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A People Grateful For God's Grace

1 CORINTHIANS 15:9-10

Introduction

1. Have you ever encountered someone you considered to be ungrateful?
2. I am sure that all of us have at one time or another in our lives, but what are some of the behaviors typically exhibited by a person who ungrateful?
 - a. An ungrateful person is someone who acts as if your time, money or effort on their behalf are owed to them.
 - b. No matter how much you may do for them, it never seems to be enough.
 - c. When they need assistance, they reach out to you, but when you need assistance, they fail to show you support or tend to disappear.
 - d. Ungrateful people focus more on what is wrong or missing in their lives than what they have.
3. We find the problem of ingratitude often addressed in God's Word.
4. To take for granted blessings which we have received from God is definitely a sign of ingratitude.
5. In Luke 17:11-19 we find a number of individuals who failed to express their gratitude for our Lord's healing. (Tell story of ten lepers)
6. The person who is truly faithful is also the person who is truly thankful.
7. This morning I want you to consider what happens in our lives when we are genuinely grateful for God's mercy.
8. What is it that grows out of our appreciation of God's willingness to forgive us?

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I. Humility

A. A SON'S RESPONSE TO THE GRACE SHOWN HIM

1. In Luke 15, we find Jesus telling a story about a man who had two sons.
2. The younger son asked his father for the share of the estate that was to be his upon his father's death — a rather presumptuous request.
2. However, the father divided his wealth between his two sons.
3. A few days later, this son left home with his newly acquired wealth and went to a distant country where he wasted it all in "wild living" (NIV84).
4. When his money ran out and his friends departed, "a severe famine occurred in that country" and he soon found himself feeding pigs to survive.
5. Jesus said that when this young man "came to his senses," he said to himself,

"How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'" (Luke 15:17–19, NASB95)

6. This young man began his journey back home.
7. While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him. He ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.
8. In the son's response to his father, we see profound humility.

"I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men" (Luke 15:19).

Slide 3**B. HUMBLE THANKSGIVING IS OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACIOUS GIVING**

1. Every good thing we have in life, we have received
2. Everything belongs to God.

"For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills."

(Psalm 50:10, NASB95)

3. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of heavenly lights" (James 1:17, NIV84).
4. **Thankfully**, "He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103:10, NASB95).
5. One night, as Jacob, the youngest son of Isaac, was returning home with his large family and all of his flocks and herds, he prayed to God and said, "I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant" (Genesis 32:10a, NASB95)
6. When we realize our own unworthiness, but see God's grace in response, we respond with a love that is humbly thankful.

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II. Devotion

A. DILIGENT DISCIPLESHIP AND SERVICE

1. These two things grow out of our recognition that we have not earned, nor do we deserve the grace which God has shown to us.
2. As we saw a moment ago in Paul's letter to the saints in Corinth,

"For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me." (1 Corinthians 15:9–10, NASB95)
3. After being healed by Jesus, the man who many had known as the Gerasene demoniac wanted to go with Jesus, but our Lord told him,

"Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you." (Mark 5:19, NASB95)

4. Our gratitude for God's salvation in our own lives prompts us to share the good news with others.

Slide 5**B. LABOR MOTIVATED BY LOVE**

1. This is the greatest labor in the world.
2. Paul said, "Let all that you do be done in love" (1 Corinthians 16:14).
3. When it came to the church in Thessalonica, the apostle Paul said that this was one of the things he constantly remembered about them.

"constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father," (1 Thessalonians 1:3, NASB95)

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III. Gentleness

A. WE ARE PATIENT TOWARD OTHERS

1. Our realization of just how patient God has been with us prompts us to be patient with those around us.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 John 4:11, NASB95)

2. Because we are grateful for God's kindness toward us we make the effort to deal gently with others.

"Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:1-2, NASB95)

"The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who

are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.” (2 Timothy 2:24–26, NASB95)

3. Have you ever noticed that when we are unthankful, we also tend to be impatient.

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B. WE ARE FORBEARING AND EAGER TO FORGIVE

1. These are the natural results of our having been forgiven by God.

“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32, NASB95)

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.” (Colossians 3:12–13, NASB95)

2. Ultimately, we should treat others in the same way we want God to treat us.

“For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.” (James 2:13, NASB95)

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IV. Godly Character

A. WE WANT TO BE LIKE CHRIST

1. We still find ourselves singing the words to a hymn written by T. O. Chisholm almost 130 years ago.

Oh, to be like Thee, blessed Redeemer,

**This is my constant longing and prayer;
Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures,
Jesus , Thy perfect likeness to wear.**

**Oh, to be like Thee! Full of compassion,
Loving, forgiving, tender and kind,
Helping the helpless, cheering the fainting
Seeking the wandering sinner to find.**

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Chorus

**Oh, to be like Thee! Oh to be like Thee!
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art;
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness;
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.**

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2. Paul instructed the Christians in Corinth to “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).
3. He told those in Ephesus, “be imitators of God, as beloved children” (Ephesians 5:1).

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B. WE WANT HIM TO LIVE IN US AND THROUGH US

1. Paul told the Christians in the churches throughout Galatia,

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” (Galatians 2:20, NASB95)
2. Why is this so important?
 - a. It is only by His abiding in us that we are able to bear much fruit (John 15:5).

“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in

him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5, NASB95)

b. He alone is our hope of eternal glory (Colossians 1:27).

"... Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

Conclusion

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1. We truly need to be thankful for God's grace, not only in word, but also in our deeds.

"Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth." (1 John 3:18, NASB95)

2. Humility, devotion, gentleness and godly character are just a few of the things in our lives which are the result of our gratitude for His grace.
3. The Lord's Supper of which we partook a few moments ago serves as a weekly reminder of our debt of gratitude to God.
4. Nothing is more vital in our relationship to God than gratitude.
5. Nothing tends to be more productive of such gratitude than our meditation upon our Lord's sacrifice for us.
6. Ultimately, we all want to be with Him where He is.

"In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:2-3, NASB95)

7. Is your life one which has been cleansed from all sin by Christ's sacrifice.
8. If not, why not do so today?