

Thanksgiving: “Being Thankful”

11.19.23

Turn in your Bibles to Luke 17. You know, as I think about the skit that Travis and Scott did, it makes me think LONG AND HARD about the cards we’ve been dealt. You say, “Who’s we?” Well, because it’s Thanksgiving this week...actually our country. Oh, I know we all have individual stories and situations that are difficult and troublesome...like we saw in the skit...but in the midst of all of that...we can still be thankful. Now, the reason I mention “our country” in regards to the hand we’ve been dealt...is that it’s not a good hand right now. We’re a country in trouble. Economically, politically, morally, spiritually. Yes, we’re supposedly celebrating Thanksgiving on Thursday, but to whom or to what are we thankful?

I mean...as a country, we seem to now go straight from Halloween decorations to Christmas decorations, in one day. Now, I love Christmas...and it’s fine to decorate for Christmas...but as a country, do we actually celebrate “Thanksgiving...being thankful?” Or is it more about turkey and food and football? Matthew made the comment to me: “You can’t commercialize gratefulness!” He’s right. There’s no money in gratefulness. You can’t decorate for gratefulness. I would argue, as a nation, we’re not a very thankful people.

Today’s message is: “Being Thankful.” **You’ve turned to Luke 17** and it’s there we’re going to see where 10 men were healed of leprosy by Jesus but only 1 was thankful. 10 were healed...9 didn’t even thank Jesus, and I would argue, most Americans are like those 9, but should be like the 1.

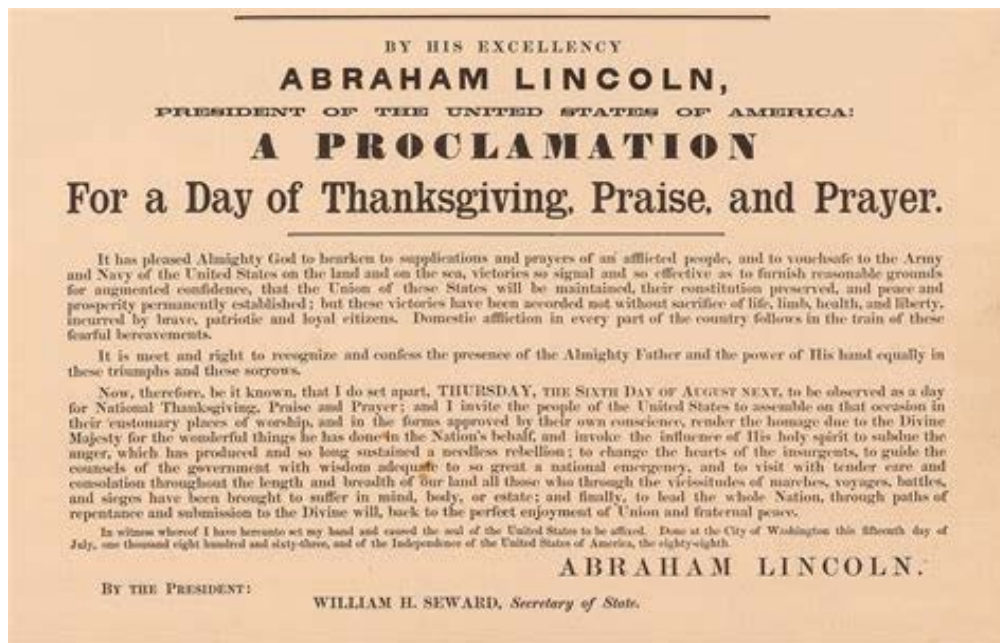
Luke 17:11-19

¹¹ On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee.¹² And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers,^[f] who stood at a distance¹³ and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” ¹⁴ When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶ and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸ Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹ And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”^[g]

This story is a fairly well-known story from Scripture. It’s often preached at Thanksgiving. I’ve preached from this text. And I’m preaching from this text because, again, as a people in this country, we’re not very thankful. People don’t say, “thank you” much anymore, because they’re so entitled.

And so it goes, particularly for the progressive liberals of our day, they say, “Thanksgiving” is a white man’s holiday and citizens of the US are ancestors of bigots, haters and colonizers. In other words, we came to this country and colonized it, and that makes us an evil people. You know I can look a progressive liberal right in the eye and calmly say, “Well, if that’s how you feel, then go give the keys to your house and your cars to an Indian. There’s Indians down in Cherokee. Give your house away.” Now, they won’t do that because it’s all bluster and they’re full of disingenuous platitudes.

