

RADICAL GRATITUDE
Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1
Rick Warren
November 28-29, 2009

Latin: *Radicalis = from the root*
“RADICAL” MEANS ROOTED

“Just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to live in obedience to him. Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him.”

Col. 2:6-7 (NLT)

“May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love. And may you have the power to understand ...how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. THEN you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God.”

Ephesians 3:17-19 (NLT)

“They don't have deep roots, so they don't last very long. As soon as life gets hard or the message gets them in trouble, they give up.” Matt. 13:21 (CEV)

“BLESSED are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they go right on producing delicious fruit.” Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NLT)

“The surviving remnant of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward.” 2 Kings 19:30 (NAS)

“Sink your roots in him and build on him. Be strengthened by the faith that you were taught, and overflow with thanksgiving.” Col. 2:7 (GW)

1st Characteristic: _____

“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV)

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

WHY IS GRATITUDE ALWAYS GOD’S WILL?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

THE BENEFITS OF RADICAL GRATITUDE

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

How will you practice the 5 ways this week?

RADICAL GRATITUDE
Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1
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We're starting a new series today I'm calling Radicalis: A Life Rooted In God's Love.

I want to begin with a letter I received recently that I think actually represents the way a lot of people feel particularly during this year of recession: "Dear Pastor Rick, I am so tired of going through the motions. I'm fed up with business as usual. Nothing really excites me or energizes me anymore. I've been in a slump for so long now I don't know if I can get out of it. But I don't like it one bit. I'm filled with a jumble of emotions. I'm frustrated, I'm bored, I'm unfulfilled. I tend to focus on what's wrong and I can be cynical about everything. The bad news is I take out my frustrations on the people that I love the most – my family. Pastor Rick, I need a major change in my life."

They need a radical change in their life is what they need.

This week on the day before Thanksgiving, Kay and I were at home kind of getting ready; we were going to have a couple dozen people at our house for Thanksgiving. I had the TV on while we were cleaning up and there was this wonderful doctor on the Sci Fi channel on zombies. As a pastor I thought, I need to know about zombies! So I watched this spook documentary on the Walking Dead.

As I watched it I realized a lot of people in life are spiritual zombies. They're just going through the motions. They're mindlessly sleepwalking through life. They don't really have any plans. They don't really have any goals. They don't really put their heart into what they're doing. They're spiritual zombies. They're sleepwalking through life.

Friends, we're thirty-three days away from the end of a decade. Think about this: the twentieth century was ten years ago. Ten years ago! There are only thirty three days left in this decade! If I were to ask you and you were to be honest, would you change something looking back over the last decade, would you do anything differently than you did in the decade – looking back, if you could? How many of you would say, "Yes, that's true." I think it's pretty universal. A lot of us would.

The problem is you can't. You can't change the past. You can't do anything about it. It's over. It's dead. It's done with. Your past is past and nothing is going to change this past decade.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

But you can change the next one. Are you going to be a better person ten years from now? You say, “I don’t know.” I can tell you. If you say “I don’t know,” you won’t be. Because it’s got to be intentional. If you want to grow, if you want to develop, if you want to be better tomorrow, you’ve got to make some radical changes now. Intentionally plan to be different, to be better, to be stronger, to be more of who God made you to be at the end of the next decade because this one’s over.

You need radical change in your life.

This word “radical” is a word that is misunderstood today because people don’t know the original meaning of it. Today “radical” means “fanatical.” We don’t need any more fanatics in the world. We need more radicals but we don’t need any more fanatics. Today radical, a lot of people think it means, over the top. It means excessive, it means extreme, it means on the edge either religious wise or political wise. They’re the extremists. They’re the radicals.

Or we use it as a synonym for “cool, hip” - that’s rad, that’s radical.

But actually the word “radical” comes from the fourteenth century Latin word “radicalis” which means “from the roots.” What “radical” means is to be rooted in the original. That’s what radical means – rooted in the original. *Radicalis* means to be having root.

We get the word “radish” from the same word. *Radix* in Latin is the word for root. We get the word radish, which is basically just a big root.

When we talk about eradicating something, that means to pull it up by its roots. It’s the same word – radical.

And in every area of life radical doesn’t mean extreme. It means rooted in the original source.

For instance, in medicine when we talk about radical surgery that means you root out the disease at its root. You’re going to cut it out. You’re not putting a Band-Aid over it. You’re rooting out the root source of the disease – radical surgery.

In botany, the radical leaves are the leaves closest to the root. They’re at the bottom of the stem. Those are called the radical leaves on any plant.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

In mathematics, the radical number is the root of the equation. And the radical sign in math is the square root or the cube root. The radical in math is the root of the equation.

In chemistry, a radical is two atoms, it's the smallest unit, it's a unit of the smallest amount. And a free radical is an unpaired electron. It's the smallest root you can get in a molecule.

In linguistics, the radical means two or three consonants that form the root of a word.

And in grammar, the radical word is the root word once you've taken off the prefixes and the suffixes.

What we need today are radical believers. Not fanatical believers, but radical believers who go back to the New Testament, who go back to the Bible, who go back to what God intended for us to do in the first place. Without all of the trappings and all of the traditions and without all the rules and regulations and restrictions – to go back to the original words of Jesus. That's a radical believer.

I want you to be that kind of believer in the next decade.

When I wrote the book *Purpose Driven Life* in 2002 I personally paid for the cover. I hired an artist from the Midwest to design a woodcut of an oak tree with the roots exposed. When I showed that to the publishing department at Zondervan they hated it. They said those roots look ugly. You can't just have roots flying out in the air. Why don't you just have a pretty picture of a tree? I said, "You don't understand. This is intentional. This is a book about the roots of living." *Purpose Driven Life* is about being rooted in the five purposes that God created every human being for. It's going back to the roots of Christianity. So I want the roots exposed. It's intentional.

Purpose Driven Life was about radical living. I just never used the word because I didn't think people would understand it.

But I want you to be rooted in God. Rooted in love, rooted in faith, rooted in hope.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

The Bible has a lot to say about having spiritual roots. The Bible says in Colossians 2 *“Just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to live in obedience to him. Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him.”*

Notice he says just as you accepted Christ you live in him the same way. In other words, the way you become a believer is the way you continue as a believer. The way you’re saved is the way you live the Christian life. The way you become a part of the family of God is the way you continue.

