

Introduction:

- Review
 - Last week we started a new series on Gratitude. It was an introductory message defining gratitude so we know what we are looking for. And it was a message with some practical application so that we know how to use it. (Gratitude journal) We are believing that the path of gratitude will lead us someplace beautiful.
 - Gratitude is showing (and expressing) a feeling of thankfulness and appreciation.
 - Gratitude closes the gap between giver and receiver creating a wonderful opportunity of relationship.
 - Gratitude not expressed is not gratitude.
 - Gratitude is the ability to recognize the gift and see/perceive the heart of the giver.
 - And we learned four steps of gratitude. Choose, recognize, appreciate, acknowledge.
- Today we shall look at the importance of humility in cultivating a heart of gratitude.
 - ***Humility is the key to gratitude. Luke 17:11-19
- In the movie *Phenomenon*, John Travolta plays an ordinary man (George Malley) who is reborn on his 37th birthday when he begins to suffer from the effects of a rare brain tumor, which actually increases his brain activity. As his capacity to understand things that were once beyond his grasp grows, he sets out to tackle an old problem: stopping the critter that's been eating the vegetables in his garden. His previous attempts -- building a taller fence, burying the fence deeper into the ground -- both failed. But as George Malley ponders the situation with an expanded genius, he decides to take a radically different approach to the problem. Instead of making the fence more difficult to breach, he leaves the gate wide open. Sure enough, a rabbit creeps out the open gate and then hops away. While he had been trying to keep the rabbit out, the troublesome critter had been hiding in the garden the entire time!

APPLICATION This story illustrates the human tendency to think that what ails us comes from without. We blame our behavior and our problems on life's circumstances. Looking outward, we fail to address the culprit that hides within. Regardless of what lies outside the fence, each of us has a sin nature. We need only look to our own sinful tendencies to find the real threat to our garden. Lets open the gate this morning and find out whats eating at our gratitude.

I. Removing the Gratitude Roadblock

- A. Pride stands against cultivating a heart of gratitude. It is hard to have a grateful heart if you are in pride. If you are cultivating a heart of gratitude, pride will be the rocks in your field or the critter in your garden.
 - 1. *"God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."* (1 Peter 5:5, NKJV)
 - a) Proud = insolent, arrogant, and boastful. All of these words are self focused. When we are operating in insolence, arrogance and boasting we are not in a heart of gratitude nor are we cultivating a heart of gratitude.

- b) God resists/opposes comes from Gr *antilego* meaning that God speaks against the proud. Knowing that God spoke creation into existence makes me not want to have Him speaking against me. "Just sayin"
- 2. "Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord;...(Proverbs 16:5, NKJV)
Pride is taking on the picture of an enemy of God. Satan "I will ascend, I will arise..."
- B. Fruit of Pride
 - 1. Pride provokes arguments. says, "Pride...breeds quarrels" "*Pride leads to conflict...*" (Proverbs 13:10, NKJV)
 - 2. Pride creates misunderstanding & a lack of consideration & appreciation for others.
 - a) "*He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife,...*" (Proverbs 28:25, NKJV)
 - 3. Pride prevents real fellowship. Usually, people who are proud will not allow you to see them as they really are.
 - 4. And if the fruit of pride is division, conflict and strife. It is a wall in the midst of relationship. Pride separates us from each other. Remember: one of the points last week was that gratitude encourages conversation or relationship.

II. Humility is the Key

- A. How do we talk about humility? What are we to understand about humility?
 - 1. God commands it. "*He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?*" (Micah 6:8, NKJV)
 - 2. You can't get into the Kingdom without it. "and said, "*Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*" (Matthew 18:3-4, NKJV)
 - 3. To be forgiven one must first enter the state of humility. 2 Chron 7:14 If my people... will humble themselves... To repent requires us to approach God in humility. Humility allows us to see the gift of salvation and the loving heart of the all powerful, holy God who makes it all possible.
- B. What is humility?
 - 1. The quality or state of not thinking you are better than other people. In the OT "humility means to bring down, to lower ones self, to force submission. It is the moral and spiritual condition of the godly." Theological Wordbook of the OT.
 - 2. CS Lewis: "Humility is not thinking less of yourself – but thinking of your-self less. Your focus isn't on you - it is on others. Your focus is on other people. You are people centered – rather than self centered."
 - a) "*(Now Moses was very humble—more humble than any other person on earth.)*" (Numbers 12:3, NLT)
 - 3. In the NT: humility comes from the word *tapeinoo* Gr. to bow down, self abasement. Not consumed with thoughts about self but about God and others.

