



Sermon: Living a Life of Appreciation

This sermon outline is meant to offer an approach to the stewardship theme. It is designed to be fleshed out further by the pastor through additions of personal thoughts and illustrations, as well as adapting to your unique context.

Theme: Appreciation is the foundation of generosity.

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-24b

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust^[a] destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

Point 1: We are called to Appreciate!

What does it mean to appreciate?

Appreciation is related to but different from gratitude. Being grateful is a response that follows from appreciation.

Appreciation certainly can lead to gratitude but being grateful doesn't necessarily mean appreciation. Gratitude is a response, appreciation is an action.

Institutions of all kinds that hope to grow in quality and impact do not start with the question “What is wrong and how can we fix it?” but are asking “what is right and how can we build upon it?” It is a different way to look at the world, a different perspective, looking for the light. Leaders are referring to this as “Appreciative Inquiry”.

The Bible instructs us in this (Philippians 4:8):

“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

When we see the world through the lamp light of appreciation it changes our perspective and transforms our heart.

We are all too quick to focus on what is wrong with those around us, with our relationships, with our church. This magnifies the darkness.

Point 2: To Appreciate is to Treasure

Our scripture verse uses the word treasure. To appreciate is to treasure.

To treasure is a function of our heart. “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

I am grateful for my wife, but do I treasure her? Being treasured means not being taken for granted. To say someone or something is a treasure is to assign it great value. I highly value my relationship with my wife. I highly value her gifts and graces. I treasure her, she has my heart.

God treasures us, paying the ultimate price to rescue our souls. God has not come to condemn our faults, but to redeem or value. God appreciates us! WE have God’s heart!

What are you devoted to, loyal to, faithful to, dedicated to, and/or committed to?
(You may want to reference the hymn - “True-hearted Whole-hearted Faithful Loyal”

Point 3: Appreciate vs Depreciation

We are designed to live a life of appreciation rather than depreciation.

The scripture warns us about putting great value in things that have diminishing value but to instead invest in things that will last and increase in value.

Diminishing value over time:

A new car depreciates 20% on avg. in the first year

A new boat depreciates 8% on avg. each year

A new Motorhome depreciates 20% in the first year and 5% a year thereafter

A fine meal is something that has passing value

Scripture encourages us to invest in those things that will increase value. What are you investing your resources in?

Do you use your power and influence to depreciate (belittle) or appreciate (value)?

We all have power and influence.

We can all make a tremendous impact in partnership with God.

We can appreciate - build value over time - build up.

We can take care in how we devote our time, energy, influence, and material resources in order to maximize our impact.

It is all too easy to fall for the fools gold that the world can offer, serving the wrong master. The act of appreciation leads us to master our resources for that which is most valuable and enduring.

Imagine what life could be if we appreciate, as God appreciates us.