

COMMUNITY GROUPS

STUDY GUIDE

Gratitude in the Gray *Luke 22:14-20*

Summary

Are you ready for some good news? *There's always something to be thankful for.* It's a simple truth, but it also provides a giant opportunity to appreciate and meditate upon on the gospel. In fact, Jesus – knowing that the horror of the cross lay in front of Him – fully participated in worship and offering of thanks to God during the Passover meal. It was a traditional part, this giving of thanks, during the Seder meal, which would give rise to our celebration of communion. It's all a giant signpost pointing to a crucial reality: *gratitude is powerful.* It can totally re-orient your whole outlook on life. Here's why...

1. Gratitude Recognizes Graceⁱ
2. Gratitude Remembers Godⁱⁱ
3. Gratitude Rejoices in Goodⁱⁱⁱ

Put simply, gratitude enables your soul to rest. It is the secret of contentment. What's the bottom line? We are thankful for our inseparable connection to God through Jesus Christ. This is an unending source of the greatest thanksgiving in the world. It's available today. And that's the gospel!

Getting to Know Each Other

Pastor Alan shared how the last 3 weeks have been overwhelming. Where have you experienced this? How are you doing? Where do you need the Lord's help?

Read Luke 22:14-20

¹⁴ And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the

kingdom of God.”¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves.¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

Deeper Into the Bible

1. The Jewish Seder meal and Passover celebration focused on how God did more than could be expected. He did more and more and more in saving Israel! That’s part of the background for Jesus giving thanks in verse 17. How does this help you understand these verses and appreciate them even more? How can this help us remember the power of thanksgiving?
2. How can this passage lead you to appreciate the significance and blessing of celebrating the Lord’s Supper together? What stands out from the text? What was it like having communion as part of the service this week?
3. The Lord’s Supper is a celebration, a fellowship, a sharing in the New Covenant (1 Corinthians 10:16). The New Covenant means our relationship with God is the result of the perfect record of Jesus and His covenantal relationship to the Father. We engage with and enjoy that relationship when we celebrate communion. Have you thought of communion this way before? How can this help you connect with Him as we take communion together on Good Friday?

Application

1. Look back through #3 in the Summary section. Consider all the ways the gospel gives us cause for thanksgiving. Is there an area of what Jesus does for us that you don’t typically think about? How could carrying this truth this upcoming week foster a thankful heart for you?
2. Pastor Alan shared the story of 2 marines, Richard Manning and Ray Brennan. When a grenade suddenly fell between them, Brennan nonchalantly handed Manning his candy bar, fell on the grenade and gave his life to save his best friend. When Manning later became a priest he changed his name to Brennan Manning. He took on the name of the one who saved him. What would it look like for this reminder of the gospel to draw you closer to Jesus in this season?
3. Pastor Alan challenged us to pause and give thanks for something good for every bad report we hear. Give this a try and plan to report back to the group at your next gathering, or by following up with each other this week. Pray for the Lord’s help and direction.

4. Christians have returned to this little summary of God's work in us for years to find encouragement and hope. Consider it as a reminder for this upcoming week to keep you coming back to a heart of thanksgiving to God. What strikes you? What gives you comfort?^{iv}

Question: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

Answer:

That I am not my own,¹ but belong—body and soul, in life and in death²—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.³

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,⁴ and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.⁵ He also watches over me in such a way⁶ that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven;⁷ in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.⁸

Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life⁹ and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.¹⁰

¹ 1 Cor. 6:19-20

² Rom. 14:7-9

³ 1 Cor. 3:23; Titus 2:14

⁴ 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:2

⁵ John 8:34-36; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:1-11

⁶ John 6:39-40; 10:27-30; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:5

⁷ Matt. 10:29-31; Luke 21:16-18

⁸ Rom. 8:28

⁹ Rom. 8:15-16; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14

¹⁰ Rom. 8:1-17

ⁱ Brenne Brown's massive study on joy found it was never present without gratitude. This makes sense because the Greek words behind them are interconnected (Grace=*charas*; Thanksgiving = *eucharisteo*; Joy = *chara*)

ii When we remember what God has done for us – all the blessings, big and small – it activates in us the power of memory. It's as if we are re-living the good to the glory of God!

iii There is always *good* in the life of a Christ-follower, because the *good* news is always true. We are forgiven, accepted, restored, given a place of authority, in fellowship with God, made co-heirs with Christ, gifted for the ongoing ministry of Jesus through us, and assured that we will reign with Christ in the New Heavens and New Earth.

iv This is the first question from the Heidelberg Catechism