

Sunday 11/17/24 – Panama Methodist Church

Sermon Title: “Thankfulness: Sermon Series: (Part 3 of 3)

(Slides 1-15 will be listed in order throughout this sermon 😊!)

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we are less than two-weeks away from Thanksgiving. Is this good news? Is this bad news? Is this stressful news? Some of us will be traveling for Thanksgiving, and for some of us, we might have people travelling to be with us for Thanksgiving. “Thanksgiving” is a holiday of coming together, of loving each other, and of giving Thanks to God for everything He has given us and done for us. We all have so much to be “Thankful” to God for. Since we are in a month of “Thankfulness,” we have been talking the last two weeks about different ways to be “Thankful.” While this was originally going to be a four-week sermon series, I will be off next Sunday, and Rev. Roy Miller will be preaching for me.

As a result, we will conclude this “Thankfulness” sermon series this morning. Let us look one last time at our “Thankfulness” sermon series cover picture:

(Slide 1 – (“Thankfulness” Series - Picture))



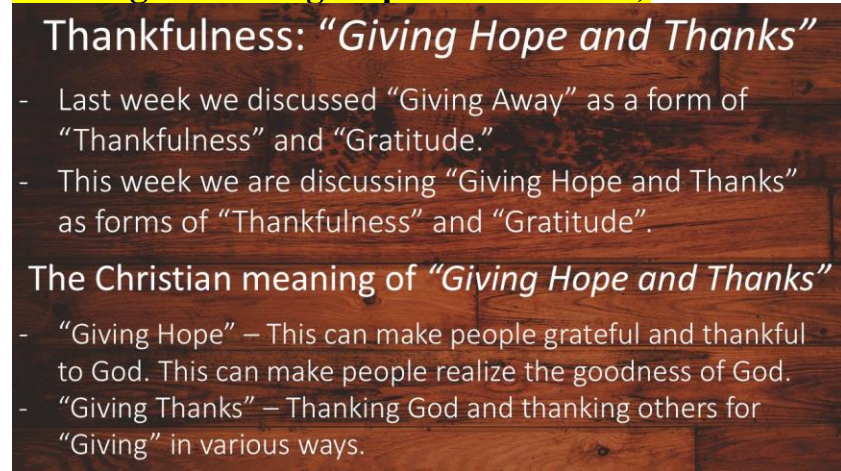
Last Sunday we talked about “Giving Away” Thankfulness, and we compared this to the parable or story of “The Rich Man and Lazarus.” We talked about the importance of loving others, serving others, giving to others, and “Giving Away” in general. This morning though, I want to talk about “Giving Hope,” and “Giving Thanks.” Here is a picture of our “Thankfulness: Sermon Series: Part 3, “Giving Hope and Thanks”.

(Slide 2 – (“Thankfulness” Series: Part 3 - Picture))



To touch on quick what we discussed last Sunday about “Giving Away,” and to discuss the “Thankfulness” topics of “Giving Hope” and “Giving Thanks” let us review and look at what we will discuss this morning:

(Slide 3 – (“Thankfulness: “Giving Hope and Thanks” and “The Christian meaning of “Giving Hope and Thanks””))



Thankfulness: “Giving Hope and Thanks”

- Last week we discussed “Giving Away” as a form of “Thankfulness” and “Gratitude.”
- This week we are discussing “Giving Hope and Thanks” as forms of “Thankfulness” and “Gratitude”.

The Christian meaning of “Giving Hope and Thanks”

- “Giving Hope” – This can make people grateful and thankful to God. This can make people realize the goodness of God.
- “Giving Thanks” – Thanking God and thanking others for “Giving” in various ways.

As we can see, there are all different types of “Thankfulness,” and all different ways to live and be “Thankful,” in this season of “Thankfulness,” and in general.

In this the last installment of this sermon series on “Thankfulness,” I am going to, as we just read, discuss “Giving Hope” and “Giving Thanks” through the parable or story of “Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers.” This is a parable or a story of “Giving Hope,” and “Giving Thanks.” “Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers” is also only found in the gospel of Luke. Let us look the parable or story of “Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers” in Luke 17:11-19.

(Slide 4 – (Luke 17:11-19, “Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers”))

The Parable or Story of “Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers”
(Luke 17:11-19, NRSV)

¹¹ On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, ¹³ they called out, saying, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’

(Slide 5 – (Luke 17:11-19, “Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers”))

The Parable or Story of “Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers”
(Luke 17:11-19, NRSV)

¹⁴ When he saw them, he said to them, ‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’ And as they went, they were made clean. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice.

