

## **Sunday 11/03/24 – Panama Methodist Church**

**Sermon Title: “Thankfulness: Sermon Series: (Part 1 of 3)**

**(Slides 1-13 will be listed in order throughout this sermon 😊!)**

Friends, brothers and sisters in Christ, welcome to November. This is the month for many, that is a month of “Thankfulness” or “Gratitude.” After all, this is the month where we celebrate Thanksgiving in the United States. Harvest dinners and festivals are winding down, and folks are getting ready for the winter months. As a result, for the next three weeks, I am going to be preaching on the topic of “Thankfulness.” Here is our cover picture for this sermon series:

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



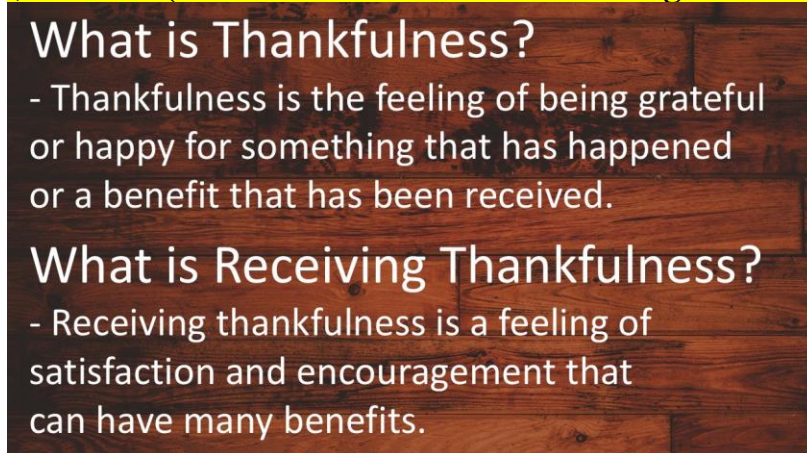
The first topic around “Thankfulness” that I want to discuss this morning is “Receiving Thankfulness,” or another way to term it is “Receiving Gratitude.”

**(Slide 2 – (“Thankfulness” Series: Part 1 - Picture))**



A good place to start this “Thankfulness” sermon series is define what “Thankfulness” is, and “What Receiving Thankfulness” or “Gratitude” is. Let us look together:

**(Slide 3 – (“Thankfulness” and “Receiving Thankfulness” - Picture))**



Thankfulness is not just something we should have in November, but every day. Some of us like to give so that others can “Receive Thankfulness” or “Gratitude,” but being the recipient of “Thankfulness” or “Gratitude” is a challenge for some of

us. Due to this, I am going to be talking about “Thankfulness,” and “Receiving Thankfulness” or “Gratitude” this morning through the parable or story of the Good Samaritan. The parable or story of the Good Samaritan is found only in the gospel of Luke. This morning, we will be looking at Luke 10:25-37. Let us open our Bibles or our Bible Apps to the gospel of Luke. I am going to read for us from Luke 10:25-37. This is what it says:

**(Slide 4 – (Luke 10:25-37))**

The Parable or Story of the “Good Samaritan”  
(Luke 10:25-37, NRSV)

<sup>25</sup> Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he said, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ <sup>26</sup> He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What do you read there?’ <sup>27</sup> He answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, ‘You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.’

**(Slide 5 – (Luke 10:25-37))**

The Parable or Story of the “Good Samaritan”  
(Luke 10:25-37, NRSV)

<sup>29</sup> But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.’

**(Slide 6 – (Luke 10:25-37))**

The Parable or Story of the “Good Samaritan”  
(Luke 10:25-37, NRSV)

<sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

**(Slide 7 – (Luke 10:25-37))**

The Parable or Story of the “Good Samaritan”  
(Luke 10:25-37, NRSV)

<sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

**(Slide 8 – (Luke 10:25-37))**

The Parable or Story of the “Good Samaritan”  
(Luke 10:25-37, NRSV)

<sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.” <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?’ <sup>37</sup> He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’

Now that we have read through Luke 10:25-37, on the parable of the Good Samaritan, let us dive deeper into this scripture reading. This is one of the best Biblical examples I can think of giving and “Receiving Thankfulness” or “Gratitude.”

