

BEING THANKFUL IN TOUGH TIMES
Sermon Series: Gratitude or Grumbling
Next Steps Devotional Guide
October 31, 2021
Kelly Stanley

1. Most people never appreciate what they have until it is taken from them. Reflect back over your past. Where in your life did you take for granted what you had until you lost it and what was the impact on you?
2. Read Philippians 2:14 from your sermon notes. Do you do all things without grumbling, faultfinding, griping or complaining? If not, where are you most vulnerable to grumble, find fault, gripe and complain? God commands us to obey Philippians 2:14. Do you think this is even possible? Why or why not?
3. We live in a culture that loves to gripe, complain, and grumble.
 - a. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18 from your sermon notes under point #1 under the heading, "*When we grip and grumble . . .*" How is griping, grumbling and complaining an affront to God? He sees it as complaining against Him. Why?
 - b. Read 1 Corinthians 19:9-10 and Exodus 12:11-12 from your sermon notes under point #1 under the heading, "*When we grip and grumble . . .*" This was a big sin of the Hebrews and Jews. All they could see was the rage of the Egyptians, not the road through the Red Sea. After all the miracles God did to free the Hebrews from Egypt, why do you think they resorted to the sin of griping, grumbling and complaining?
 - c. Now compare this to yourself. After experiencing all the good God has done in and through you, why do you choose to gripe, grumble and complain?
 - d. Read Ephesians 4:29 from your sermon notes under point #2 under the heading, "*When we grip and grumble . . .*" How does griping, grumbling and complaining destroy our testimony and witness for Christ?
4. Life comes at us. We can be having the best day and in a second it all can be ruined.
 - a. Read James 1:17 as well as the Greek New Testament explanations for the words translated as "good" and "perfect" from your sermon notes under point #1 under the heading, "*No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . .*" Right now make a list of the good and perfect gifts God has given to you. What does this say to you about God's grace to you?
 - b. Imagine for a moment: if God gave you what you deserved, rather than what you needed, what do you imagine that would be for you?
 - c. Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and Psalm 103:2-5,8-10 from your sermon notes under point #1 under the heading, "*No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . .*" Jesus said from the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:20, NLT). What intangible gifts of grace has God given to you?
5. Everyone makes plans. God has plans for you too. Many times these conflict.
 - a. Do not blame God for your mistakes. Do not blame God for your wrong and/or bad choices. When we say that God has a plan for your life, that doesn't mean that you're in it! You could be out of God's plan your entire life. You have to choose to be in God's plan for your life. What evidence is there to prove you are in God's plan for your life?
 - b. Read Proverbs 14:12 and Hebrews 13:20-21 from your sermon notes under point #2 under the heading, "*No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . .*" When in your life did you blame God or get angry with God that your plans did not match His plans for your life?
 - c. Many people, including Christians believe that when something bad happens, it is God who is causing that suffering in their lives. That is not always true. Read Isaiah 53:4-5 from your sermon notes under point #2 under the heading, "*No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . .*" Now read from your Bible Jesus' words in Matthew 11:11:28-29. What is God saying to you personally through these passages?
 - d. Anything something bad happens, we want an intellectual explanation for it. But intellectual or rational explanations fail to answer, satisfy and comfort our emotion pain. Why?
 - e. Read Romans 8:28 from your sermon notes under point #2 under the heading, "*No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . .*" It is easier to thank God for the good in our lives. How do bad things work together towards the good of those who love the Lord and have chosen to be part of His plan?
6. Today we discard and throw away so much stuff. Anytime bad happens, we are vulnerable to think God has left our universe.
 - a. Read Hebrews 13:5b from your sermon notes under point #3 under the heading, "*No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . .*" Think back over your life, when was there a time you felt God was not there for you in some bad or horrible situation? Why did you feel that way? Were you ever able to eventually see God in that situation? If you were, what made that possible?
 - b. Read Isaiah 43:2 from your sermon notes under point #3 under the heading, "*No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . .*" Every person who is "in Christ," has felt they were drowning in something terrible. One

of the best ways we can give thanks to God when this is happening is by praising God through songs. What are some of your favorite Christian songs and/or hymns that help you?

