

What Happens When We Aren't Thankful

Romans 1

Introduction

- 21 years old when I went to Las Vegas
 - I can remember that because I had just turned 21 and with an opportunity to go to Las Vegas I thought, "I can go and put a coin in the slot; just once to say that I did it."
 - Excited and nervous to go because while it would be a new adventure, I also knew that Las Vegas was known as "Sin City"
 - Finally arrived, began walking the streets and a feeling came over me like I've never felt anywhere else before.
 - As I was taking everything in, I felt a deep sense of sorrow for what I saw
 - Sex
 - Money
 - Power
 - While we may not consider idol worship in our American culture today, the gods we tend to worship may seem less obvious and even less harmful
 - I didn't put a coin in the slot machine; I still can't say that I've done that in my life. To be honest, I just couldn't bring myself to it.
 - I also don't have any deep dark secrets that I left in Vegas, so nothing like, "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas"
- Sometimes it takes experiences like that to help us appreciate what we already have.
 - Last Week we began a sermon series "The Gift of Gratitude"
 - Difficult year to say the least, but hopefully through this sermon series we can see that God has blessed us even in the midst of hardship.
 - Gratitude is a gift that God gives to us. It is not something we earn.
 - God has already given us the gift, however we must acknowledge it and receive it.
 - The foundation of this gift is found in what God has already done, mainly through his Son Jesus Christ, our Salvation
- Today we are going to continue in **Romans 1**
 - "What happens when we aren't thankful"
 - There's a risk that any of us and all of us could fail to be thankful at some point in our lives
 - When we aren't thankful- it can be detrimental to our lives- things can get turned upside down.
 - Worship helps put life back into focus no matter our circumstances.
- Background

- Las Vegas is specifically known for gambling and entertainment- its a place quite different from most of our ordinary lives.
- Relate to Rome- center of the world, very influential not just to the present culture, but the surrounding areas.
- Rome had everything you could want and folks took liberty to enjoy what was offered.
- Rome is one place the Apostle Paul has yet to visit, but he has a strong desire to do so.
- In the midst of this “Sin City” are a group of Christians
- The Apostle Paul wants to meet them, encourage them, but to also help in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Gratitude sets the Course for Our Life

- **Romans 1:8-10**
 - Thank God for You- Your Witness
 - Think of the challenges these Christians must have faced living in Rome
 - Not much different than what you and I experience today
 - Yet, their faith has set them apart from all that Rome has to offer to communicate a different message
 - Paul begins many of his letters with a word of thankfulness. It sets the tone of his letters as a place to start.
 - It doesn't mean that the Christians that Paul writes to are perfect
 - In fact in many of Paul's letters he rebukes the actions of the Christians he writes to.
 - However, Paul is always able to draw the line between what Christ has done, the faith of the believers and the opportunity provided to each Christian community.
 - Apply to our lives- Can we start with being thankful?
 - Gratitude sets the foundation for our lives
 - It points us in the right direction
 - It doesn't tell us that we are perfect, but it does remind us of what our life is to be about.
- Reflection from past week- Getting Away
 - Become an annual get away for Amy and I for our Anniversary (12 Years)
 - Spend time just reflecting on our life and always looking for how God has worked and where he is leading
 - The more that we get away from everything else and can focus on God the more clear the picture becomes
 - We all need an opportunity to focus on Gratitude in our life to set things straight.
- **Romans 1:11-12**

- Gratitude not only sets our life straight, but it impacts our relationships
- Last week similar theme
 - Tools of Worship: Holy Spirit and God's Word
 - Colossians and Ephesians- Filled in order to encourage one another with our worship
 - When our focus and attention are on God, it pulls us together
 - Friendships
 - Marriage
 - Church
 - Organization
- Gratitude sets the course for our life- Can you start with being thankful?