I am looking at Luke 10:25-37, starting in verse 25, we have an example of the religious leaders of Jesus’ day attempting to trip him up, confuse him, and try to prove that he is a false teacher and not who he says he is. Throughout the gospels, one of the tactics used against Jesus was to ask him difficult questions, assuming that Jesus would not be able to adequately answer these questions. Jesus of course, always answered these questions well, and he always responded in a way that made those challenging him back off. This morning in Luke 10:25-37, is no exception.

In Luke 10:25 the scripture says that a “lawyer,” or in some bible translations, an “expert in the law,” challenged Jesus. The first Five Books of the Old Testament, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, are often called the five books of Moses, or again the Torah. The Torah is the heart of Jewish laws and teachings. So, when a “lawyer,” or often religious leaders, such as “Pharisees” and “Sadducees” were challenging Jesus, they were pulling from the Torah, or the Law of Moses, or commonly called the Jewish Law. Once again,

remember that these leaders were not doing these things to encourage Jesus, they were trying to tear him down.

In continuing on in Luke 10:25, the “lawyer,” asked Jesus a question. He refers to Jesus as “teacher,” which often translates to “Rabbi,” which is a title for a Jewish spiritual leader. I think that this “lawyer” is probably giving Jesus that title not in sincerity, but as a cover for him trying to undermine him. The “lawyer,” or the “expert in the law” then asks Jesus “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus then responds knowing this is an expert in the Jewish Law or the Law of Moses. Jesus then responds, saying “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” The “lawyer” then says in Luke 10:27, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus then affirms this answer in Luke 10:28, saying “You have given the right answer; do this and you will live.” This could have been the end of this conversation.

Unfortunately, though, this “lawyer,” or “expert in law,” wanted to push Jesus just a little further. So, he asked Jesus in Luke 10:29, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus responds with the Parable or story of “Good Samaritan.” Remember that this parable or story is only found in the gospel of Luke, and this parable or story around “Receiving Thankfulness” or “Gratitude” is once again, the first sermon in this “Thankfulness” sermon series.

I have always loved the parable of the “Good Samaritan,” and it is such an inspiring story, that if someone is called a “Good Samaritan” this is a good thing and a compliment. There are also various hospitals, laws, and charitable organizations that have the name “Good Samaritan.”

This is how Jesus responds to the question from the “lawyer” or the “expert in the law,” about who his neighbor is. Jesus tells us that a man, who was probably Jewish, was heading from Jerusalem to Jericho. This person was clearly on foot, At this time the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was full of dangers and difficulties. Some at this time called the path from Jerusalem to Jericho the “Way of Blood,” and this was because people were sometimes robbed and even killed on this road. This “man” as Jesus calls him is unfortunately about to be a victim of robbers. We do not really know anything about the man, other than he was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, and that, as the scripture says he fell into the hands of robbers. Not only did the robbers rob this man, but they also stripped him of his clothes and beat him half to death.

This man, who we know virtually nothing about but who, once again, was probably Jewish, is attacked by robbers. They take everything he has, including his clothes, and they beat him severely. This man is laying on the ground, with no clothes, very beat up, and probably bleeding. I mean imagine if you saw something like this on a sidewalk here in Panama. What would you do? Would you drive by

the person or keep walking? Would you call 911? Would you go and help the person?

According to Luke 10:31 a priest was going down that road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side of the road. This priest was almost certainly a Jewish priest or Rabbi, and the man who was beaten and robbed was, once again likely Jewish. Yet this priest or Rabbi, passed by the beaten and naked man on the other side of the road. It was as if the priest never even saw this poor man. Maybe the priest or Rabbi was in a hurry, even so, he just left him there. We do not know why he did, but he did.

