Luke 22:24-34 (Sermon Notes) 1 Thess. 5:12-22 In Everything Give Thanks

How do we cultivate and sustain *an attitude of gratitude*? "In everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (See also Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:15-17)

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail. And you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers. But he replied, Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death. Jesus answered, 'I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me." (Luke 22)

If people grow to be grateful in everything, only God's grace has taught them; by trusting in God's grace, they have cultivated this gold of Christian character: gratitude, contentment, hope, peace, love, joy. Is it possible to become grateful for our failures?

1. **Failure is a gift from God:** "You will deny three times that you know me"
    a. In the context, Peter is not so great after all. "All such boasting is evil" (James 3:16). Peter will deny Jesus three times very soon. Jesus knows all this in advance, and the involvement of Satan is noted.
    b. If you are doing anything at all, you will fail; all things noble are difficult
    c. We live in an imperfect, fallen world by design; we fail every day, both in thought, intent, and action. We fail by omission. "We all stumble in many ways" (James 3:2)
    d. All have sinned; none are righteous; this is our condition. (Romans 3)
        i. We fail to love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength; and each other
    e. Failure does not feel great in the moment, but we need it... In time, we will see.
    f. So you can't be afraid of it; you must learn to respond, adjust, and use it.
    g. All of us have failed to yield . . .to God's rule over our hearts.
        i. Romans 7: "Wretched man that I am, who shall save me?"
    h. Get a real good introduction to reality and to yourself; we have forgotten we are dust. Dying . . dead - - - I am failure by birth; by nature…***all we like sheep have gone astray***
        i. This is you. Introduce yourself to yourself. (David's failure, Ps. 32 and 51)
        ii. Peter goes out and weeps: like Adam and Eve, his grasping led to shame
        iii. Jesus presents Peter's failure as a reality lesson
            1. The war in the air: Satan has demanded permission
            2. The war in the heart: You will deny me three times
            3. We are no match for these battles without Jesus.
    i. Luke 18: God, be merciful to me, the sinner. Life's most important lesson and posture.

2. **Failure needs the grace of God:** "But I have prayed for you"
    a. Failure exposes us and our deep need for grace; Jesus is our helper and intercessor
    b. Peter's failure was not a destination; rather, a God-ordained detour as part of His sanctification. "But I have prayed for you" - Divine, gracious intervention.
        i. Jesus does not delete or cancel Peter; He is making all things new.
        ii. He loves Peter and knows Peter . . 'get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 16)
        iii. He has already made a promise to Peter: I will build my church . .
    c. Luke 22:54:
        i. Around a fire . . after they had arrested Jesus: "Woman, I do not know him"
        ii. You are not one of them too... "Man, I am not"
        iii. An hour later . ."Man, I do not know what you are talking about"
        iv. The Rooster crows: Jesus was right. I am a fearful little weakling; the Lord looked at Peter, and Peter went out and wept bitterly. Embarrassed; ashamed
        v. How many times, under the pressure of man's approval, have we bailed and denied him . . turned away. . how foolish and weak . .to sin against such love and truth and grace
    d. We have in Jesus a gracious high priest; a friend that sticks closer than a brother.
    e. At his lowest, Peter found Jesus to be filled with love, kindness, forgiveness, and power. "We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us"
        i. The prodigal - "came to his senses" (Luke 15)
    f. There is no quick undo button... no eraser; a long and costly process of grace and growth is necessary; Cain's offering was not favored; instead of mastering sin b by humbling himself and repenting, he became angry. Instead of doing well, which would have lifted up his countenance, he went out and killed his brother. If you do not humble yourself and receive grace, you will become angry and vengeful

3. **Failure leads to growth in God:** "To sift you like wheat"
    a. Failure is a necessary part of the discipleship process, long-term growth (pruning; potter and clay) so that we ultimately become like Jesus
    b. "Demanded permission to sift you like wheat": Satan means for evil; Christ for good
        i. Steal, kill and destroy: the mission of the enemy . .John 10
        ii. Actually, failure is the greatest of teachers. "The greatest teacher, failure is."
    c. Success is dangerous; it can intoxicate us; it tends to create pride, ego, arrogance, and complacency that will ultimately self-destruct. We begin to feel invincible; incredible; I was walking on water for a bit . . **Success has destroyed more people than failure**; Failure keeps you honest and humble; it keeps introducing you to yourself as you really are; serves to cut the root of pride, envy, jealousy, bitterness, self-pity, whining, complaining, discontent...etc.
        i. Success is like a drug; "Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they can't lose" (Bill Gates)