How did you become a believer? Not by promising to do good. Not by working real hard. Not by keeping a bunch of rules and regulations. There’s only one way to become a part of God’s family – accept his love, accept his grace, accept his forgiveness. Put your faith in his love.

The Bible says just as you were saved, you live the Christian life the same way. It’s not saved by grace, live by works. A lot of people think, I accept God’s love and I become a believer. Then I work real hard the rest of my life to prove I’m worthy of it. No. He says *just as*. That means the same way you became a believer you continue. What is that? You’re rooted in God’s love.

Most people don’t get this. Even people who’ve been believers for a long time don’t understand what it means to be rooted, radically rooted, in God’s love.

The Bible says in Ephesians 3 *“May your roots go down deep into the soil of God’s marvelous love. And may you have the power to understand how wide, and how long, and how high and how deep his love really is. May you experience this love. [In other words, not just know it, “Oh, yeah, I know God loves me.” May you feel it at gut level. I want you to experience it. I want you to experience daily what it means to really feel loved by God, unconditionally loved by God, so that you know, no matter what happens in your life God is never going to stop loving you. And you love him back with that same kind of love. That’s what it means to be rooted.] May your roots go down in the soil of his love. May you experience the love of Christ though it is so great you’ll never fully understand it. [Our brain capacity isn’t big enough. Then he says...then if you do these things, if you root your life radically root your life in how much God loves you, you think about that every day...] Then you will be filled with the fullness of life.”* That means a fulfilling life, a meaningful life, a significant life, a purpose driven life, a life of compassion and completion, a life where you get up in the morning with renewed energy and new vigor and new vim and new vitality because you can go, “I know what my purpose is. I know what God made me to do. [You don’t lose that spark and you’re not a spiritual zombie. You’re not just sleepwalking through life, kind of letting life tell you where to go instead of knowing where you’re going. He says then you’ll be filled with the fullness of life...] and power that comes from God.” Most people live powerless lives. They have no power to change their habits. They have no power to change their circumstances. They have no power to change their own lives. Why? Because they’re not rooted in the love of God.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

The Bible, as I said, has much to say about growing spiritual roots. He says I want you rooted, radically rooted, in God's love. In fact, every single problem in your life comes because you don't have deep enough spiritual roots.

How do you know when you don't have deep spiritual roots? Worry. Fear. Anxiety. Stress. Guilt. Shame. Boredom. Loneliness. Resentment. Bitterness. These are the results of not having deep spiritual roots.

One of Jesus' most famous stories in the Bible is called the parable of the sower. He tells this story about a farmer. A guy was out in his field and he takes his seed and he's kind of throwing it out. He's broadcasting the seed. He's not planting them one at a time. He says, as he throws the seed out in the field, it falls on four different kinds of soil. Jesus said this represents four kinds of hearts of receptivity we can have toward God.

He said there's the hard heart that doesn't even let the seed grow. He said there's the shallow heart, the roots don't go down deep enough. There's the crowded heart where the roots get choked out. Then he says there's the good soil where deep spiritual roots are built.

Jesus says the reason why people start off good in life and then blow it, why they start off so well and then they lose their joy and they get stuck in a funk and they get in this spiritual zombie thing, is they don't have spiritual roots. So they're blown away by everything that happens.

The Bible says in Matthew 13 Jesus said, *"They don't have deep roots so they don't last very long. As soon as life gets hard [like a recession] or the message gets them in trouble, they give up."* Have you ever felt like giving up? Whenever you feel like giving up it is a sign that your roots aren't deep enough, your spiritual roots aren't radical enough. They're not grown into the soil of God's love enough.

If you've been feeling like giving up – a lot of people do at the end of the year. December is often the most depressing month for many people because they look at all of what they didn't get accomplished. They feel like giving up on their marriage, giving up on their dreams, giving up on their desire to ever get married or have a baby, or giving up on their desire of having some big goal in life.

Don't do that. I can help you develop spiritual roots. And that's where we're going in this next series. I want you to be ready, tested and eagerly prepared for the new decade. I don't want you

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

to make the next decade like this last one. It's over. I want it to be radically different in your life.

Contrast the person who has no roots – it says he just withers and wilts whenever problems and difficulties and trials and troubles and temptations come. Contrast that with the person who has deep spiritual roots. Jeremiah talks about that kind of person in chapter 17 of Jeremiah. By the way this verse Jeremiah 17 is the first verse in *Purpose Driven Life*, before the first chapter. I was writing about this. I just wasn't using the word "radical."

The Bible says "*Blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence* [in other words their confidence isn't in their job, their hope isn't in their marriage, their trust isn't in other people] *blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made him their hope and confidence*. [Then he gives a metaphor. He says ...] *They're like trees planted along a river bank with roots that reach deep into the water*. [Then he says people who have deep spiritual roots, there are four things you can see in their lives and he gives them here in this metaphor.] *Such trees who have deep roots, they're not bothered by the heat*, [number one]. *They're not worried about long months of drought* [number two]. *Their leaves stay green* [number three], *and* [number four] *they go right on producing delicious fruit no matter what happens*."

That's what I want to be true of your life in the next decade. That no matter what happens – high, low, up, down, recession, depression, whatever, you go right on living a productive life because you've got roots.

This verse, God is talking about you and he's saying there are four things here that if you'll develop deep spiritual roots will be true in your life.

Number one, he says when the heat's on, you don't wilt.

He says they do not wilt. They're not bothered by the heat. What's he talking about there? He's talking about pressure.

How do you know when somebody doesn't have spiritual roots? They crumble under stress. They cave in under pressure. When you don't have deep spiritual roots, pressure comes on and it baffles and batters and bashes you around and you just get drawn along like a tumbleweed because you don't have any roots. You get blown this way and that way and this way and that way. The pressure's on and the heat's on and you get fried.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

He says if you've got deep roots heat doesn't bother you. Bring it on! I can handle the heat. Why? Because I've got deep roots. I'm not depending on it to rain.

That's the second thing. He said not only that, they're not worried by drought. People who have deep spiritual roots, they're not worried about the recession. They don't care if it goes on ten years because their source is not in their job, their hope is not in the economy, their trust is not in the stock market. Their roots are in the love of God and when the drought's on, I'm not worried about it. Why? Because my source of nutrition and nourishment and strength and refreshment is coming from the river and not from the rain. And we don't know when it's going to rain again. He says you're not shackled by circumstances when you've got roots.

