GRACEPOINT CHURCH

Weekly Devotional

The 30-day Shift:

The Transforming Power of Gratitude

Cultivating Gratitude – Linda Magengenene-Moyake – 16.11.2026

Scripture

Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

Observation

Philippians 4:6-7

Life can be hard, and the Philippians knew this well. Apart from the challenges of daily life, they also had the fact that they were Christ-followers which opened them up to challenges others did not have to face. Paul offered a solution. He encouraged them to take everything to God in prayer. Just as a child can take anything to a parent, certain that parent will be interested and will help in the situation they are facing, so the Christ-follower can take anything to God, sure of His interest and concern. Whether they took their past, present or future, or the needs of other people to God, He would hear their prayer and respond. Paul goes on to say that, because of God's care, the Christ-follower should express their gratitude whether the answer was evident or not, and whether the subject of their prayer was a sorrowful matter or one that brought joy. In this way the Christ-follower would not only be thankful but also show their willingness to submit to the will of God. As they pray, they should remember the love of God (which only wants the best for them); the wisdom of God (which knows what is best) and the power or God (which can cause the best to come about). When the Christ-follower remembers these three things, the result is perfect peace – the Peace of God. Paul uses a military word to describe this peace which implies that God's peace stands guard over the believer's heart.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

- God's people are recorded as rejoicing in many circumstances. It was a word they used as a greeting to one another; they rejoiced during feasts, and victories; Mary, Elizabeth and the Magi are recorded as rejoicing at the birth of the Messiah. Paul now urges the Thessalonians to rejoice always in all circumstances. Paul and Silas had shown them how this was possible when they sang hymns and prayed in their prison cell (Acts 16:25) and on other occasions during his ministry.
- He goes on to encourage the Thessalonian congregation to pray whatever is happening in their lives. Whilst life may be too busy to pray without ceasing, the Christ-follower can have confidence that they are connected to God's love and they could live in such a way that honoured God, praying for the needs that they encountered and giving thanks for the blessings they noticed as they went through their day.
- Once again, Paul urged the Thessalonian congregation to give thanks at all times.

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These three components of the Christian life comprise the will of God in Christ Jesus for all who follow Him. They are part of God's plan for His people.

They also describe the life of a happy church, which is joyful, which is praying, and which is grateful. There is always something for which to be thankful, even on the darkest day.

Icebreaker:

What happened in your day that was an unexpected blessing.

How does the memory of it make you feel now?

Was it a big enough blessing for you to immediately thank God for it; or was it so small, you didn't think about saying thank you to Him, even though it warmed your heart.

What do you want to say to God now about this blessing?

Spend a moment in silence and tell Him what it meant to you.

Application

- How is your gratitude journal going? What effect has it had on you in the last two weeks?
- Showing gratitude is not always easy when life is not going well. How can we support one another in this group by being grateful together? How do you show gratitude when the person sitting next to you is suffering or grieving in some way? What does that mean to you as a member of the group?
- *When gratitude is cultivated, it shifts our focus*: What does it mean to you when you are encouraged to focus on the goodness of God rather than the detail of what is going on in your life? How does keeping your eyes on God and His love for you help you through a difficult time*?
- *When gratitude is cultivated, it makes room for honesty*: Do you wear a mask to hide your struggles when you are praying, or when you are with other Christ-followers. Can you be real with God? Or with those who make up your Christian community? What would it take for you to be real? How does the thought make you feel? Would it help you to cope with the challenges that face you, if others knew and offered you their support? How do you think God would respond to your honesty with Him and with others? How does being a member of this group encourage you to be open and honest with the other members?
- *When gratitude is cultivated, it transforms how we live*: Do you know God's peace? How do you experience it? How does it help you cope with your day-to-day life? Can you see it as a gift? Can you see your life as a gift? Why/why not? Can you see God's love and goodness despite any challenges you are experiencing now? How does His love reveal itself in your life?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

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Pray for one another regarding the issues raised during your discussion time and any other needs of the group.

Service

Make a point of being thankful to God and anyone who helps you in any way this coming week. Tell them what their comment or act of service means to you. Be genuine in your thanks. Continue to keep your gratitude journal.

Bibliography

William Barclay's Daily Study Bible

https://sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary-old/1-thessalonians-516-24/

https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dsb/1-thessalonians-5.html

**Remember, if we turn away from the sun the shadows are in front of us. When we face the sun, the shadows are behind us. Keep your eyes on God.*