

5 Marks of a Thankful Soul

Opening Question: Describe a thankful person with one word that isn't "thankful."

Tell them: Pastor Michael said that thankfulness is easy to see in another person. **Ask them:** *Why would you think that is so?*

Ask them: *Why do you think thankfulness is important to God?*
(See Psalm 50:14; 2 Thess. 2:13)

The 5 marks of a thankful soul:

1. **Thankful Souls Count Blessings – Tell them:** Let's look at Philippians 4:8 - *"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if something is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things."*

Tell them: This is something we should be doing constantly, but oftentimes we forget to count our blessings, so today let's take a step in that direction.

Ask them: *Is anyone willing to tell us something they count as a blessing, perhaps that others might see as a curse?* (thinking of the Beatitudes of Matthew 5:1-11)

Tell them: Thankfulness is calming and centering; it helps us to trust God. **Ask them:** *What do you think of that idea?*

Ask them: *What is the opposite of counting your blessings? How does that opposite usually end up making you feel?*

2. **Thankful Souls Embrace Trials – Tell them:** Let's look at 1 Peter 4:12–13 - *"Dear friends, do not be astonished that a trial by fire is occurring among you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in the degree that you have shared in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice and be glad."*

Ask them: *What do we learn about our trials in this passage?*

Tell them: Pastor Michael said that most of us run from trials, but Peter writes that we should not only be unsurprised by trials, but we should rejoice in them to the degree that Jesus suffered. Embrace the trial as you being able to identify in the sufferings with Christ.

Ask them: *How does your thankfulness in trials honor Christ?*

Ask them: *In what ways do we reject trials? For example: work or family issues, national or world dilemmas.*

- 3. Thankful Souls Talk to God – Tell them:** Pastor Michael said that giving thanks is the salsa that gives flavor to the chips of prayer.

Ask them: *Why do you think that would be so?*

Let's look at Phil. 4:6 - *"Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to God."* (Philippians 4:6)

Tell them: It is hard to be stressed or worried while giving thanks. If you want to be more thankful, remind yourself to: *"Be thankful in every situation, for every situation and because of every situation."*

Ask them: *How does that sentiment make you feel? To be thankful in each of those ways?*

Ask them: *What does prayer and petition without thanksgiving say about our thoughts on God? (It says something big and not-so-pretty.)*

- 4. Thankful Souls Curb Complaint – Tell them:** Pastor Michael went over Phil 2:14-16 - *"Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God without blemish though you live in a crooked and perverse society, in which you shine as lights in the world by holding on to the word of life so that on the day of Christ I will have a reason to boast that I did not run in vain nor labor in vain."* (Philippians 2:14-16)

Ask them: *Why is complaint unbecoming of a Christian? (It accuses God, denies His sovereignty and makes us look like the world.)*

Tell them: If we are honest with ourselves, most of us complain multiple times a day.

Ask them: *What kinds of things do you like to complain about?*

Ask them: *How many of you can be honest enough to say that complaint is a staple of your running commentary on life?*

Tell them: Many of the trials of 2020 might be "fiery trials" like we saw in 1 Peter 4:12-13 that are not meant to astonish us.

Ask them: *In what ways could we look at the trials of 2020 as something to rejoice over rather than to complain about?*

Tell them: Pastor Michael said, “Complaining about God is a sin, but complaining *to* God is a Psalm.”

Ask them: *How do you feel about complaining to God?*

Ask them: *In what ways do we sometimes absentmindedly complain about God?*

5. **Thankful Souls Give Thanks** – **Tell them:** Pastor Michael said that thankful souls give thanks publicly. **Ask them:** *How many of you are comfortable giving thanks publicly? If not, why aren't you?*

Tell them: We looked at Colossians 3:15-17 - *“Let the peace of Christ be in control in your heart (for you were in fact called as one body to this peace) and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and exhorting one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, all with grace in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”* (Colossians 3:15–17)

Ask them: *What do we learn about God in this passage?*

Ask them: *What do we learn about giving thanks?*

Ask them: *How might these 5 marks of a thankful soul be a good gauge of your spiritual life?*

Ask them: *What did you most appreciate about this sermon?*

Tell them: In order to embrace this idea of thanksgiving, let's take a few minutes to give thanks publicly for one another and for our church.

Tweetable Quotes to Remember

1. “Giving thanks is the salsa that gives flavor to the chips of prayer.”
2. “Complaining about God is a sin but complaining to God is a Psalm.”