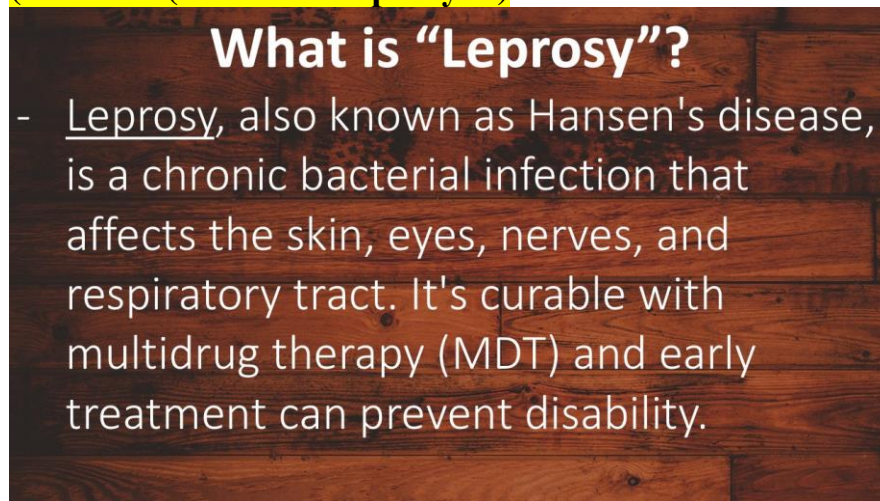
(Slide 6 – (Luke 17:11-19, “Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers”))

The Parable or Story of “Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers”
(Luke 17:11-19, NRSV)

¹⁶ He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then Jesus asked, ‘Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they?’ ¹⁸ Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?’ ¹⁹ Then he said to him, ‘Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.’

Before taking a deep dive into Luke 17:11-19, I think it is important for us to understand what “Leprosy” is. In Luke 17:11-19, once again, “Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers.” The question then, is what is a “Leper?” Let us look together:

(Slide 7 – (“What is Leprosy”?)



So, the technical name for “Leprosy” today is “Hansen’s disease.” Dose this still exist in the world today. It does, but not like it once did. Where it does exist is usually places where people do not have access to need medical care to cure “Leprosy,” or “Hansen’s disease.”

Further, what are the symptoms of this disease that Jesus cleansed ten-people of in our gospel reading for this morning? Here are the symptoms of “Leprosy,” or “Hansen’s disease”:

(Slide 8 – (“What are the symptoms of “Leprosy”?)

What are the symptoms “Leprosy”?

Symptoms of Leprosy - Include:

- Skin lesions that are lighter, darker, or redder than normal skin - Loss of sensation or pain
- Nodules on the skin - Thickened or dry skin
- Painless ulcers on the soles of the feet
- Painless swelling or lumps on the face or earlobes
- Loss of eyebrows or eyelashes

Leprosy is spread through close and frequent contact with an untreated person who coughs or sneezes. It's not spread by casual contact like shaking hands or hugging.

Even though “Leprosy” or “Hansen’s disease” still exists today, we at least, in general, can cure it. This was not really an option in Jesus’ day. Further if you developed “Leprosy” or “Hansen’s disease” you were seen as unclean and defiled. People would be worried about getting “Leprosy” from you. Worse, your condition or disease might be seen as something you have gotten as a result of sin in your life. Not only were you banished from the Jewish synagogues and Temple, but you were literally banished from society. At this time, you were removed from your family, and all people, except other people with leprosy. No one would want to come near you, and once again, it could be assumed that you developed leprosy because you or your ancestors had sinned against God. To put it another way, it was your fault you had leprosy, and you were paying the price by being removed from society and the public worship of God with the congregation. It must have

felt like such a disgrace, and it must have caused people with leprosy to feel abandoned and unloved.

Let us look through the “Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers” parable or story, more closely. Picking up starting in the gospel of Luke 17:11 it says that Jesus was headed to Jerusalem. As part of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem he headed through the region between Samaria and Galilee. Remember that Samaritans and Jews did not associate with each other and were usually considered enemies of each other. As Jesus was journeying to Jerusalem, and going through the region between Samaria and Galilee, Jesus enter a village on his path. When Jesus entered this village however, ten lepers approached him. Knowing the rules, these ten lepers kept their distance from Jesus, but at the same time in Luke 17:13 it says:

¹³ they called out, saying, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’
(Lk. 17:13, NRSV).

You will also notice that in Luke 17:12, once again, that the ten lepers were near the entrance of the village, as they were not allowed in the village. What I have always wondered to, is how did the ten lepers know who Jesus was? Had they met him before, or did they just know that he was the Messiah, the son of the living God?

