



Grateful Church

Grateful Church: Part of the “Slow Church” Series

- WEEK TWO: STARTING JULY 14 -

OVERVIEW:

“Many spiritual disciplines encourage us to look inward, but not so gratitude. As we practice living thankfully, we are in a posture of realizing that as humans we are interdependent. We all rely on others to meet our physical, emotional and spiritual needs.”

- Richard Foster

Scarcity draws us inward and leads us toward a toxic self centeredness. When we live ungratefully our inner world gets closed off from our outer world. When we only rely on ourself, rather than interdependently with God and others, it can lead to all kinds of physical, emotional and spiritual issues.

American individualism teaches us we are all on our own and we have to figure it out ourself. The myth of the self made hero and the long ranger run deep in our bones. The way of Jesus offers a different narrative. Not one of scarcity or individualism but one of abundance and community.

Paul encourages us to set our minds on “things above”. He gives us more detail in Philippians 4:8:

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things."

Part of being a Grateful Church is focusing our minds on the good things God has given us through others. Friendship. Support. Wisdom. Laughter. Generosity.

We simply would not be where we are without the help of others. There are many people in our lives we can be grateful for. This is the beauty of the church. We are a spiritual family who serves and loves one another in a way which sparks gratitude.

Who are you grateful for at Renaissance? Who has been a significant part of your spiritual journey? Who has supported you when you felt overwhelmed? Who has helped shape who you are today?

Take some time and reflect on why you are grateful for the people in your life and how they have impacted you. If you feel prompted, practice some gratitude by sharing with them why you are grateful for them.

Gratitude is good news for both the giver and the receiver. We bring good news and can focus on the outward gifts God has given us through practicing gratitude. We can choose to focus on how people have hurt us or all the things we are ungrateful for. My encouragement is to focus on “things above”. We know all the reasons for our gratitude are gifts from above because God is the giver of every good gift.

Scarcity and individualism does not produce the life Jesus has on offer. When we focus on the good gifts God has given us through community it enables us to actively be involved in a loving and grateful spiritual family.

As Drew said last week, our prayer is that this month reset the gauges for you, and that you discover the beauty of what God has done and is doing for you, together.

- Jacob

DAILY READING:

Today: Phillipains 4:8
Thursday: Colossians 3:1-4
Friday: Philemon 1:4
Saturday: 2 Thessalonians 1:3
Sunday: Break
Monday: Romans 1:21
Tuesday: Colossians 3:15-17

WEEKLY PRAYER:

God, we are grateful for the gift of community.

May our love and our labors
Echo your love and your labors God.

Let all that we do,
In this brief moment to love,
In the work of community and gratefulness,
Flower in winsome and beautiful foretaste
Of greater glories yet to come.

O Spirit of God,
Now shape our hearts.
O Spirit of God,
Now guide our hands.
O Spirit of God,
Now build your Kingdom among us.

We are grateful.
Amen.