

thankFULL: whatever, whenever

1. _____ you're _____ is greater than _____ you're _____.
2. Thankfulness is best prepared in a _____, not an _____.
3. What _____ us _____ through the _____ of the One Who _____ us.
4. Determine blessings _____ instead of _____.

We showed that clip - "The Big Table" - for one important reason: we need to know that we have a place in the family

Everything we're going to talk about this morning makes no sense if you're not at the table

In fact, our main verses - 1 Thess. 5:18 and Eph. 5:20 - border on crazy without it!

I'm going to share four important truths that can help us be thankful for whatever, whenever, but the most important step toward a life of continual thankfulness is a saving relationship with God through Jesus

That is the starting point, and if you've not taken your seat at the big table, you can right now before we even start learning the four lessons.

Now, the four truths...

1. Who you're with is greater than what you're in
 - We've all found ourselves in bad situations before
 - Funeral homes, emergency rooms, long lines at Carowinds
 - Sometimes, when you're with the right people, even the worst of situations can become tolerable
 - We've talked about position versus condition before, and that if we're in the right position with God, it changes our condition
 - Col. 2:6-7 speaks to this:
 - a. Look at all the position words:
 - i. "Received Christ"
 - ii. "Live in Him"
 - iii. "Rooted and built up in Him"
 - iv. "Strengthened in the faith"
 - b. The result of being with Christ?
 - i. A changed condition
 - ii. Not necessarily the situation, but our condition
 - iii. We'll be "overflowing with thankfulness"
 - I was reminded of this truth early this morning at 5:05 am
 - Sydney woke me up after having a bad dream about a tornado and asked me to tuck her back in bed
 - What she was in was not something to be thankful for; but her reaction to it was to make sure she was with me
 - Acts 5:41 had always blown my mind until I understood this position truth
 - a. They had just been flogged, so they were hurting (v. 40)
 - b. They left that place rejoicing
 - c. Why? They were with Jesus! They had suffered for "the Name."
 - If you're finding it hard to be thankful in any situation, asking yourself who you're with is the first place to start

2. Thankfulness is best prepared in a microwave, not an oven
 - Percy Spencer never knew he was going to change the world when a candy bar melted in his pocket in 1946

- He was working with microwaves, and that melted bar led to experiments with popcorn and eggs, which opened the door for microwave ovens to become a common household item
 - They work because the microwaves make the molecules in the food vibrate, which causes increased heat
 - Simply stated, microwaves heat from the inside out, and ovens from the outside in.
 - We'll never be thankful for whatever, whenever as long as our thanks is externally motivated
 - Col. 3:15
 - a. Let the peace of Christ rule
 - i. Where? "In your hearts"
 - ii. We won't always have peace on the outside, but we can choose to have peace rule us on the inside
 - b. What's the result? Thankfulness.
3. What confuses us passes through the hands of the One Who changes us
- a. Let's state the obvious: there are situations in our lives that confuse us
 - b. We ask why a lot, not just because we're spiritual 2 year olds, but because we honestly don't understand.
 - c. We don't understand what's happening and we don't understand why God is letting it happen
 - d. This is the place where we must make a choice: do we trust God to change us?
 - i. None of us (probably) would claim perfection
 - ii. We know we need to change, even if we don't know what specifically needs to change!
 - iii. Do we trust God to be sovereign enough to use what confuses us in order to change us?
 - e. Do we really believe Romans 8:28 and Genesis 50:20?
 - f. If we do, then it changes how we approach even the most painful circumstances:
 - i. With a teachable spirit instead of just a troubled one
 - ii. With an open heart instead of an closed one
 - iii. With an expectation that something greater will be revealed that will make sense of what confuses us now
 - g. The Boys and the Piles of Poo
 - h. When we understand that the bad in this world is what shows the sovereignty and power of God the most, we'll find ourselves thankful that He not only doesn't waste our pain, but He transforms it for our good and His glory
4. Determine blessings there, not here
- a. This is the last one, and it ties closely to the previous truth, because this one is about perspective also
 - b. All of us live in the present, but some of us never look past the present
 - c. As a result, our level of thankfulness changes based on what we see here and now
 - i. If our present situation is good, then we're blessed and thankful
 - ii. If it's bad, then we're depressed and sorrowful
 - d. But Paul offers another way to determine what is a blessing: look down the road a bit!

- e. 2 Cor. 4:16-17
 - i. They stayed strong inside even when the outside was bad
 - ii. They determined the present (here) based on the future (there)
 - iii. The greatness of there put what was here in proper perspective
 - 1. The glory waiting for them changed how they saw the present
 - 2. He called vv. 8-10 “light and momentary”
- f. Bottom line? Stop looking at what you can see and start looking at what you can't
- g. Change your perspective from here to there, and you may find yourself thankful for blessings in disguise.