- c. Prayer is almost extinct in most churches today. If you call on someone to pray, they can appear to be almost choking on their own tongue. Everyone agrees we should pray, but not everyone is willing to pray. Prayer is the second best way to praise God when times are tough. Read Philippians 4:6 from your sermon notes under point #3 under the heading, *"No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . ."* If prayer is a test, what grade do you think God would give you on a scale from 0-100? Why did you give yourself that grade?
 - d. According to Philippians 4:6, God commands us to tell Him every detail of our lives. Not to inform Him, because He already knows. Why do you think God commands us to do this?
7. Read Romans 5:3-4 from your sermon notes under point #4 under the heading, *"No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . ."* Many people are a character, but God wants to work on your character to make it more like Christ's character.
- a. The only thing you are taking with you to heaven is your character. Nothing else. How intentional are you at making your character more like Christ's character and what is the proof?
 - b. Read Jesus' words in Mark 8:36 in your sermon notes under point #4 under the heading, *"No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . ."* It matters more who you are, not what you have acquired. It matters more the person you are becoming, not the possessions, or position, or power you have. How can you apply Jesus' words in Mark 8:36 to your life?
 - c. Would God say that today compared to a year ago, or 5 years ago, you are more humble, you are less proud and less arrogant, less conceited, more Christlike today than you were a year ago, 5 years ago?
 - d. Read Philippians 2:13 and 2 Corinthians 3:18b from your sermon notes under point #4 under the heading, *"No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . ."* Where in your life do you see and others see God making your character to be more like Christ's character?
 - e. Too many Christians focus on the faults, failures and sins of others rather than their own. Read from your own Bible Jesus' words in Matthew 7:3-5. Jesus certainly knew how to paint a picture and use metaphors. What are those "planks" or "logs" in your own eyes you need to remove before focusing on the "planks" and "logs" in other people's eyes?
 - f. Read 2 Corinthians 12:9 from your sermon notes under point #4 under the heading, *"No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . ."* God says His power is most visible through your weaknesses, not your strengths. your weaknesses can be any bad habit, or hurt or addiction or bad attitude or pain or loss. Who better to help an alcoholic than a recovered alcoholic. Who better to help a parent who has lost a child than a parent who has lost a child. Who better to help someone going through divorce than someone who has gone through divorce. You get the picture. Your "weaknesses," whatever they be, is what God wants to give you grace and power so that you can heal and impact others. What would that be for you personally?
 - g. Read Psalm 50:23a and Psalms 97:12 from your sermon notes under point #4 under the heading, *"No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . ."* Have you stop and thank God for all He has done in your life in spite of all the bad things?
 - h. What experience has God used that has changed your life (ex., mission trip, Bible study group, a friend, a ministry, sharing your faith, etc.) that you need to thank God for right now?
8. Every should know and believe that earth is not our home; heaven is. Read Jesus' words in John
- a. Read Jesus' words in John 14:2-3 under point #5 under the heading, *"No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . ."* Most people who lives in an apartment or home is always having to get their rooms clean and ready, especially when they know they are having guests.. Jesus is actually getting your room ready for you. This is a place were you are welcomed. This is a place where you are comfortable. This is a place where you are loved. Let it sink deep into you. What does that look like and mean to you?
 - b. Read Jesus' words in Matthew 25:34 in your sermon notes under point #5 under the heading, *"No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . ."* Jesus says that His kingdom and heaven are something He prepared for you from the time lHe created this world. Wow! This is not some fly-by-night or last minute preparation. it is personal. It is intentional. It is purposeful. It is well thought out. Holy guacamole! What does this mean to you?
 - c. Read 1 Corinthians 2:9 from your sermon notes under point #5 under the heading, *"No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . ."* Hollywood never portrays heaven correctly. Why views of heaven by Hollywood have you scene and in what was has it had an affect on your view of heaven?
 - d. Read Revelation 21:4 and Revelation 21:1 from your sermon notes under point #5 under the heading, *"No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . ."* In heaven there is no sorrow, sadness or sickness. There is no death, disease or destruction. All of that is gone. For everyone who was "in Christ" and died that you knew, who are you looking forward to seeing again? List them.
 - e. Read 2 Corinthians 5:10 from your sermon notes under point #5 under the heading, *"No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . ."* You get assigned tasks and responsibilities in heaven based on how intentional you were at making your character more like Christ's character. Does that impact you in any way? How?
 - f. Read 1 Peter 1:4-6 and John 10:28-29 under point #5 under the heading, *"No matter my situation, I can always be thankful . . ."* Many Christians fear they can lose their salvation. Why?
 - g. Read 2 Corinthians 4:8-9. 14, 18 under point #5. What does this mean to you and why?