He says your leaves stay green year around. You're an evergreen. You don't dry up in the winter and fall. And he says you keep on producing fruit. That's what God wants. He wants you to be productive year around, no matter what kind of circumstances you're going through.

What is the fruit that he's talking about here? The Bible calls spiritual fruit the fruit of the Spirit. It's listed in Galatians 5:22-23 nine qualities. The spiritual fruits are love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. Those are things I want in your life. Those are things I want in my life. At the end of the next decade I want to have more self-control. I want to be more joyful. I want to be more at peace. I want to be more loving. I want to be overflowing in patience. That's spiritual fruit.

How do you know when somebody has spiritual roots? It's real simple. You can see the fruit. Here's the equation. No root – no fruit. Really hard to understand – no root, no fruit. Any gardener will tell you if you cut the root off a plant there isn't going to be fruit on the vine. If you don't have spiritual roots you will have no fruit of love and joy and peace overflowing in your life.

Friends, this is the number one problem in America today. Our culture is spiritually rootless. We've now gone through two generations who've grown up without any spiritual roots. As a result we get blown away by this fad and that therapy and that instance and that circumstance and that problem. We can see society decaying in many areas. We see conflict in many areas. We can see crime in many areas. All these things come from the lack of spiritual roots.

So what we're going to do in this series is talk about radical living. Not fanatical... radical living. Rooted in God's love. So you're stable, you're strong, you can take anything that comes at you no matter what happens; and none of us know what's going to happen in the next decade.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

We're going to look at what does it mean to radically follow Christ? What would happen in your life if you really took Jesus seriously? Not casually, but really took him seriously, and God's plan for your life. What kind of fruit would happen in your life? How productive would you be? How much more productive if you had deeper roots?

There's a story in the Bible in the book of 2 Kings about a king named Hezekiah. He was the king of Israel and everything was going wrong for Israel. But the worst thing that was happening was the enemy nation of Syria had a huge army and they were coming at them and they were going to kick their butt. They were going to take over. They were going to annihilate and uproot Israel. King Hezekiah is devastated. He goes to the temple of God and lays out flat on the ground and prays God you've got to help me! I'm in a no win situation. Time's up. The last inning's over. We're in overtime and I'm way behind. And we're going to get killed. You've got to help me, God. Please help.

Through God's prophet, a man named Isaiah, God gives Hezekiah this promise, a wonderful promise. 2 Kings 19:30 *"The surviving remnant [those who make it through that tough year with its recession or war or whatever] of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward."*

That is my prayer for those of you who survived the last decade. That in the new decade you will take root downward and you will bear fruit upward. That's my prayer for Saddleback Church, that we will take root downward. We'll be deeper rooted in God's love and as a result will produce more fruit in our lives.

The Bible says in Colossians 2:7, God's Word translation, *"Sink your roots into him [talking about Christ] and build on him. Be strengthened by the faith you were taught and overflow with thanksgiving."* Circle "overflow with thanksgiving."

The first characteristic of deep roots. How do you know when somebody has deep spiritual roots? **Continuous gratitude.** The first characteristic that you know that you are not shallow, you are not superficial, that you have deep spiritual roots is you are continually grateful. You overflow with thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is not to be a day that we celebrate once a year. It is to be a habit by the lifestyle of the radical believer. If you have deep roots, the deeper you understand God's love, the more grateful you're going to be.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

What does it mean to be radically grateful? This is the first root I want to look at in this series – radical gratitude. What is the definition of radical gratitude?

The Bible tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 this is the definition of radical gratitude. I'm not talking about I'm thankful for my parents or my family. Anybody can do that. I'm thankful for pumpkin pie. Anybody can say that. I'm thankful for freedom and health. Anybody can say that. It takes no intelligence, no character, no faith to be thankful for the good things in your life.

Radical gratitude is this. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 "*Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*" That's radical gratitude. In all circumstances give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Friends, this is such an important verse. I'm going to tear it apart word by word.

First it says give thanks. That means gratitude. It means appreciation. It means recognition. It means praise. It means giving credit to people where credit is due. In everything give thanks.

By the way, the phrase "give thanks" here, the Greek word is *eucharisteo*. *Eucharisteo* is the word we get Eucharist from. Eucharist is one of the words that we call the Lord's Supper. It's called communion, it's called the Lord's Supper. It's called the Eucharist. What does that mean? It's the Greek word that simply means "give thanks." When we take the Lord's Supper together we're giving thanks to God for his salvation, for his forgiveness, for our home in heaven – all of these things. We're just giving thanks.

It says give thanks *in*. Circle the word "in" and then it says all. Circle the word "all." Give thanks in all circumstances. It doesn't say give thanks *for* all circumstances. Big difference. Doesn't say *for*, it says *in*. You don't have to be thankful *for* the bad in your life. You don't have to be thankful for evil and there's a lot of evil in the world. A little girl gets kidnapped and molested and killed. You don't ever have to be thankful for that. A woman gets raped; you don't ever have to be thankful for that. When a young man is shot down in Afghanistan, you don't ever have to be thankful for that. When a car driven by a drunk plows into somebody and a family dies, you don't have to be thankful for that. The Bible does not say be thankful for evil.

There's a lot of evil. That would make God a sicko. Everything that happens in the world is not God's will. "If it happens it must be God's will," Baloney! Most of the time God's will is not done. My will is done. If I went out here and picked up a gun and started shooting somebody that would not be God's will. That would be my will. That's why we're to pray "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,*" because in heaven God's will is always done and on earth

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

God's will is rarely done. So don't blame God for all the evil in the world. And you certainly don't have to thank God for it. It doesn't say thank God for. It says thank God *in* it.

Why can I thank God in every circumstance? There's a number of reasons. One, I know God is in control. I know God can bring good out of evil. I know even the stupid mistakes I make God can turn it around. I know that I'm not going to have to live on earth forever. I know that I'm going to go to heaven one day. I know I can't lose my salvation. I know that no matter what happens God isn't going to stop loving me. I could think of a hundred things to be thankful for in the circumstance even when the circumstance stinks.

It doesn't say *for* everything. It says *in*.