It unfortunately got worse. In Luke 10:32 the gospel says, “So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed on the other side.” Two people now, a priest or Rabbi, and now a Levite. They see this man beaten, naked, and probably bleeding, and they just go to the other side of the street and walk on by. One possibility is that the priest and the Levite thought that the beaten and robbed man was dead. If so, contact with a dead body for a priest or a Levite was seen as unclean and defiling, but they still could have gotten close enough to check. A Levite, by the way, is a member of the Jewish tribe of Levi. So, the Levite is Jewish, we are pretty positive that priest who passed by the man is a Jewish priest or Rabbi, and, once again, that the robbed and beaten man was

probably Jewish. To say it another way, two of his own people saw him beaten, naked, and laying on the ground, and kept walking like they never even saw him.

Just as a reference, the road from Jerusalem to Jericho is about 18 miles, and this is the road below:

**(Slide 9 – (Road from Jerusalem to Jericho))**



So, this road could be the very same road from the parable or story of the “Good Samaritan.” Imagine the man in the story getting attacked, robbed, stripped, and beaten half to death along this road. Once again, the priest walks right by the man, as does the Levite.

What the gospel goes on to say however, is that there is a third person that walked by the robbed man on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Starting in Luke 10:33 we read: “But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them.” This is pretty extraordinary as two of the robbed

man's own people walked right by him. Not only this, the third person that approached the robbed man was a Samaritan. The Samaritans and Jews, at least at this time did not get along, and mostly hated each other. According to some research I have done, as "Samaritan" in Jesus' time was this:

**"In 721 B.C., the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians. Many of the people of Israel were led off to Assyria as captives, but some remained in the land and intermarried with foreigners planted there by the Assyrians. These half-Jewish, half-Gentile people became known as the Samaritans."**

The Samaritans, therefore, were not fully Jewish and had some religious differences with the Jews. They also of course tended to live in Samaria, as they are Samaritans. Jews and Samaritans at this time did not mix and, as I said, were enemies. Yet, two Jews, a priest and a Levite, walk right past the robbed man on and do nothing. Yet, a man from a rival place, stops to help someone that is his bitter enemy. He does this when two of the own men's people do nothing.

The Samaritan man bandages the man, and pours oil and wine on him, and cleans him up. After this, the scripture continues in Luke 10:34 saying this of the Samaritan, "Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' This is just amazing to me! Why are there so many hospitals, laws, and even some charitable organizations called "Good Samaritan?" Well, because of the

“Good Samaritan” in this parable or story from Jesus in Luke 10:25-37. Here is a depiction of the parable or story of the “Good Samaritan”:

**(Slide 10 – (Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son Picture))**



I wonder if the two men standing in distance looking back are the priest and Levite, or maybe other people?

After all of this, Jesus then responds to the “lawyer,” or “expert in the law,” and says in Luke 10:36: “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell in the hands of the robbers”? In response to Jesus’ question, the “lawyer,” responded this way in Luke 10:37: “He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

What I have always wondered about in the parable or story, is when the Samaritan came back to the inn where the injured and robbed man was, was the robbed man still there? Did the Samaritan have to pay the innkeeper more money? Further, how was the man that was robbed doing when the Good Samaritan came

back? He was now healing, clothed, had food, shelter, and care. If the Samaritan came back, they would have been able to interact and talk to each other. Perhaps the robbed man was hurt so badly that he did not even remember the Samaritan helping him, or not much communication took place.

I would like to think that the robbed man was grateful and thankful. I mean he could have very well died if the Samaritan did not stop and care for his injuries, take him to the inn and have his care paid for. I would hope, that the robbed man was thankful. Even more, the robbed man “Received Thankfulness” or “Gratitude,” as he likely felt encouraged, loved, cared for, and significant.