So, these lepers, sick and cast out people, cry out to Jesus for mercy. Maybe at different times in our lives, we have also cried for mercy, as well. In response to the ten lepers cry out to Jesus for mercy, Jesus says in Luke 17:14 once again:

‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’ And as they went, they were made clean (Lk. 17:14, NRSV).

Now clearly, in order to do this, the lepers had to walk into the village or maybe a nearby town. Remember, they were forbidden to do this, because of their leprosy. Yet, Luke 17:14 tells us once again, that as the ten lepers walk where they were walking was forbidden, even though they were “made clean” or healed. Was it instant, did it happen over a couple of minutes? We do not know, other than to know that they were “made clean.” In fairness to the lepers, Jesus told them to go where they were not supposed to go and to show themselves to the priests or Rabbis. Jesus did not ask them for a thank you or order them to turn back to interact with him.

Even so, one of the ten lepers turned back to Jesus. Jesus “Gave Hope” to all ten lepers, as he healed them all. Perhaps these lepers had cried out to God for healing, but this day when they cried out to Jesus, they were in fact healed. The hope that they may have had in God, was delivered through Jesus Christ healing all ten of these folks. As I said, one of the ten lepers turned back, but before I discuss that leper who “Gave Thanks” to Jesus, let us look at couple depictions of Jesus cleansing the ten lepers. Here is one depiction of this scene in Luke 17:11-19:

(Slide 9 – (“Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers” Picture # 1))



We can see that the ten lepers in this depiction of this parable or story are suffering and crying out to Jesus for healing. Once again, they are outside of the village, as they were banned for having leprosy. Here is another more modern depiction of Jesus cleansing the ten lepers in Luke 17:11-19:

(Slide 10 – (“Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers” Picture # 2))



It must have been quite an experience for Jesus, to see these 10 sick people. It must have been even more of an experience to see them healed. What amazing miracle, through the power of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So back to the one leper that turned back to Christ. Jesus “Gives Hope” to all ten lepers, and they are all cleansed and healed by Jesus, but the one who turns back “Give Thanks” to Jesus. Maybe the other nine gave thanks, but the one leper came back to thank Jesus directly. In one of my Bible Commentaries, or books that explain the Bible, this leper who turned back to Christ is called “A Grateful Samaritan.” Like the story of the “Good Samaritan” that we discussed a couple of weeks ago, a “Samaritan,” who was not a Jew, was the one here “Giving Thanks.” In Luke 17:15-16 it says this of the “Grateful Samaritan,” once again:

¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. ¹⁶ He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan (Lk. 17:15-16, NRSV).

Again, Jesus did not tell any of the ten lepers to turn back, but the “Grateful Samaritan” does anyway. The “Grateful Samaritan,” now healed, turned back and praised God for his healing. He prostrated or got down and touched Jesus’ feet as a sign of love, appreciation, and respect. The man, who was a Samaritan, some called “A Grateful Samaritan,” did this when the other nine cleansed lepers did not. The “Grateful Samaritan” not only was given hope and healing from Jesus Christ, but he then turned and “Gave Thanks” to Jesus Christ.

In response to this, Jesus then asked the “Grateful Samaritan” this in Luke 17:17:

‘Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? ¹⁸ Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?’
(Lk. 17:17, NRSV).

Of ten lepers were nine Jews, and one Samaritan, and only the “Grateful Samaritan” turns back and thanks God and prostrates before Jesus. In part what this tells us is that the gospel of Jesus Christ, and his saving grace is open to not just Jew, not just Samaritans, but to the whole world. All people can be offered salvation through Jesus Christ, if we repent of our sins and turn to him as Lord and Savior. I have also always wondered, what this scene looked like? Meaning what did it look like when only one of the ten lepers came back to thank Jesus. What did this scene with the “Grateful Samaritan” look like? Here is one depiction that I really love:

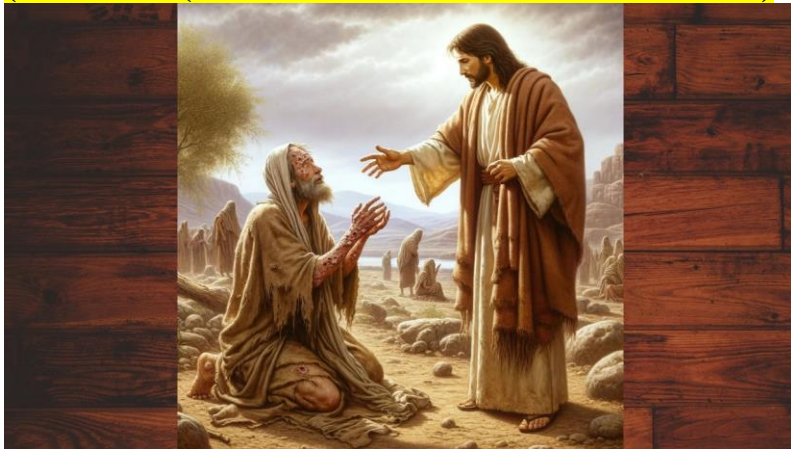
(Slide 11 – (“A Grateful Samaritan” Picture # 1)



In this depiction, the “Grateful Samaritan” is prostrating himself before Jesus, and “Giving Thanks,” for Jesus healing him.