- a) It means seeing others as higher than our self. The word (tapeinoo) literally means "to level a mountain or a hill." Humble people are those who have no hills sticking up. They are not filled up with the hot air of arrogance and pride.
- b) In humility one finds salvation—the ability to see both the gift of salvation and the heart of the giver.
- c) Humility is not pushing ourselves forward, nor is it pushing ourselves backwards. It is forgetting self and pushing others forward and upward.

III. Unlocking Gratitude

- A. We have looked at pride and we have looked at humility. Now lets put it all together.
 - 1. Pride keeps us in a narcissistic place.
 - a) Meaning we love looking at ourselves, are only concerned about ourselves, and think more highly of our selves.
 - b) Pride's fruit is strife, division, conflict and separation all because it is only concerned about self. Pride thinks about ME! Not others.
 - 2. Humility on the other hand considers others better than itself. Humility is not selfishly promoting or lifting itself above others. Humility will take you down a path leading to death. Death to self is humility's destination. Humility is recognizing others and seeking to lift them up. Ie. Jesus humbled himself to lift us up!
 - 3. Therefore we want to attack pride with a vengeance and we want to grow in humility. We want to seek out and destroy pride in our lives and promote and grow in humility.
- B. ****Those who lack humility will not be grateful when they receive. In their mind, they do not see the gift or giver. They see something they deserve or are entitled to.**
 - 1. Ie. The 10 Lepers: Maybe the reason that only one of ten returned to the Healer, is the fact the other nine lacked humility. They saw in this act of healing as something they were due or entitled to.
 - 2. Human beings can develop such an inflated sense of their own importance that we take everything good that comes our way as if it were our due. When we do that we become or we reveal our ungratefulness.
 - 3. Humbleness is linked to generosity.
 - 4. Humility is able to see others because it is not self absorbed. Therefore it is the foundation of gratitude. Gratitude must see others in order to be expressed.
- C. Because humility is not self focused it allows us to look outward. It allows us to see the value and importance of others. Here is what we learned last week; ****"Gratitude is the ability to recognize the gift and see/perceive the heart of the giver."**
 - 1. *"Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too."* (Philippians 2:4, NLT)
 - 2. *"Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand."* (MSG)

3. Don't just be interested in what is going on in your life (Jesus did this), but be interested in the lives of other people too. Look out for them. The Greek word for "look" is "scopos" from which we get the word "scope" – ie. Like the scope on a rifle. A Telescope – a microscope – both help you see things better. Care about the lives of other people. Pay attention to their needs pay attention to them.
- D. When our eyes are off ourselves we can recognize the gift and the giver. When we can recognize the gift and the giver we can appreciate who they are and what they have given. When we can recognize and appreciate the gift and giver, we are positioned to acknowledge or express gratitude.
- E. Gratitude: Is showing (and expressing) a feeling of thankfulness and appreciation.

Conclusion:

- Can you see the gift?
- Can you see the giver?
- Maybe you need to open the gate and release the critter that has been destroying your gratitude garden.
- Jesus wanted all 10 of those lepers to see beyond the miraculous healing they received. He wanted them to who it was that gave to them. He wanted a relationship with them. Only one was humble enough to recognize what he had received and who it was that gave it.
 - ***God in humility saw something in us that was worth saving and paid the ultimate price to purchase our redemption.
 - The heart that humbly turns to Him and cries out for salvation is a humbled vessel bringing the gift of their life to God and with all sincerity. He/God sees the gift and the heart of the giver.