        ii. Humility: Failure is humbling; humility is the soil in which all the other virtues grow; get over yourself; "Failure gives us something to correct"

iii. Confidence: Failure drives you to continue to work and practice and become better, excel still more while in complete dependency: Phil. 3:14
    1. Law . . then grace. The Law opens our eyes and ears, and shuts our mouths.
    2. We grow in confidence because we shift our reliance off of self onto Christ.
iv. Forgiveness: Saves me from toxic self-absorption; allows me to no longer fall for the trap of the fear of man; and empowers me to be gracious when others fail.
v. Freedom: Peter will never fear failure again; Peter is set free for God's service

4. **Failure Exalts the Gospel of God.** God has Good News for Failures
    a. The Kingdom of God has come - it is within you. The Kingdom is available only in Jesus, and the Kingdom is available to be in you. How? "And He was numbered with the transgressors"
    b. Peter's good news: But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.
    c. How was Simon turned back? Jesus obviously prayed for Peter, but Jesus was also going to die for Peter, not just praying, but purchasing. Redeeming.
    d. Jesus is counted as a transgressor; He takes Peter's place. He is treated as the one who denies; the failure. He is mocked; beaten; crowned as a loser and a curse; scourged, stripped naked, subjected to open humiliation
        i. . . but when He rises, He says, "Go tell his disciples, and Peter"
    e. Maybe this is why he runs to the tomb . . there is hope! A new day; my failure didn't ruin God's plan; it was part of the plan
    f. God took the worst thing ever, and used it to become the greatest thing ever
        i. Go, tell the disciples and Peter . . it is the kindness of God that leads to repentance.
        ii. Peter boldly proclaimed the Gospel in Acts 2 to crowds of people
        iii. Peter became the most thankful, joyful, hopeful . .(Read his letters)
    g. Only one never failed; yet He was treated like a failure (criminal) for us to become victorious and strong enough to strengthen our brothers.
        i. Because the perfect Savior died, my sinful soul is counted free
        ii. He willingly volunteered to take the fall; to be counted among the transgressors and to be treated as sin deserved.
        iii. So that I cannot end as a failure! I will end perfect and complete (with a kingdom to enjoy) Jude 24
    h. There is no ultimate failure for those in Christ- and for failures who run to Christ, there is certain future eternal glory
        i. . Nothing can separate; we are more than conquerors
    i. Faithful is He who calls you; He will also bring it to pass...

i. Increasing your confidence in Him empowers more success along the way
ii. The Freest Person in the world has a broken heart, an open mind, a new direction to travel. (Gordon Macdonald)

"Truly Christian relationships are governed not by rivalry but by service. The correct attitude to other people is not 'I'm better than you, and I'll prove it' nor 'You're better than I and I resent it' - but, 'You are a person of importance in your own right (because God made you in His own image and Christ died for you) and it is my joy and privilege to serve you'. " (John Stott) #Gal. 5:26

The essence of sin is to forget God: People who forget God gradually become their own god and begin to disobey God's Word, mistreat other people, and take God's gifts for granted. (Wiersbe)

The famous English Bible scholar named Matthew Henry was once attacked by thieves and robbed of his purse. He wrote these words in his diary: "Let me be thankful. First, I was never robbed before. Second, although they took my purse, they didn't take my life. Third, although they took my all, it was not much. Fourth, let me be thankful because it was I who was robbed and not I who did the robbing.

John Newton, "I asked the Lord"

1. I asked the Lord that I might grow, in faith and love and every grace; might more of his salvation know, and seek more earnestly his face

2. Twas he who taught me thus to pray, And he, I trust, has answered prayer,
   But it has been in such a way; As almost drove me to despair.
3. I hoped that in some favored hour, At once he'd answer my request,
   And by his love's constraining power, Subdue my sins and give me rest.
4. Instead of this, he made me feel The hidden evils of my heart
   And let the angry powers of Hell Assault my soul in every part.
5. Yea, more with his own hand he seemed
   Intent to aggravate my woe,
   Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
   Cast out my feelings, laid me low.
6. Lord, "Why is this?" I trembling cried,
   "Will you pursue your worm to death?"
   "'Tis in this way," The Lord replied,
   "I answer prayer for grace and faith."
7. "These inward trials I employ
   From self and pride to set you free
   And break your schemes of earthly joy
   That you would seek your all in me."