It says *in* all things. The Greek word there is the word *pos* and *pos* means any, all, everything, anyone, all the time, anywhere, everywhere, the whole thing. It means no exception, no excuses, no exemptions. God expects you to be grateful in every circumstance.

That's called radical gratitude.

Anybody can be grateful for the nice present somebody just gave you. But to be grateful in all circumstances is radical gratitude.

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. People say, I need to know God's will. There it is. I want to know what God wants me to do with my life. There it is. In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you.

What am I supposed to do in the next decade? Am I supposed to get a new job? Am I supposed to go to school? Am I supposed to get married? Am I supposed to move overseas? God says I'll tell you number two when you start doing number one. All those other number twos, we'll work on those but first let's work on this one. I want you to in everything learn to give thanks for this is my will for you. Once you've got that one down we'll start talking about number two, three, four, five and six. This is clear. In everything give thanks; this is God's will for you.

Why is that true? Why is it always God's will no matter what happens in my life that I am to give thanks not for the circumstances but in the circumstances? Why is that God's will? Five reasons.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

One, because it honors God.

Gratitude honors God. Anytime you thank anyone you honor them. For instance if I say to my wife, "Honey, I'm so grateful for that great Thanksgiving dinner you made." I just honored my wife. When I say to her mom, "Mom, I want to thank you for having Kay so I could marry her." I am honoring her. When I say to you, "Thank you for opening the door for me," or "Thank you for coming to another service," I am honoring you. Anytime you express gratitude you honor that person.

The Bible says this about God. *"Giving thanks is a sacrifice that truly honors me."* When you sacrifice, giving thanks, what are you sacrificing? Your time, your money, your thoughts. It takes time to think of things to be grateful for.

My wife likes me to say thank you for the things she does for me. But if that's all I ever did, she'd begin to wonder, does he really love me or does he just love me for the things I do for him? At some point I have to start moving to the higher level of thanksgiving which is not just thanking my wife for what she does, but thanking my wife for who she is. That's a higher level of thanksgiving.

If my kids came to me and the only time they thanked me was when I gave them their allowance I'd begin to wonder, do they love me or do they just love the money?

If all you do is thank God, "God thank you for letting me get into this class... Thank you for giving me this food... Thank you God for the things you do for me..." God starts going, Do you really love me or do you just love the things that I do for you?

You need to learn to thank God not just for what he does but who he is. God, I thank you that you're smarter than me... I thank you that your wisdom is greater... I thank you that you know what will make me happy more than I do... I thank you that you're consistent when I'm inconsistent... I thank you for your love... I thank you for your mercy... I thank you God that you're always fair... I thank you that even when I don't understand it you have my best interest at heart..." That's thanking God for who he is. And you need to get beyond the "Thank you God for food", to thank you God for who you are. That's where you need to go in the next decade. That's digging your roots deeper. It honors God.

The way to do this, I want to encourage you to develop the habit for the next decade, that your feet don't touch the floor in the morning without your saying thank you to God. Develop the attitude of gratitude.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

Doctors have shown in many, many reports that gratitude is the healthiest human emotion. That the more grateful you are in life the healthier you'll be, actually physically. It's good for your physical health. The more ungrateful you are in life it actually affects your health. Gratitude is good for your health and good for your heart. If you say, God I'm not going to put my feet on the ground in the morning, I'm going to sit on the edge of my bed, and before I do anything else I'm going to stop and say thank you.

I'd say start this week. Every day sit on the side of your bed and think of ten things to thank God for before you get out of bed. It'll change your attitude. It'll change your day. The first five minutes of your day sets your mood for the rest of your day. If you start it with gratitude, you'll be healthier, you'll be happier; you'll be closer to God. Your roots will be going deeper.

God, let me just think of who you are, what you've done, how much you've done for me. I make a list and think of ten things. Then I think of ten more things. Give thanks. It honors God.

The second thing, why is gratitude God's will? Because **it creates fellowship.**

What do I mean by that? It builds relationships. Gratitude always builds deeper relationships between you and other people. Not just between you and God but between you and other people.

Whoever you want to get closer to start expressing gratitude to that person and you'll get closer. If you start moving away from your husband or your wife you know what you need to do? You need to start doing what you did during dating. Express gratitude. Start writing little kind notes. Making calls during the day. Do the things you did at first. The reason you've lost that lovin' feeling is because you stopped doing the things that created that lovin' feeling early on. And you take each other for granted.

Do you want to rebuild that relationship with a friend, with a parent, with a spouse, with people in your small group? Whoever you want to get closer to start spending more time expressing gratitude to them. Do you want to build your small group? Don't just go to small group. During the week text them, email them, call them, write them. Say, "You know, I'm grateful for you and here's why I'm grateful." You'll find that the more grateful you are for your group the more your group will coalesce together.

The Bible says this "*Encourage one another and build each other up.*" I want to encourage you to be more intentional expressing gratitude to the people in your small group. This week, write

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

some notes, send some text messages, emails. Just tell people how grateful you are. It brings you closer together.

Three, the third reason why it's God's will for you to be radically grateful is that it develops faith. **It develops my faith.**

How does gratitude develop my faith? It happens when times are tough. When things don't make sense, when you can't figure it out, when your prayers are unanswered, when life sucks, when everything is going the way you didn't want it to go, and yet you thank God in that circumstance – “God, I know you're in control. I know you love me and I know you can bring good out of this. I'm thanking you. I'm not thankful for the situation. I just got fired. But I'm thankful in the situation that you're bigger than my problem. You can turn off one faucet and turn on another just as easily. I'm thanking you for that.” That's an evidence of trust. Anybody can thank God for good things. But if you can thank God even in the bad things your faith grows and your roots go deeper.

It's also an evidence of humility when you thank God in a situation you don't understand. God I don't understand this but I'm humble enough to go, I'm not God and you are. I trust you. I'm humble enough to admit it that you know what's best for me.

There's a guy in the Bible named Habakkuk. I always like to bring these guys from the little books of the Old Testament in because one day you're going to get to heaven and Habakkuk's going to come up to you and say, “How'd you like my book?” And I don't want you to look like a duffus. “Mr. Habakkuk! I didn't even know you were in the Bible!” So I want to make sure you know who these guys are so when you get to heaven you're not embarrassed. You could say, “Oh, I really liked what you said in chapter 3. That was good. Really good!”

