disciplined you
- Identify one non-believer in your life and pray for an opportunity to share the gospel with them

As a Group:

- Share testimonies of how God is working in your lives or church—practice "infectious gratitude"
- Pray specifically for each other's growth in knowledge of God's will, spiritual wisdom, and understanding
- Hold each other accountable to the challenge of sharing the gospel with one person this month
- Consider supporting a missionary or evangelist as a group—someone spreading the gospel in another place

Closing Reflection

Read together: **Colossians 1:12-14**

"Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Final Question: How has this study changed or deepened your gratitude for the gospel? What is one specific way you'll let that gratitude overflow into your life this week?

Closing Prayer

Pray together, thanking God for:

- The gospel and the salvation it brings

- Specific believers in your lives who demonstrate Christ-like love and faith
- Those who shared the gospel with you
- Opportunities to share the gospel with others

Ask God for:

- Increased gratitude that overflows into all areas of life
- Boldness to share the gospel despite fear of rejection
- Growth in knowledge of His will and spiritual wisdom
- The salvation of specific people in your lives who don't know Christ