

Discussion Questions



The sermon explores whether it's possible to give thanks in every circumstance, even when life is difficult. Using the example of Jesus giving thanks before multiplying the loaves and fish, we learn that the bravest thank you is the one we pray before we see how things turn out. The message highlights three things we can always be thankful for: each other, God's awesome love, and salvation.

Discussion Questions

Section 1: The Challenge of Gratitude

1. The sermon opened with two stories—Alexander Whyte thanking God that "it's not always like this" and Matthew Henry finding four reasons to be thankful after being robbed. Which story resonates more with you and why?
2. Do you agree with the statement: "Sometimes it's hard to be thankful"? What are some circumstances that make gratitude particularly challenging?
3. What's the difference between being fake/pretending to be happy and genuinely choosing gratitude in difficult circumstances?

Section 2: Jesus' Example

4. In John 6, Jesus gave thanks BEFORE the miracle happened. Why is this significant? How does this challenge our typical approach to thanksgiving?
5. The sermon states: "The bravest thank you we can pray is the one we say before we see how things turn out." Share

- an example of when you (or someone you know) gave thanks before seeing the outcome. What was the result?
6. What does it look like practically to thank God for a difficult situation before it's resolved?

Section 3: Three Reasons to Be Thankful

Reason 1: Each Other

7. Read Ephesians 5:19-20. How often do you thank God specifically for other believers in your life? Who in this group (or church) are you particularly grateful for and why?
8. The sermon used the puzzle illustration—we're all pieces that complete the picture. How have you experienced being "the missing piece" for someone else, or someone being that for you?

Reason 2: God's Awesome Love

9. The sermon highlighted that God didn't just speak us into existence—He formed us with His hands. How does this detail about creation impact your understanding of God's love for you?
10. Reflect on the balloon illustration—God holding tightly to the string, so we don't float away. When in your life have you most felt God "holding the string"?
11. Read Jeremiah 31:3. What does it mean to you personally that God has loved you with an "everlasting love"?

Reason 3: Salvation

12. The sermon used the illustration of a broken toy being replaced by someone who loves you and has paid for a new one. How does this simple picture help you understand salvation?

13. **John 10:10 says Jesus came to give us life "to the full." What does a "full life" in Christ look like practically? How is it different from just surviving?**

Key Takeaways

- Gratitude has proven health benefits: better sleep, lower depression, improved cardiovascular health, and even lower mortality rates
- We can choose to be grateful even before we see how situations resolve
- Three constant reasons for gratitude: the church community, God's love, and salvation through Jesus
- Grateful people are more enjoyable to be around and reflect Christ better
- True gratitude isn't about being fake—it's about choosing to see God's goodness even in difficulty

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. **Gratitude for Each Other:**

- Text, call, or write a note to 3 people in your church family specifically thanking God for them and telling them why you're grateful they're in your life
- During your daily prayers, specifically thank God for members of your small group by name

2. **Gratitude Before the Outcome:**

- Identify one current challenge or uncertain situation in your life
- Before you see how it resolves, write out a prayer thanking God for what He will do in that situation
- Share this with an accountability partner in the group

3. **Gratitude Journal:**

- Each day this week, write down three things you're grateful for
- Include at least one thing from each category: people (each other), God's love (something that shows His care), and salvation (a spiritual blessing)

4. **Family Gratitude Practice:**

- At dinner each evening, have everyone share one thing they're thankful for that day BEFORE they knew how it would turn out
- Model thanking God for challenges, not just blessings

Group Accountability:

- Share which application you're committing to with the group
- Exchange contact information with at least one person for check-ins during the week
- Plan to report back next week on what you experienced

Closing Reflection Questions

- **How has this discussion changed your perspective on gratitude?**
- **What's one specific thing you're committing to do differently this week?**
- **How can this group pray for you as you practice gratitude in difficult circumstances?**

Closing Prayer

Pray together, incorporating these themes:

- Thank God for each person in the group by name
- Thank God for His unfailing love and salvation
- Ask for help in choosing gratitude before seeing outcomes
- Pray for specific situations group members are facing where gratitude is difficult