YOUTH PASTOR CO

Thanks A Lot - Sermon Builder

Week 1 — Worship God

Capture

Grab their attention with an illustration.

Illustration/Story: Tell the room, "On three, I want you to cheer like your team just won the championship. As loud as you can. One, two, three!" Let it get loud. Then bring it down and say, "Nobody had to teach you how to do that. Nobody handed you a script. So why is it so easy to shout for a team, and so hard to shout for God?" Let that sit for a second. Then tell them Psalm 100, the psalm we're going to live in for three weeks, starts with exactly that: a shout.

Over the next three weeks, we're going to learn gratitude from Psalm 100. Most of us assume thankful people were just born that way. Scripture treats gratitude as something you practice until it becomes who you are. And the practice starts with worship.

Connect

Connect them to God's word.

Tension Question: When was the last time you thanked God for something without asking Him for anything? For a lot of us, prayer is a list of requests with a quick "thanks" tacked on the end. Gratitude to God has to be learned, and worship is where the lesson starts.

Scripture: Psalm 28:7 "The LORD is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving." Look at the order. David names who God is (strength, shield), what God does (helps), and then something happens to him: thanksgiving bursts out. That word matters. Thanksgiving isn't squeezed out of David. It overflows from someone who has noticed what God has done. Worship is where the noticing happens.

Consider

What does this mean for us today?

Scripture: Psalm 100:1-2 "Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth! Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy." Notice what comes first: the shout. Worship isn't what you do once gratitude finally shows up. Worship is how gratitude gets built in the first place.

Shouting with joy is stadium language. It's the sound a kingdom makes for its king. The psalm is inviting the whole earth to make that sound for the King of kings, and it starts with you in this room.

Then it says worship the Lord with gladness and come before Him. The word behind "worship" here also means to serve, so gladness belongs in your songs and in your obedience. Worship is more than the noise you make on a Wednesday night. It's the way you live in front of God the rest of the week. When you worship Him with your voice and your life, you put yourself in the place where Psalm 28:7 happens.

Bottom Line: Learn gratitude in worship.

Collide

How do we apply this in our lives?

Scripture: Colossians 4:2 "Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart." Two things you need if prayer is going to grow gratitude: an alert mind and a thankful heart. Those aren't moods you wait to feel. They're habits, and prayer is where both get trained.

You can't notice what God is doing if you're never paying attention, and you can't thank Him for what you never noticed. Most of us open a prayer with our problems. Flip it. Start with what you've seen Him do, and your mind gets alert and your heart gets thankful at the same time.

Application: This week, start every prayer with three specific thank-yous before you ask God for anything.

Call

How do we respond to the message?

Altar moment: God, You are our strength and our shield, and we want songs of thanksgiving to burst out of our lives. Teach us to worship You with gladness, with our voices and with our obedience. Make our minds alert to what You're doing and our hearts thankful for it. Help us start every prayer this week with thanks before we ask for anything. In Jesus' name, amen.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What's a moment you cheered so loud you lost your voice? What was it for?
2. Psalm 28:7 says thanksgiving "bursts out." When was the last time gratitude to God came out of you like that? What made it happen?
3. Read Psalm 100:1-2. Why do you think the psalm puts the shout before everything else? What does worshiping "with gladness" look like on a day you don't feel glad?
4. This week's challenge is three specific thank-yous before you ask God for anything. What are your first three? When in your day will you pray them?