Here's what Habakkuk said. He was going through tough times. He says, “*Even though the fig trees have no fruit and no grapes are growing on the vine, and even though the olive crop failed and even though the fields produce no grain, [in other words I'm going through a recession. My business is in the tank.] and even though the sheep are all dying and the cattle stalls are empty [in other words he said my portfolio has hit the skids. My 401K has become 101K.] even though all of this I happening, I will still, I will still, I will still be joyful and glad.*”

Why? He's not thanking God for all the bad things that have gone wrong. Not for those things. What's his cause of gratitude? “*I will be joyful and glad because [here's the cause] the Lord is my Savior.*” Everything else stinks in life but I can be grateful because the Lord is my Savior. He will pull me out. He'll bring me through this. He'll help me out. I'm not on my own. I'm not by myself. He hasn't left me abandoned. I'm not an orphan. I will still give thanks to God.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

That is the ultimate test of faith. Can you thank God when life stinks? That's the test of whether you're a shallow Christian or a deep one. Whether you've got spiritual roots or you're just superficial. Can you thank God even when life stinks? When everything's going wrong. He says if I'm going through tough times, what I need to do is not look at what's lost. I need to look at what's left. I need to look at what's left and I need to be grateful for that. No matter how bad things are in my life there's always *always* thousands of things I can be grateful for. And no matter how bad things are in my life there's always, *always*, the fact that I can be thankful to God just for being God. And that he has promised to see me through these situations. To help me out, to strengthen me, to care for me, to do miracles, to answer prayer. He's always promised that even when things don't go my way that he can work it for good in my life. So ultimately the plan is in action. That is faith.

God's will is radical gratitude. In all things give thanks. Why? It honors God it creates fellowship. It develops faith.

Four, it serves others.

Radical gratitude, the attitude of gratitude says I'm just going to walk through life being grateful in every situation no matter what. Times of plenty, times of tightness, good, bad, right, wrong, whatever. I'm just going to be grateful in every situation. He says that actually serves others. It becomes a ministry.

Did you know – we've talked about this many times but every Christian, every believer is a minister. You are a minister. You have a ministry. You're not a pastor but every Christian is a minister. What does that mean? It means we are to serve other people. We're saved to serve. You can have a ministry called the ministry of appreciation.

Do you know what the word "appreciation" means? If you've ever bought a car you know the meaning of depreciation. The moment you drive it off the lot it's worth less than you paid for it. Even if it's brand new. You take it back and it's worth less. Depreciation means to decrease in value.

If you've ever bought a house in Southern California you know the meaning of both appreciation and depreciation. You've seen the value go up and you have seen the value go down. To appreciate means to raise in value. And this is a ministry.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

When you appreciate your husband you raise his value. When you appreciate your wife, you raise her value. When you appreciate your kids, you raise their value. When you appreciate your co-workers, your spouse, the people you work with in the office, you raise their value to you and to the company. When you appreciate your boss, you raise his/her value.

The ministry of appreciation raises the value of people. That's why God says radical gratitude is a ministry. You can go around making a ministry out of raising the value of people simply by appreciating them.

One of the things I've discovered is that everybody in life needs massive doses of encouragement. I've never met anybody who's said, "Oh no! I don't need a compliment! I have too many. Please, stop! I'm too affirmed. Don't give me any more." You have an unqualified need to be affirmed, to be loved, to be appreciated. And so does everybody else. If you want to be used by God here's a little secret: affirm everybody. Appreciate everybody. Show gratitude to everybody.

The team that I travel with, we have a little pact that we're going to leave a trail of gratitude wherever we go in the world. We're going to express appreciation to the people everybody else ignores. So we make a little game. We make sure that the maid services who are fixing the sheets in the motel or the taxi driver or the bellman or the clerk or the ticket agent that we express appreciation to them in the middle of their busy day. We're not going to have contact with any person on the road without saying thank you. I'm pretty good at it and David is pretty good at it.

But Steve is a pro. He's almost embarrassingly good at it. He is so good at expressing appreciation to people; I'm in awe of the guy how he does it. On the phone and stuff like that. We have actually missed planes because we were still busy thanking people. The nice thing about it was the people that we thanked then helped us get on the next plane.

I was gone for two weeks. I was a week in Africa and then a week in Europe. On one day I was speaking to pastors. We had breakfast in Brussels and lunch in Paris and dinner in Vienna all in the same day. I'm speaking to these groups of pastors. We're just leaving a little trail of people everywhere we go.

It was funny. In Vienna I was sitting in a taxi and an elderly lady, a seventy-nine year old woman and her husband came up and knocked on the window. I rolled the window down and she goes, "I'm a friend of yours on Facebook." I said tell me your story. She said, "I'm

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

Romanian..." I go, Romanian. Seventy-nine year old woman in Paris watching me on Facebook. It's a new world, friends! We have a radical change here. This is a radical change!

It helps other people. In fact the Bible says this, "*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, [in other words critical, complaining, negative, cynical, sarcastic, always putting other people down. Don't let that kind of stuff come out of your mouth.] but only what is helpful for building others up [He said you need to talk about not what builds you up but what builds others up] according to their needs, that it may benefit [not you but] those who listen.*"

That's called the ministry of affirmation.

So why is gratitude, radical gratitude in every situation always God's will? It honors God, it creates fellowship, it brings you closer to people, it develops faith, it particularly shows your trust in God in tough times, it serves other people...

Then there's a fifth one. It is a witness. It is **a witness to unbelievers.**

The best way to share your faith with other people is to start with gratitude. "You know what I'm grateful for about you?" That'll blow their mind! Because people are so ungrateful today, it's not typical.

The Bible says that as believers we are to live in a way that makes the truth about God attractive. You are to live in such a way that it makes the truth about God attractive. Do you do that? Do people look at you and go "I'd like to know more about the Bible!" Do they look at your life and you are so winsome in your gratitude that people go, "What gives with that person? She's never complaining, she's always grateful. He's always positive. I'd like to be like that guy!" Do you do that?

How do you make the truth of God more attractive? By developing radical gratitude. Philippians 2 says "*Do everything without complaining or arguing...*" Let's stop there for a minute. Let's not skip over that part. Do everything without arguing? Come on! Do everything without complaining? Be serious!