You see, what the liberals want is for all vestiges of Christianity to be removed from this nation. They don’t want anyone to celebrate “Thanksgiving to God,” which is exactly what Abraham Lincoln said we should do, when he established Thanksgiving as a national holiday in 1863



every fourth Thursday in November. No, progressives/the ruling class hate America. They change the lyrics to the national anthem. They say our country is filled with bigots and haters. They say those who ascribe to biblical principles are mean and unloving and unaccepting. It's amazing, they've been the ones who have been blessed with so many great opportunities...most of whom are filthy rich, because of those opportunities; they wouldn't thank God if you paid them. No, "thanks" from them.

And so it was with Jesus, heading to Jerusalem. He healed 10 men and only 1 was thankful.

Luke 17:11-13

¹¹ On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee.¹² And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers,¹³ who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

These men were following the Mosaic Law in regards to leprosy. Leprosy, as you know, is a terrible disease of the skin and cartilage. A person with leprosy often looked hideous, as their nose would fall off...their ears...their lips...even the ends of their fingers and toes. And the smell...oh, the smell of rotting flesh. Thus, according to the Law, they had to be separated from the community, because leprosy is super contagious. Thus, they lived in "Leper Colonies." It was an awful existence...often leading to death.

These 10 men are desperate and they've obviously heard about Jesus, as the Healer, and they cry out to Him: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Church, that's how a person is saved. You can't be saved until you recognize that you're destitute, a spiritual pauper...with nothing to offer...so you cry out... "Jesus, Master, have mercy on me!" Well, what did Jesus do?

Luke 17:14

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

"Go show yourselves to the priests." Why? Well, this was expected for anyone claiming to have been relieved of leprosy... The priests had to say you were clean. "Why?" So, you could be restored to your synagogue. Because with your disease, you were considered unclean and not allowed to be in the community or the synagogue. The synagogue had a list of lepers, and in order to be reinstated, you had to have a letter from the priest.

Jesus gave them a command... "Go." And you know what? **He expected them to go.** It was a command! BUT WAIT!!! Were they healed before they went? Well, let's see...

Luke 17:14b

14 And as they went they were cleansed.

As they went, they were cleansed... Ah! They **had to obey** before the healing came. Wait a minute... Does Jesus actually expect us to obey? Yes...if you love me...you'll keep my commandments.

Love = Obedience

Yes, they had to obey first! That's what you do for a Master, right? You obey. Are you obeying Jesus?

Let me ask you another question. Do you expect Jesus to do stuff for you? Do you want Him to bring blessings into your life? There's a requirement. Obedience. Before they received their healing, they had to obey Jesus and go! But I get it. We want the blessings without the obedience. And so many Christians wonder why they're living life with so little joy, so little fulfillment. I'll tell you why...it's a lack of obedience, and we're short-circuiting God's blessings for our lives.

Let me give you an example. Take a look at the screens.



How well is this bike going to work? Not at all, right? That's because the chain is not on the sprocket. We've got a disobedient chain. Listen, the chain has to obey the sprocket for the bicycle to work. Chains that are obedient to the sprocket...make the bike go. So many Christians are getting nowhere because we're disobedient to God's commands and we're living in "known" sin and expecting God to bless and He can't...because He can't bless KNOWN SIN. You know about it and do nothing! Repent and get the chain of obedience back on the bike.

Well...what an amazing scene...can you imagine...as they walked away...cartilage started growing back around their ear holes and a nose began to form...fingers and toes popped back out and **ulcerated skin became smooth, like a baby's. Can you imagine! What happened next?**

Luke 17:15

15 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice;

One is coming back! Take a look at this artist depiction...it's a good one...



He saw he'd been healed and he turned back. He's not limping anymore on feet with no toes...he's not using a crutch anymore...he's brand new...and he comes to Jesus and falls on his face...

Luke 17:16a

16 and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks.

He gave thanks. In fact, the words “giving him thanks” is one Greek word: **“Eucharisteo”** and every time it's used in the New Testament, (37 times), it's used to direct thanks to God. Do you know what that leper was acknowledging? The fact that Jesus was God. That's why it says in vs 15 that he was “praising God with a loud voice.” And what's even more amazing is the fact this man is a Samaritan.

Luke 17:16b

16 Now he was a Samaritan.

As you know, Samaritans are part-Jew, part-Gentile; and therefore, neither the Jews nor the Gentiles wanted anything to do with them. They were derogatorily called: half-breeds. They were ostracized and treated with no mercy. So, here's a Samaritan falling down at the **feet of a Jew**. Wow! And yet, verses 17 and 18 imply the other nine were most likely Jews. Watch...