Gratitude Changes Everything

- **Romans 1:15-17**
 - The purpose or foundation of our worship is what Jesus Christ has already done for us
 - The Apostle Paul's confidence and motivation to come to Rome is not in his ability to preach, but in the one he preaches about!
 - Paul can testify from personal experience of how this gospel has changed his life.
 - It's clear that this message has impacted the Christians in Rome despite the cultural challenges they face.
 - What Jesus has done for us on the cross- gives us every reason, no matter the circumstances, to worship God!
- **Significance of Vs 17-** Transformed two lives
 - Martin Luther- leader of the Protestant Reformation
 - John Wesley- leader of the Methodist Movement
 - Freedom/Gratitude found in realizing what Jesus had already done, and not focused on their own efforts
- Gratitude changes everything!
 - It sets us free
 - It sets the course of our life
 - It gives us a true purpose for our lives

The Evidence for Gratitude is Plain to See

- "I thought you said this sermon was about: What happens when we aren't thankful"
- **Romans 1:18**
 - Chapter shifts immediately when worship is focused on something other than God
 - "Suppress the Truth"
 - Refuse to acknowledge it

- Result: Ungodliness and Unrighteousness (*Paul will get specific further down*)
- When we lose focus on worship and gratitude everything turns upside down
- **Romans 1:19-20**
 - The evidence for our gratitude is plain to see
 - How God reveals himself
 - General Revelation-creation or natural order
 - Special Revelation- salvation (Exodus or the Cross)- God flips the script
 - Without Excuse
 - There is no reason for us to not give thanks to God
 - The evidence is plain to see- it is overwhelming despite the challenges we might face
- **Romans 1:21-23**
 - Summary of what happens when we aren't thankful
 - Things get turned upside down
 - **Vs 21** is the key verse to this message
 - Futile Thinking
 - Foolish Hearts
 - The Evidence for Gratitude is plain to see
 - If we don't start by acknowledging the gift of gratitude the consequences are destructive
 - When we lose gratitude everything gets turned upside down!

Three Things that Happen When we Don't Worship

- **Romans 1:24, 26, 28**
 - Lusts of their Hearts
 - Creature over the Creator
 - Exchange Truth for a Lie
 - This is why the Bible is so important as a tool for our worship
 - It's God's Truth
 - It's what we base our worship on
 - Too much of the time our worship is circumstantial, but God's Word reminds us that the evidence for our gratitude is plain to see!
 - Dishonorable Passions
 - Homosexuality
 - Unnatural
 - *Handle this with love and respect and yet speak truth*

- **NOTICE** that homosexuality is also included with sins that we **all** are guilty of committing!
- You can believe all of what the Bible says or you can choose to dismiss all of what the Bible says. **HOWEVER**, you can not pick and choose what you want the Bible to say!
- This is not only goes for what you believe, but also for how you live
- Debased Mind
 - There are times in my life that I have been guilty of at least one of those sins
 - When I get right down to the root of the problem, it is a result of losing my focus on worship
 - I start worshipping my own righteousness or my own desires and I fall right into the trap of a debased mind
 - Key role of the Holy Spirit
 - Conviction
 - Holy Spirit convicts me- similar to Las Vegas experience
 - At times it requires me to repent
- Repentance is the beginning of Gratitude
 - The gift of Gratitude is something that God gives to us, not something we earn
 - If our lack of worship turns things upside down, then repentance turns things right-side up!

Conclusion

- **Romans 1:15**
 - Preaching the gospel we often relate to initial salvation (heaven over hell)
 - Paul not only wants to proclaim that part of salvation, but the ongoing work of salvation.
 - Salvation is more than just saving us from hell
 - As Christians we need to hear this, because we stop short too many times of what Jesus Christ came to do
 - Jesus didn't die for your sins to only save you from hell, He died to save you from yourself!
 - He died to transform your life, to give you hope, and a message to share with the world.
 - The Evidence is plain to see
 - Gratitude sets the course for your life
 - Gratitude changes everything
 - Everything gets turned upside down when we don't worship God.
 - Gratitude begins with repentance

- Where in your life have you chosen to worship something other than God?
 - Lust of the heart
 - Dishonorable passions
 - Debased mind
- **Romans 1:17**
 - Set Luther and Wesley free
 - Can set you free today as well!