That's what God says to do. Friends, can I be honest with you as your pastor, there are some Scriptures in the Bible that I don't understand and they don't make sense. I don't have a problem with those. I just figure I'm not smart enough. My brain's too small. God knows what

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

he's doing. One day I'll get to heaven and God will explain why he did what he did and it didn't make sense to me but he says do it this way. I don't have a problem with the parts of the Bible I don't understand

I have a problem with the parts I do understand. Like that verse. That's not like open to questions and conjecture. It's not like, "That's your interpretation." When he says "Do everything without complaining or arguing," there's only one interpretation. Don't complain. Don't argue. As a believer you are never to complain or to argue.

Holy guacamole! How in the world do you do that one?

He says if you do that you will be so unusual in the world because everybody complains and everybody argues, you're going to make the truth of God attractive. It's a witness. He says you will become blameless, and pure. It'll show you're a child of God without fault. He says you'll be faultless if you do that. In a crooked and depraved generation that is cynical and sarcastic and critical, in which you shine like stars in the universe. We sing that song, "We will shine like stars in the universe because we're living for your glory." How do you live for God's glory? You don't complain and you don't argue. But you're grateful in every situation.

That would change the world. That would bring millions of people to Christ. Not our protest signs, but our gratitude. Christians should be known for radical love, radical kindness, radical joy, radical gratitude. There's a word for that. It's called Christlike. The problem is we're not doing a very good job of this. We really aren't.

This week I read some depressing statistics in *World* magazine. They did a survey nationally how Americans under thirty view evangelicals. And who is an evangelical? You are. An evangelical is not an evangelist. An evangelical is someone who believes the good news that Jesus Christ died in the cross, paid for my sin, that by his grace I could go to heaven, my past could be forgiven, I'd get a home in heaven and a purpose for living. That's an evangelical. You're an evangelical. It comes from the word "evangel" which is the Greek word for "good news." That's all it is. Somebody who believes the good news.

They did a survey on how Americans under thirty view evangelicals. Here were the results.

Ninety-one percent – the number one answer – said anti homosexual. Great! So the one thing we're known for more than anything else is what we're against! I'm tired of the church being known primarily for what it's against. I think it's time that we be known for what we're for not just what we're against.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

Eighty-seven percent said they view evangelicals as “judgmental.”

Eighty-five percent said “they’re hypocritical.”

Seventy-eight percent of Americans said “they’re old fashioned.”

Seventy-five percent said they’re “too involved in politics.”

Seventy-two percent said “out of touch with reality.”

Seventy percent said, “Insensitive to others.”

Sixty-eight percent said “Boring.”

We’re not doing a very good job of representing Jesus. If that’s what the world thinks of us we’re not doing a very good job. Why? Because we’re not radically loving, radically kind, radically compassionate. We’re really no different than anybody else.

What we need is a radical change in the way we act to be like Christ, to have those roots.

No church is better positioned to change that than Saddleback Church. My goal, my desire, my dream – and I want you to be a part of this – is that they take this survey ten years from now and they get a whole different list. They’ll go, “When I think of evangelicals I think those are the people that will help you when everybody else walks out of your life. Those are the people that give you a second chance like in Celebrate Recovery. Those are the people who stand for the truth but they share it in a loving way. You can disagree with somebody and still love them. Those are the people who are kind. They are generous to a fault. Those are the people who’ll give you the shirt off their back. They’re the people who act like Jesus. They care for the poor and the sick. They help educate the next generation. They do all the things that the PEACE plan does.”

That’s what the church needs to be known for. Not for boring, negative, and all these other things.

The Bible says this in Proverbs 11:11 *“Good people bless and build up their city. But the wicked destroy it with their word.”* I want every member of Saddleback to be a good person, a righteous person. Good people build up their city but the wicked tear it down. How do you destroy a city with your words? Negativity, criticism, complaining, griping, all of those kinds of things. The Bible says that good people build up their city.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

What if every person in our church and our church family, what if we set a goal like this week we said, “Everybody this week five times a day express gratitude and appreciation to people in the city.” I’m not talking about to other believers. I’m not talking about to your family. I’m talking about people in the grocery line: “I like the way you bag those groceries!” The post office person, the clerk, when you go do Christmas shopping and they’re stressed out because the person in front of you was so cranky.

What if every one of us in our church said, we’re going to be radically grateful during this Christmas season and five times a day in the community this next week I’m going to tell five people, “I’m grateful for what you did. Thank you for the way you did that. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your help.” Just expressing thank you.

That would equal, if we did it every day for a week, that would equal over one million impressions in our community. Do you think that would change a climate and atmosphere? Absolutely. This one church could change the atmosphere of Southern California. If everybody five times a day expressed gratitude to somebody in the community – not a believer – every day for a month, there would be about thirty million impressions. That would radically change the atmosphere this Christmas in our community.

You can bless people just by being grateful. Saying, I thank God for you. It better be genuine. You’d better have a reason for it. Think it through. But one of the ways you can bless people is saying, God has really gifted you. You’re good at... I don’t know how you do this, the way you close deals. The way you wrap packages... the way you give my dog a bath. Whatever it is! You just be grateful.

If you become a radically grateful person you’re going to start building roots in your life that’s going to make you stand through the toughest things of the next decade.

One of the ways we’re trying to express Christlikeness is through our signature issue Celebrate Recovery, Orphan Care, PEACE plan. One of them is our AIDS ministry. World AIDS Day is coming up this week. The reason why we do it is because AIDS is one area people don’t expect the church to care about. It involves sex and drugs and needles and things like that.

I’m going to ask Kay to come and talk about that.

Kay:

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

As Rick said, one of the ways our church has tried to show compassion to people who are suffering, people who are sick, is caring for people who are HIV positive. This Tuesday is World AIDS Day, December 1st. This will be the seventh year that as church we have commemorated World AIDS Day. Joined with people around the globe in saying we care, we care about what's happened in the past, we care about what happens now and we care about what happens to people in the future. So I want to tell you some ways that you can be a part of giving radical love and care this week to people who are HIV positive.

In your program, in your bulletin, there are a couple things. There's a flap and on the flap there's a story of one of our care teams, a group of people who are committed in friendship to take care of someone who is HIV positive. You'll see the story of a woman and her team who are cleaning someone's house. It's a really sweet simple thing to do. You'll see on the back of that flap some other ways you can help.

