

# Mark 14.22-26

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## *Giving thanks*

Amington

Sunday 12 May 2019

### **Gratitude**

A vicar went to get her hair cut – at the end she asked how much it cost. ‘No charge,’ the hairdresser said, ‘I consider it a service to the Lord.’ The next morning she found a dozen little prayer cards by the door to her hairdresser’s, with a thank-you note.

A few days later a police officer came in for a hair cut. ‘How much do I owe you?’ she asked. ‘No charge,’ the hairdresser said, ‘I consider it a service to the community.’ The next morning she found a dozen doughnuts by the door to her hairdresser’s, with a thank-you note.

A few days after *that* a politician walked in for a hair cut. ‘How much do I owe you?’ she asked. ‘No charge,’ the hairdresser said, ‘I consider it a service to the country.’

The next morning the hairdresser found a dozen *politicians* by the door to her hairdresser’s.

## When he had given thanks (22 & 23)

When I was little I thought it strange that we said thank-you *before* we ate the food, rather than afterwards – until my parents pointed out that I should really do both:

- *Before* the meal we should say thank-you to God for providing the food.
- *After* the meal we should say thank-you to (usually) Mum for actually making the food.

Why so many thank-yous? Is it simply old-fashioned British politeness?

There are five little words that Mark repeats: **when he had given thanks** (22 & 23). The *first thing* Jesus does with the bread and wine is give thanks.

Then there's this, from one of David's songs of praise: **Give thanks to the Lord** – why? – **for he is good; his love endures forever** (1 Chronicles 16.34).

Why does David say we should **give thanks to the Lord**? Because God **is good**. And how often is God good? All the time. So how often should we give thanks? *All the time*.

In a few minutes we will celebrate communion together – one of the words for communion is ‘eucharist’ which comes from the Greek word *eucharizo*, ‘I give thanks’.

Communion points us to God’s love and goodness and generosity – *which he is like all the time*. But it also points us to the way we should respond to God: saying ‘thank you’ *all the time*.

Communion is a sign of the attitude we should have: an attitude of gratitude. (I don’t like it... it’s memorable though!)

It’s so much easier to complain and be grumpy, to nag and to nit-pick. Why? Because the people we live and work alongside aren’t perfect – but, here’s the truth – *neither are we*.

We all know people who are grumpy and complain, who nit-pick and nag – we probably see them every day, most likely when we look in the mirror. And we get like this when we put ourselves at the centre of our lives, when everything becomes about ‘me’.

But what if we were people whose **first thought** wasn’t to complain, but to say thank-you?

What if we were people who, instead of picking holes and arguments, **looked for the good** in people and situations?

What if we were people who, instead of wishing our life were different, learned to **give thanks to God for what we have** – *because he is with us and he is good, no matter what we have or don't have?*

That, my friends, is what it looks like to have an attitude of gratitude. It's what it looks like to have *God* at the centre of our lives, rather than ourselves. The more we put him there, the more we knock ourselves off the top spot, the more we will change and become more like Jesus – which is a *very* Good Thing to happen.

And that is – ultimately – what this series is all about. It's called *The Life You've Always Wanted* – the life that can *only* be found in God, and comes when we put *him* at the centre of our lives.

Your homework this week is simple: every day, before bed, while you brush your teeth, look back over your day and say thank-you to God for the people you've met, or spoken to. That's it – simply practise being thankful.