

Thank you – 25/09/2016

“Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy^[a] met him. They stood at a distance ¹³ and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”

¹⁴ When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.

¹⁵ One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

¹⁷ Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?¹⁸ Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?”¹⁹ Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”(Luke 17:11-19)

Beloved in the Lord,

Thank-you is one of the most powerful phrases that we can use. Giving thanks is one of the most important elements in our daily life. Ingratitude distances people from us, whereas gratitude attracts people. Isn't that the truth? When you do something for someone and they say “thank-you” it draws you closer to that person. The opposite is also true – if the person is ungrateful then you are distanced from that person, and maybe you will think twice before helping that person again. It is much easier to serve a grateful person than an ungrateful one. Gratitude is a very powerful thing.

Our text today tells us the story of Jesus and ten lepers. Leprosy in Jesus day had no cure and it was basically a sentence to a slow and painful death. Not only that, the leper had to live away from the community. Leprosy was an awful disease. One day Jesus was passing through a village where He was met by ten lepers. Seeing Jesus they cried out to Him:

“Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” Jesus did have mercy on them and sent them to see the priest. In our day the equivalent would be to be sent to a Doctor to confirm that they were cleansed of the disease. As they went they were all healed. In the twinkling of an eye they were cured of this terrible disease. They would be able to return and live in the community.

One of them, seeing that he was healed, immediately turned around and went back to Jesus to thank Him. He came praising and worshipping Jesus with a loud voice. He fell at Jesus feet and thanked Him. That is the reaction that we would expect. This man did what was normal and right. But what of the other nine? Even Jesus was astonished. We read: ***“Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?”¹⁸ Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?”***

Where are the others? They too were healed, but they didn't even consider turning back and saying thank-you to Jesus. Before we judge them too harshly we need to look at our

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own heart. Jesus said that we should remove the log from our own eye before we attempt to remove the speck from our brothers eye. Every time I read this passage about the ten lepers it makes me stop and ask myself how grateful am I? How much do I simply take for granted? How much have I received from God in prayer and not said "Thank –you Father?

Last week I read a few lines written by Derek Prince: *"The best way to acknowledge God is simply to thank Him. Thank Him that He is in charge. Thank Him for His faithfulness. Thank Him for all the help that you have received in the past. Thank Him for His wisdom. Thank Him for His power."*

These are things we should do regularly. When we wake in the morning, our first thought should be; "Thank you Lord for a new day." When we sit down to eat we should thank God for our daily bread. Thank Him that He loves you and gives you eternal life. Thank Him that He sent Jesus to take your punishment and to die in your place, for your sin. Never forget that you were born with something far worse than leprosy. You were born in sin which carries an eternal death sentence. In His grace and mercy Jesus took your punishment and served your sentence so that you would not have too. He did it so you and I could live forever in Heaven with Him. Thank Him for that every day and often. Not a day should pass that we do not humbly thank Him for His sacrifice on our behalf.

Thank Him that you have a home to live. Thank Him for all His provision. David gives us a great prayer we can and should pray often: ***"I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well."*** (Ps.139:14)

When was the last time you prayed this prayer? - ***"I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well."***

This prayer brings us close to God. This type of prayer takes the focus off you and onto God. It changes the way we think about ourselves and gives us a Godly perspective. That is a good thing. The less we focus upon ourselves, and the more we look to Him, the better we are. Our life becomes freer and our steps lighter because we realise everything is of Him. The more we draw near to Him, the more we reflect Christ Jesus.

When you live a life of gratitude, others pick up on it and it gives you a chance to testify about what God means to you and what He is doing in your life. You can tell others that God is good and gracious and loving. As I said before gratitude draws people closer, ingratitude drives them away.

Thanksgiving, is the key to a blessed life, that serves God. When we are grateful we are giving God the glory due Him, and that brings blessing. All of our life is to be one of service to God. Paul writes:

"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." Col.3:17

I remember growing up in NZ, there was a campaign in the early 70's that encouraged people to whistle while they worked. The idea was do your work joyfully, with a gracious heart. When you are happy while working, you are more productive. A negative attitude is bad for productivity.

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Paul teaches us to be thankful in all things and to honour God by doing all things with gratitude. Let me emphasise what he writes:

“Whatever you do in word or deed, **do all** in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”

The word **all means exactly that – all!** Whether you are raking up the leaves before the service; sitting at the door handing out the service sheets; making the coffee, playing the organ; taking out the garbage bins; bringing someone to Church; monitoring the sound system; baking piragi; setting the tables; do it with a grateful heart and spirit. Thank God that you can serve Him in this way and do it for His glory.

When we do things in this way, then the tasks are more pleasant and easier to perform. When you whinge and complain and grumble, then the opposite is true.

I know this from experience. I have a long way to go, but I am improving with God’s help. I believe that I am on the path and God is helping me every day to have a better attitude. I am trying to be grateful for whatever way I can serve Him.

When you feel like grumbling, stop and praise the Lord instead. You need to remind yourself that there is so much more to be grateful for than to complain about.

Gratitude gives God the glory and brings you and others blessing.

May we live and serve with an attitude of gratitude and so glorify God in all that we say and do.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.