Then on the bulletin insert there are two things. One is World AIDS day. We're doing an event called the Evening of Hope. Rick and I will be leading that Tuesday evening in the Refinery between seven and eight thirty. We're going to pray for people who are positive. We're going to meet with a person from the International AIDS Vaccine. This is a really big deal. It's not going to be on the scientific level so if you don't have a degree in rocket science you're not going to be left out. It's geared for people like me. So if I can get it you're going to get it.

Then to talk about the future and the past and what we're doing for people who are positive. On the back side of that bulletin insert are five practical ways that you and your small group can serve people who are positive in this season.

Then one other thing that you could do today that we're really excited about. I'm going to invite you to go out to the patio right by the staircase is the HIV/AIDS initiative booth. You're going to fill out your name on this piece of paper. This one says, "Kay Warren facing AIDS because Saddleback Church cares." You're going to take your picture, your mug shot. You'll have the opportunity to post it on AIDS.gov which is an attempt to have millions of people post this on that one web site. There's this huge collage of people who care about HIV. Or you can take this and do like I'm going to do and put this on Facebook and twitter on World AIDS Day on Tuesday to say I'm a part of a group of people who care about those who are HIV positive.

So show your radical love and compassion this week on World AIDS Day. Thanks. God bless you.

Rick:

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

That's a simple way to witness. To simply stand there for a mug shot to say I care. Yet it could be posted on a site that the world would see. If people saw enough, Saddleback Cares, that's a witness, would you agree? Here's a church that says they care. They care about people who are sick.

If somebody's lying on the side of the road and they're bleeding to death you don't walk up to them and say, was it your fault? You just help them! When somebody's lying on the side of the road and they're sick you don't walk up and say, are you here illegally? You just help them.

The government has a different role. But my role is always this: to show compassion. That's your role. That's what it means to be a radical believer.

The way God wired the universe – I love God; he's so cool – the way he has wired the universe is that when you give out and you help other people by showing appreciation and gratitude God makes sure you always get blessed back more in return. There are four personal benefits you get from developing radical gratitude. These are the four things that will happen. If you will show gratitude in every circumstance four things will happen in your life...

1. It keeps me in God's will.

You won't have to doubt whether you're in God's will or not. If you're giving thanks to God in every situation you are in the center of God's will. You don't have to doubt. You don't have to wonder. You don't have to question. Giving thanks to God and to others is not a duty, it's a privilege. The alternative is disobedience. This keeps you in God's will.

2. It makes me better not bitter.

Particularly when times are tough. If you'll learn to have the attitude of gratitude in every situation no matter what happens. You say, God I'm going to give thanks in this situation. It will make you better not bitter.

Every one of us here, all of Saddleback in all the different venues, every one of you has an excuse to be bitter. I didn't say a reason; I said an excuse. Because we've all been hurt. We've all had difficulties. All things haven't gone the way we wanted them to. You could get bitter.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

But you don't want to be bitter. You want to be better. So you need to be grateful instead of bitter so God can bring good out of it.

Thirty-three days left before we start the new decade. Do not take any grudge of the last decade into the next. That's stupid. It's dumb. It's foolish. Whoever you're holding a grudge against, whoever you still resent, whoever you haven't forgiven, you let it go now. Because you don't want to take last decade's grudge into tomorrow. That's foolish. Because at the end of next decade you'll just be a more bitter person than you are now.

Whoever has hurt you, whoever has harmed you, you need to let it go. You need to forgive them. Not because they deserve it. You didn't deserve God's forgiveness. Let it go so you can get on with a clean slate. Do not take yesterday's grudges into tomorrow's decade. I beg you as your friend and pastor.

3. The third benefit of radical gratitude is it defeats the devil.

How does that work? It defeats the devil because the devil loves to mess you up. The devil's got your number. What he likes to do is to get you angry, get you upset, get you irritated, he likes to get you depressed, discouraged. He likes to get you jealous, envious, greedy, lustful. He likes to do all these different things. And he knows your buttons. He has figured you out and he knows if he can just push this button you'll get angry, you'll get irritated, you'll lose your joy, you'll lose your peace, you'll lose your love, you'll lose your connection with God. So he pushes that button.

What Satan does not like you to do – what he hates for you to do is to thank God. He can't stand to hear you thank God. He can't stand to hear you praise God. So if he does something in your life and you thank God in it, it gets him off his game. It was his idea that I'm going to push this button and it'll make them irritated. But if I push this button and every time I push this button they just say, I'm going to thank God in this situation, he's going to stop doing it. Does this make sense?

It's like Pavlov's response. If you keep doing something and he keeps getting a result from it he'll keep doing it. If there's somebody in your life who irritates you and Satan knows that, he'll just keep bringing that person into your life to irritate you. But if every time that person starts to irritate you, you go, "God, I thank you in this irritation. I'm so grateful for you. Because I know that even in this you can teach me patience. You can teach me love. I can learn that this isn't that big a deal. I can learn it's not about me. I can learn to be more unselfish. I can give you a hundred reasons I can learn from this situation."

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

This is not our normal response. Friends, I have ADD which means you're going to be scatterbrained but also means you are going to be intensely focused. When I get intensely focused on a project and somebody interrupts me, I don't naturally say "Oh, thank God for this interruption." I'm just not that way. Or somebody irritates me, "Oh, man, I love this irritation. Bring it on."

Here's the thing. If you can learn to thank God in everything in your life you just shut out the devil. He starts irritating you over here you go, I'm just not going to let that bother me anymore. Lord, instead of being irritated at that person I'm going to pray for that person. I'm going to thank God for that person. I'm going to thank God for you and thank God for lessons learned." Satan has to move to project B. He starts trying to irritate you, get your goat, trying to get you to lose your joy. Lord, I'm going to thank you in this situation.

So he starts moving over 'here'. "Lord, I'm going to thank you in this." If you learn to thank God in everything you develop basically a wall of thanksgiving, a wall of praise around you that frustrates the devil to no end. Because he can't get at you. Because no matter what he does, you're not getting ticked any more. You just go, thank you God. I don't know why this is happening. I don't like it. But I'm going to trust you and to thank you. And you praise God in every situation and there's no way the devil can get at you. And it defeats the devil.