Luke 17:17-18

17 Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?”

“Except this foreigner.” Does it seem crass to you for Jesus to call him a “foreigner?” No, Jesus wasn't being mean...He was simply pointing out the exceptional nature of this man's faith...a man who was not raised with the same understanding of God as Jews would have been. See this wonderful image...



Jesus was tender! Listen, this Samaritan not only came back to thank Jesus, but he acknowledged Jesus as “God.” And that took courageous boldness, when all the others just kept going! The other nine just walked away, (healed)...but weren’t thankful. Church family, I want to say this...we’re going to have to be like the Samaritan going forward and show courage in living for Jesus. Again, Samaritans were loathed, hated, called names...ostracized. And as our country continues to become more and more pagan, we’re likely going to be treated the same way. Because as we approach Thanksgiving this week, we must understand the reality of what we’re **living in** today... You see, much of our country is like the 9 who walked away...See this image. It’s so good!



Those 9 are just as happy as clams running and jumping and celebrating and not even thinking about Jesus. And that’s America...we’ve run away from Jesus. It’s a sad reality, at the first Thanksgiving, in 1621, we gave praise to God. See the depiction...they’re thanking God...



And yet today we have DEI, ESG, CRT, LGBTQ... LMNOP. All of these funded by George Soros and Blackrock...



Blackrock...they're the largest asset manager in the world. Managing over \$10 Trillion in assets, and they're why



Target pushed Pride Month to the detriment of their customers...all because Blackrock controls their stock. Blackrock controls whether or not Target's stock will show up in the investment portfolios they manage and run. Blackrock, in essence, weaponizes their \$10 trillion dollars telling corporations how many gays, lesbians and transgenders are to be on their board and it's all about being woke and "DEI."

You know, DEI stands for: "diversity, equity and inclusion."



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

No, DEI isn't about acceptance and inclusion...it's all about hate! Hatred of anything that's biblical or good. You see, DEI doesn't recognize basic biology and how God made us. DEI says boys can come in girl's bathrooms and participate on their teams. But I want to make something very clear...that won't happen here. Ladies, you don't have to worry about a man going into one of your bathrooms. These signs mean something:



No...if someone who looks like a man, walks into one of our ladies' restrooms, we will escort him out. And we do so, because we're going to protect our women and our children and our little girls in this building. You say, "You're not being loving to that man who has gone into our ladies." Well, how about being loving to our wives and our daughters. I say it all the time: The most loving and kind thing you can do for someone is not to play their games...but, kindly tell them the truth.

Listen, if you're a man, you go to the men's bathroom, and if you're a woman you go to the women's bathroom. It doesn't matter how you feel or what you call yourself. That's not mean, that's the truth. And if there's anyone struggling with gender dysphoria in the room, I would love to encourage you and help you and to talk to you about embracing your identity as God made you, as He has fearfully and wonderfully made you from your mother's womb- Psalm 139.

Church, we're not a nation running toward Jesus any longer. This is poignantly evident because of what happened in Ohio a couple of weeks ago...



in Ohio...not CA, not NY...Ohio...they enshrined abortion in their constitution by a: 56-44 margin. What's even more astonishing, according to exit polls, a whopping 24% who voted for this constitutional amendment for abortion (up to the moment of birth), 24% who voted for this were evangelical, born-again Christians. Are you kidding me?

How in the world did this happen? I'll tell you one of the main reasons these "Christians" voted this way is because our churches have grown silent out of fear. You see, we're expecting voters to act with moral clarity when the church in America, out fear of being seen as unloving and unkind and offensive, never offers moral clarity and biblical truth. And until that changes, pro-lifers will have a much steeper hill to climb because of silent pulpits.

Unfortunately, because of weak pastors and weak churches, many Christians have been left with the impression that abortion doesn't really matter because it's never addressed from the pulpit. They're looking for guidance on the issue and other social issues, where moral clarity is needed and they never get it. Do you understand if that 24% (claiming to be Christians) had voted against the amendment...it would have been defeated resoundingly.