Here is a second depiction of the “Grateful Samaritan” turning back to Jesus, “Giving Thanks,” and prostrating himself before Jesus.

(Slide 11 – (“A Grateful Samaritan” Picture # 2)



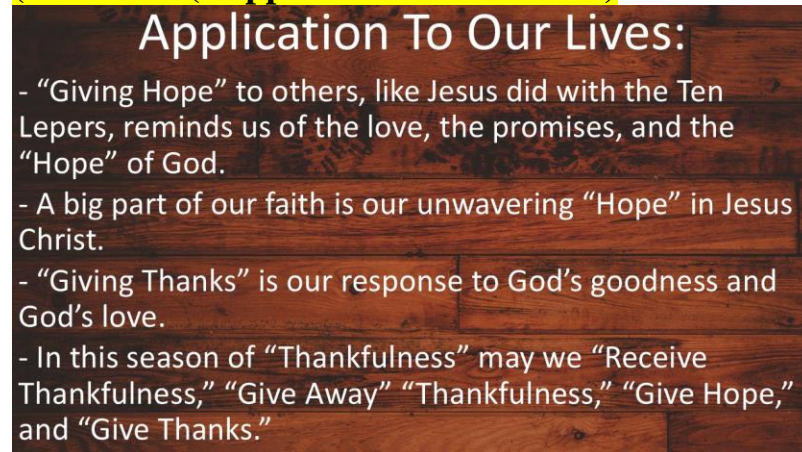
After doing all of this, Jesus then says to the “Grateful Samaritan” to close our gospel of Luke reading in 17:19, this:

¹⁹ Then he said to him, ‘Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well’ (Lk. 17:19, NRSV).

In many places in the gospels, Jesus told people that what healed them or made them well, was there faith in him. Jesus was happy to heal and restore, but even more than this, Jesus wanted us to have faith in him. This is why Jesus said in various places in the gospels, once again, “your faith has made you well.”

In this parable or story of “Jesus Cleansing Ten Lepers,” we see the giving of hope, and we see the “Giving Thanks.” Jesus healed ten-lepers, gave them home, and one, the “Grateful Samaritan” turn back to “Give Thanks.” In this season of Thankfulness, and in general, how are we “Giving Hope, “ and “Giving Thanks?” To try this all together, let us look how all of this applies to our lives right now here today and in general:

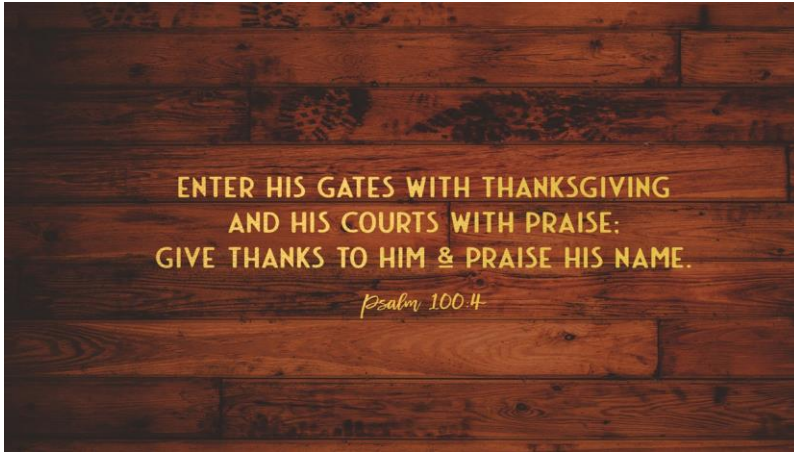
(Slide 13 – (“Application to our Lives)



In this season of “Thankfulness” and always, let us seek to “Give Hope” and to “Give Thanks,” s God has given us all so much!

As I call the Praise Team forward, We have been using a slide to close this sermon series from Psalm 100:4, and here is that slide.

(Slide 14 – (Psalm 100:4)



On this day and always, may be thankful for all that God has given us, and may be generous so others can receive “Thankfulness,” and “Gratitude” from us. Our closing slide is a slide that says, “God Bless Have A Great Week”

Slide 15 – (God Bless Have A Great Week)



May we continue to be thankful, now, and always. Amen.