4. The fourth benefit is it causes miracles.

Gratitude is the source of miracles. It is the cause of miracles. Why? Because thanking in faith is thanking God in advance.

Listen real closely. When God does something for me and I thank God for it after it's happened, that's called gratitude. When I thank God for an answer to prayer before I get it, that's called faith. Faith is thanking God in advance.

In other words the Bible says in the book of Mark where Jesus said, "*When you pray, believe that you have received it and you shall have it.*" You say, what does that mean? That I've got to believe that I've got it in order to get it? Yep. That's called faith. If you wait until after you've got it to thank God, that's called gratitude. If you thank God before you get it, that's called faith. Faith is thanking God in advance.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

Let's just take a practical subject. Let's say in the next decade you want to get married. A lot of people don't pray for a partner. They whine for a partner. Oh, God I need a husband. Oh, God just let him have a heartbeat. I don't care. He could look like Rick Warren for all I care. Just let him be alive." You're whining.

God doesn't answer whines. He doesn't answer whines. Here's how you pray over long term.

First why do you have to keep praying over and over? Because God says be persistent in your prayer. Are you trying to wear God down? Trying to convince him that you need a husband? No. God wants to answer your prayer more than you want it answered. God is waiting on you, not you waiting on him. He wants to make some changes in you, some radical changes in you, to get you ready for the answer to whatever prayer you're asking.

When you're ready he can answer your prayer.

So what you do is you ask once and then you just keep thanking God in advance. God, you know what I need. I need a new job. Then now you don't keep saying, by the way, God I need to remind you. I need a new job. God! I need a job! Hello!

God heard it the first time. Faith is thanking God in advance. Saying, "God remember I asked for a job. Thank you that the answer's on its way. I don't see it. I don't know where it's coming from. But I thank you that it's on the way. You turned off one faucet. You can turn on another just as easily. So God I'm thanking you in advance." That is the source of miracles. Faith is thanking God in advance for the answer to prayer before you get it.

This is what Jesus did in a miracle. One of the stories of Jesus is that Jesus had a friend named Lazarus who got sick and his sisters, Mary and Martha sent for Jesus. "Jesus, your good friend Lazarus is sick. You better come over and heal him." Jesus was one day from that house, one day's walk. As I told you a couple weeks ago he took three days to get there.

I don't know what he was doing for three days. Skipping around and picking flowers or telling jokes. But it took him three days to get to where his best friend was dying. By the time he gets there Lazarus is dead and they had buried him in a cave. They didn't bury them in the ground in those days. They carved caves out of limestone walls and rolled a stone in front of it.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

Jesus wasn't in a hurry. Why? Anytime God's not in a hurry in your life he wants to do something bigger. Jesus didn't want to heal Lazarus he wanted to raise him from the dead. More glory for God. Anytime God is taking his time, he wants to do something bigger than you have been thinking of.

So he gets there. They've already buried him. They said Lord it's too late. We've already buried the guy. We wrapped him up in grave clothes like a mummy and put him in a cave. Jesus says, Open up the cave. Then, one of my favorite verses in the Bible. I memorized it as a little boy. Mary said, "But Lord he stinketh." I thought that was such a cool verse when I was a kid. One of the only verses I memorized in the Bible: "But Lord, he stinketh." Well duh! He's been dead for three days. They're not embalming and it's in the Mediterranean and it's hot.

Jesus walks up and says move the stone out of the way. Here's what Jesus said, he looked at the cave and said, "*Lord, Father, I thank you that you've already heard me.*" He didn't ask God to raise Lazarus. He didn't beg God to raise Lazarus. He said, "*I thank you that you've already heard me. And I'm just saying this aloud so the people around me will publicly know that I am who you say I am and that you sent me and so they may know that I am the one.* [Then he says,] *Lazarus, come forth. Come out.*" Today he would have said, "Lazarus, come on down!"

And Lazarus comes walking out. I love it that he had to say Lazarus, if Jesus had just said, come out, every dead person in Jerusalem would have come out of the tombs. So he had to be specific. Lazarus come out. And he comes out and he says take the graves clothes off, loose him and let him go.

The point is he thanked God the Father in advance.

When you start doing this you're moving to a new level of maturity. You're moving to deeper spiritual roots.

Some of you have lost your joy. You're not as close to God as you used to be. You know how you get it back? Gratitude. Get a new believer around you; get around them and you'll start getting excited again. Or go out and watch a baptism and let it remind you of when you were baptized.

It's kind of like going to a wedding. Have you ever gone to a wedding and all of a sudden you fall in love with your wife again? You see other people in love and you say I want to be that way.

RADICAL GRATITUDE

Radicalis: Developing Spiritual Roots - Part 1

When you see somebody baptized, you get around a new believer, you get your spark back. You remember what you were like. The longer you're a believer the more you take for granted. All those answered prayers, all those great things in your life, the first time you had an answered prayer, you went Wow! Today you get an answered prayer and go, that's typical. When you went through a tough time the first time and God really helped you out, you went, man that really helped! Now he's helped you so many times you take it for granted. You need to get your roots deeper.

I invite you to join me on a radical journey. The journey of deeper Christian roots.

Prayer:

As we begin this new decade in less than a month now, you're going to need Christ in your life. If you've never opened your life to him you need to say this right now, Jesus Christ I don't understand it all but I want to put my faith in you. I want to trust you, to know your plan for my life. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying for me. I don't understand that. But I want to get to know you and love you and trust you. Would you pray, Lord I want to honor you this week. I want to start every day with gratitude. I don't want my feet to touch the ground without saying thank you God. Lord, I want to build relationships. I want to get closer to some people. Help me to be grateful for them. To express gratitude to the people I want to be close to. In my small group, in my family, in my fellowship. Lord you know the tough times I'm going through. I'm going to thank you just like Habakkuk did. Even though everything goes wrong, I will *still* thank you. I want to develop my faith and trust you believing that you know what's best and I don't. I want to serve other people this week by raising their value by appreciating them. And Lord, I want my life to be a witness. I don't want Christians to be known for the negative. I want you to use me to be a positive person this week, expressing gratitude to people in our city wherever I'm working, wherever I'm playing. Make a difference through me, a radical difference. I pray this prayer in your name. Amen.