One thing you won't ever have to worry about is if I'm going to be clear from this pulpit regarding what the truth of God's Word says on any matter. So, on this Sunday before Thanksgiving, I will say this clearly...we on Thursday will give thanks to Almighty God, the One who created us all in our mother's wombs...and I will also state the obvious, when it comes to abortion, when your heart stops beating, you die. You've killed someone. See this baby:



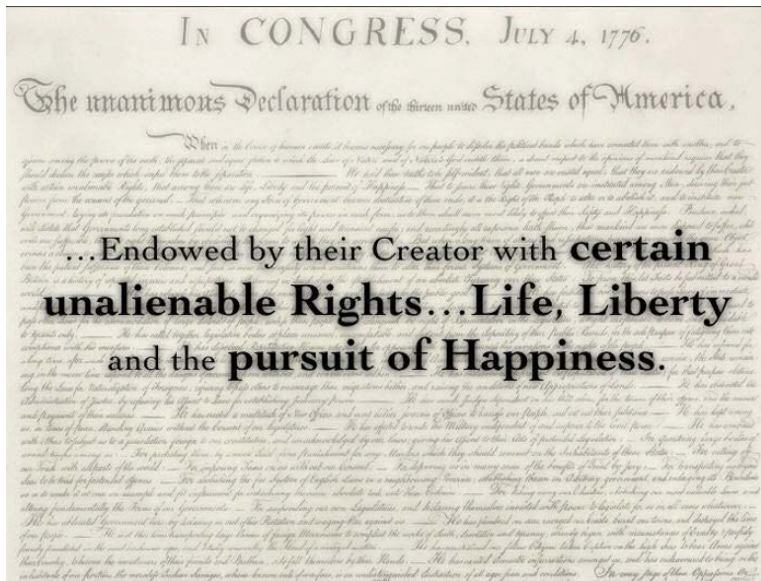
That baby is sleeping like it did in her mother's womb, her location just changed.

Church family, our kids are being fed lies in the universities, social media...by the cultural elites that the slaughter of babies in the womb up to the moment of birth is: "women's health care" and "bodily autonomy." No...it's murder. Plain and simple. It's the sacrifice of little ones made in the image of God. And so is it any wonder that a society that will do that, will now emasculate our little boys and chest-bind our little girls?

Oh, we live in a culture that idolizes sexual freedom, so those who want to experience that freedom can be freed from the consequences of their own fertility. Church, the Left's false rhetoric about killing babies in the womb being: "women's health care" and that anyone who doesn't believe in this just wants to harm women, is a total lie. WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE...is ruse. It's verbal gymnastics. It's murder. We must be clear and we must recognize abortion has two victims: the baby and the mother, who in many cases got talked into the abortion by the father, a relative, an abortion provider, and perhaps someone whom claims to be a Christian. And as we talked last week, there is forgiveness. Jesus will heal and cleanse and restore. There is mercy, grace and love at the cross!

No, loving life is not about punishing the mother, but to help her. Whether it's to keep her baby or to find a loving adoptive home, not to condemn her...but to love her and tell her the truth that she's being exploited by abortion right's advocates and the fact they're never told about the long-term consequences of having an abortion, and how that abortion will affect them physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually for the rest of their lives.

Church family, in this country, we celebrate the fact that all men are created equal, (Dec. of Indep.)



endowed by their Creator (God...not Buddha, not Muhammad), with certain unalienable rights, that among these IS LIFE! Jesus gave 10 men their lives back so, for them, they can now return home and go back into their communities, but there's something else about the 1 who returned

Luke 17:19

19 And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Church, the word for "made you well" is one word in the Greek: "sozo," and it means "salvation." In fact, there's a little "#4" in my Bible that says at the bottom of the page that phrase can be translated: **"has saved you."** In my opinion, that's the more accurate translation. The man was truly made whole, body and soul: SOZO. He was saved!!

Do the math...90% of the lepers walked away...that's a big number. Yeah...they were healed...but, they didn't get saved. What a shame. I wonder if they ever did? What about you today? Are you just seeking the blessings from God and once you get them, you'll be like the 90% and just walk away? Which one are you?



Could it be that "thanksgiving" is the key to unleashing the power of God in our lives? **Could it be** that when we humble ourselves and fall on our faces before Him that we find the REAL BLESSING...that blessing is simply to be at the feet of Jesus...to be in His presence. **Could it be** that the promotion...the new job...the next "fun thing" isn't what it's all about? **Could it be** that Jesus and Jesus alone is the only One who can totally satisfy the human heart? **And could it be** that when we come to Him in thankfulness...and fall at His feet is when our lives truly begin? YES!!!

Thursday is Thanksgiving... church family, may we truly be thankful! May we truly give all the glory to Jesus, just like the leper...the only one who returned.