When I was planning this sermon series, as I said, I could not think of many stories in the scripture so full of “Received Thankfulness” or “Gratitude,” as this. In fact, even if when the robbed man got back on his feet, and even if he tracked down the Samaritan and paid him back with interest, could he really repay him? I mean if someone does something like the Samaritan did for the robbed man, can you really repay that? I cannot think of any sum of money that you could pay to have potentially saved a man’s life and taking all this time to help a mortal enemy. What we can feel in such situations though is thankful and grateful. When we “receive thankfulness” like this, we are receiving what someone wants to give us or do for us.

Are we good at “Receiving Thankfulness” or gratitude? Sometimes, some of us like be the giver and not the receiver. Sometimes, some of us want to bless others, but do not want to be the person receiving the blessing. We will do anything for anyone else, but we do not want anything done for us. If someone is sick or struggling, we are right there to help, but if it is us who is sick and struggling, we might not want any help at all. Why is this I wonder? Some of us are willing to help and offer thankfulness, but we might not want to receive thankfulness?

“Receiving Thankfulness,” or receiving gratitude I think therefore, can often we harder than giving it. I mean part of Acts 20:35 says:

**“It is more blessed to give than to receive”** (Acts 20:35, NRSV).

Even so, there is a special kind of grace and thankfulness in receiving. When we are vulnerable and broken, we get to witness the unbelievable love of God when someone offers us grace, thankfulness, and gratitude. Due to the this, the name “Good Samaritan” is seen as not only great, but something to aspire to be more like. Once again then, we do not know if the robbed and beaten man ever saw the ”Good Samaritan” again, as the scripture said that he was going to come back to check on the robbed man, and even pay more money for his care if needed.

I would hope though that the robbed man was so thankful to God for what the Samaritan did for him. I would hope that the robbed man “Received

Thankfulness” and gratitude because of what someone from an enemy culture and place did for him. Jesus tells us that this is the level of loving your neighbor he calls us all too.

Now how does this apply to us and to our lives? Let us look together:

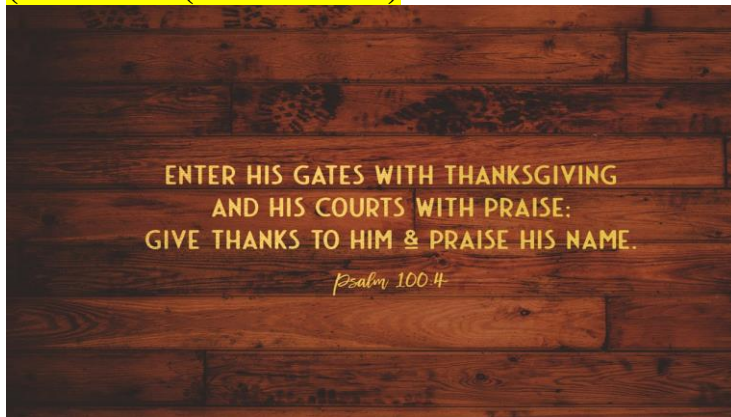
**(Slide 11 – (Application to our Lives))**



What Jesus call us to is sometimes very hard. It can be very hard to love people when we are told that we are enemies. Jesus gives us the parable or story of the “Good Samaritan” to show us what is possible through Him. Through Christ, hearts can be mended, lives can be changed, and hope can be restored. If we turn to Christ, repent of our sins, and love each other, the Holy Spirit can transform us, this church, and the world. Revival can happen when we are laser focused on Jesus.

As I call the praise team and Choir forward, I want to leave with this scripture from Psalm 100:4 on thankfulness. Let us look together:

**(Slide 12 – (Psalm 100:4))**



In this month of “Thankfulness” then, are we able to receive care and love from others, which in turn makes us thankful and grateful? The Parable or story of the “Good Samaritan” is really a high-water mark on giving and receiving grace and gratitude. I would challenge us all, including myself, in this month of “Thankfulness,” to regularly give thanks to God, and to show and live thankfulness and gratitude. May also be willing to be thankful in the other ways, as we will discuss in the next two weeks ahead. All glory and honor to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen!

**Slide 13 – (God Bless Have A Great Week)**

