

Thankful

Thankful Series

Part 1

November 6, 2022

The Gospel of Saint 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, who stood at a distance ¹³ 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.””

May the Lord add His blessing to the Reading and the Hearing of His Word Today, in Jesus Name, Amen...

What does it mean to be Thankful? Perhaps some may have different views of this word and its expressions but I would like to offer a slightly different perspective of this word. Could it be that the truest form of being thankful is not predicated from an act but rather the by-product of an attitude of the heart?

Take this text I just read for you as an example, there were ten lepers that were cleansed of their malady but only one returned to offer thanksgiving and praise for the miracle that he had received. It would seem that nine valued the Substance but only one honored the Source.

Perhaps the defining factor that separated the 9 from the 1 is simply this; all ten needed a miracle but only one had a heart that would be truly thankful for the miracle that they needed. Far too often we pray for miracles to only, after they appear, move on as if we never needed the miracle to begin with.

But when we focus on our heart on being simply thankful for what we have, when the miracle comes; it is not taken for granted. Some may ask, “Is it possible to focus my heart on being thankful?” and I would like to suggest that we absolutely can and should.

For example, the Book of Proverbs states in Proverbs 23:7, “for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he”; and if our mind and our heart work in tandem to influence our attitude then the same can be said of them working in tandem to influence our posture of being thankful. Consider this, how often do we become unthankful simply because we take things for granted; common things become common and expected rather than appreciated and valued...

Take for example a conversation I had recently with a combat veteran who served in the middle east fighting in the war against terror. In this conversation, I was discussing this sermon series and he was speaking of his deployments by mentioning how thankful he was for ice after his deployment. Something as simple as ice becomes a huge deal when you go months without it and are stuck drinking lukewarm water. Again, when common things become too common then we lose our thankfulness for the simple things.

Church, far too often we fall prey to the following mentality, “I will be thankful if, _____” (fill in the blank) thus making thankfulness and gratitude a byproduct of our current state of life rather than it being an internal premise based upon a healthy perspective. Choose to be thankful from the perspective of IF/OR rather than IF only...

Thankfulness is an attitude of the Heart and simply a thought process of our minds... So with that said, Point #1...

1) When We Focus our Hearts on Being Thankful, We will Always Follow Through with Being Obedient!

a) The Gospel of Saint Luke 17:11-14, 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, who stood at a distance ¹³ 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.

b) Dear friends, we must never underestimate the power of simple obedience... as they went, they were healed! What if they had argued? What if they all refused? What if they demanded another way? I fear that if they had, it would have forfeited them of their miracle.

- c) And how often do we do the same? We argue, refuse to follow through, demand another way or more specifically our own way. And in light of this attitude of heart and mind, how many times have we forfeited our own miracles because we complicated simple obedience. (Story of the snake in the tree)
- d) Notice that it was the lepers that cried out to Christ for Him to have mercy on them and Christ's simple response was a directive of simple obedience. Go to the temple, show yourself to the priests, and be restored to society; and in their going, they were healed...
- e) Remember, when We Focus our Hearts on Being Thankful, We will Always Follow Through with Being Obedient!
- f) Point #2...

2) When We Focus our Hearts on Being Thankful, We will always respond Appropriately when We Receive a Miracle!

- a) The Gospel of Saint Luke 17:15-16, “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.”

- b) When the Samaritan man realized he had received his healing, he was the only one willing to return to the source of his miracle rather than simply enjoying the substance of his miracle.
- c) And the most interesting part of these two verses is the fact that the one person who returned was a Samaritan; from which, we can assume that the other 9 persons were Jews. Now this is not an incriminating statement but rather to point to the fact that the “church folk” went on about their business after receiving a miracle but the person who was non-religious was the only thankful one.
- d) It would seem that the other 9 just wanted their miracle so they could go on with their lives without returning to the source of their miracle to demonstrate their thankfulness for their miracle. They wanted a miracle to fix their mess but not a miracle that would draw them closer to the Master!
- e) Friends, if we are willing to count our blessings, we will always show an abundance but we must never lose sight that it is the Source of the Substance and not the substance itself that deserves Honor and Gratitude!
- f) A Thankful Heart always produces Fruitful Worship thus it would seem to reason that Fruitful Worship is birthed from True Thanksgiving unto God!

- g) Remember, when We Focus our Hearts on Being Thankful, We will always Respond Appropriately when We Receive a Miracle!
- h) In closing, Point #3...

3) When We Focus our Hearts on Being Thankful, We will always be Grateful for what we Receive!

- a) The Gospel of Saint Luke 17:16-19, “¹⁶and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸Was 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.””
- b) We must all take a moment to understand why this miracle for this man was so life changing; This man was a leper. Leprosy caused the person infected to be ostracized from society, disconnected from all they ever knew or would know, and would never feel the touch or embrace from another human being ever again.
- c) Leprosy was a life sentence in a prison of flesh that was slowly rotting and decaying. We can only imagine or assume how long this man had been dealing with this disease much less the mental and emotional tole that it had taken on his psychological state.

- d) And to make matters worse, social custom and polity was that one who had Leprosy had to announce themselves as being unclean much the same as the woman with the issue of blood that Christ healed by the touch of the hem of His garment. One had to declare their uncleanness to everyone around them.
- e) This man went from untouchable to returning to Christ to express his gratitude; it's interesting that this man did not rush home, or to his friends etc. He returned to Christ to express his thankfulness for his miracle.
- f) Church, a thankful heart wields the power to transform our views of lack into more than enough when we have a heart of thanksgiving and gratitude.
- g) Simply being thankful can turn a lack into a feast because our attitude shifts from what we don't have to what we do have. Much like the feeding of the five thousand, it was not what the disciples didn't have that made the difference but rather what they did have.
- h) With this in mind, we can either view every matter and moment in life as an opportunity for a miracle or trap our hearts in a posture of thanklessness thus never believing for a miracle!

- i) May we all today choose to change our hearts and choose to be thankful!
- j) **Remember, when We Focus our Hearts on Being Thankful, We will Always be Grateful for what We Receive!**