

Be Thankful

Luke 17:11-19

November 19, 2023

HDBC

Thanksgiving Day was first celebrated in colonial times in New England. After the first harvest was completed by the Plymouth colonists in 1621, Governor William Bradford proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving and prayer.

Gradually the custom prevailed in New England of celebrating Thanksgiving after the harvest. During the Revolutionary war a yearly day of Thanksgiving was suggested by the Continental Congress. In 1817 New York State adopted Thanksgiving Day as an annual custom, and by the middle of the 19th century many other states had done the same. In 1863 President Abraham Lincoln appointed a day of Thanksgiving.

Though the original meaning has been lost among many in this country, it is still a wonderful opportunity to focus on the important virtue of THANKFULNESS. Not that we should be thankful only that day, but that this day should be a great reminder of the need to be thankful year-round.

Lucy asks Charlie Brown to help with her homework. *I'll be eternally grateful*, she promises. *Fair enough. I've never had anyone be eternally grateful before. Just subtract 4 from 10 to get how many apples the farmer had left.*

Lucy says, *That's it! That's it! I have to be eternally grateful for that? I was robbed! I can't be eternally grateful for this; it was too easy!*

With his blank stare, Charlie replies, *well whatever you think is fair."*
How about if I just say 'thanks, bro! replied Lucy.

On his way outside, Charlie meets Linus who asks, *where've you been, Charlie Brown?* He replies, *Helping Lucy with her homework.*

Linus asks, *did she appreciate it?*

Charlie answers, *yes but at a greatly reduced price.*

One of the most important statements in all the world is found in two simple words, **thank you**. Easy to say, hard to remember. Teach them to kids early and expect them to remember while we casually exempt ourselves.

Two little words. **Always appropriate**. Nobody complains about being thanked. More than thanking each other, we should be thankful to the Lord. Over and over the Bible teaches it. Over **35 times in Psalms**. Paul thanks God 18 times in his letters. **140 total times**. God takes it seriously. It is sin to be unthankful.

Luke 17:11-19 tells a story about the healing power of Jesus, but it is more. It is also a story about one man who was thankful when the crowd was not.

1. Condition of the men (11-12)

1) Physical Condition

Fatigue, joints sore, discoloration of skin or face, spread to hands and feet, spongy tumors, nerve cells die, no pain, more harm, internal organs inevitably affected. Terrible odor. Hair turns white. Vocal cords destroyed. Walking death. Might live 20 years.

2) Social Condition

Outcasts, had to live only with other lepers. Distance, declare presence, undesirable, no future, no hope, no job. Beggars. Bottom Rung. Destitute. Graphic picture of the human condition. These men were suffering from physical disease. That disease to their bodies is a picture of the disease in their hearts.

All men and women who have not been born again by grace through faith in Christ are like those men. May be fine in their bodies but are sinful on the inside. All people apart from Jesus need to be touched by him.

Jer.17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all else and is terminally ill, who can know it.*

2. Cry of the men (13)

1) Knew His Name

Some prior knowledge. Reputation

2) Called Him Master

Word = authority, overseer, superintendent.

3) Asked for mercy

Sympathy leading to action. Didn't want pity but help. Also speaks of that which is not required and undeserved. He didn't have to help.

Their cry echoes the cry that God longs to hear from every person. A cry for mercy. Mercy not simply to be healed of some physical problem, but mercy to be healed spiritually. Like the cry of the thief on the cross.

3. The Cure of the Men (14)

Jesus always drawn to down and outers. Zaccheus, Mary M., Woman at well. He doesn't question request. He just acts on it. They had no lack of faith. Went to priests for verification and to return to normal life.

Jesus met greatest need in their lives. Nothing else would mean a thing. This was like coming back from the dead. They had new life and a new future. Reconnected with family members and friends. Go back to work. Religious life reinstated. How did they respond to what Jesus did?

4. The Response of the Men (15-16)

Up to this point they were united group. Now divided.

1) One Came Back

Imagine excitement, runs and sings and shouts looking for Jesus. Bows on face. Continues to thank Jesus. Doesn't mind showing it.

2) Nine Went their own way

Can only speculate.

a. Pride

One was Samaritan - distinction means others were Jews. Hated each other. Disease tore down wall. Did the cure rebuild it? Maybe they no longer wanted to be seen with him.

b. Selfishness

Too busy to say thanks. That's too busy. They were not interested in

Jesus, as a person, only what He could do for them. Sounds familiar.
Too busy focusing on self to stop and thank Jesus.

5. Awareness of Jesus (17-19)

1) He noticed the nine

Sobering thought. Jesus noticed that the nine did not express their thankfulness. They were quick to ask and quick to forget. What is there in your life that you have not thanked Him for?

One Thanksgiving season a family was seated around their table, looking at the annual holiday bird. From the oldest to the youngest, they were to express their praise. When they came to the 5-year-old in the family, he began by looking at the turkey and expressing his thanks to the turkey, saying although he had not tasted it, he knew it would be good.

After that rather novel expression of thanksgiving, he began with a more predictable line of credits, thanking his mother for cooking the turkey and his father for buying the turkey. But then he went beyond that. He joined together a whole hidden multitude of benefactors, linking them with cause and effect.

He said, "I thank you for the checker at the grocery store who checked out the turkey. I thank you for the grocery store people who put it on the shelf. I thank you for the farmer who made it fat. I thank you for the man who made the feed. I thank you for those who brought the turkey to the store."

He traced the turkey all the way from its origin to his plate. And then at the end he solemnly said, "Did I leave anybody out?"

His 3-year-older brother, embarrassed by all those proceedings, said, "God."

Solemnly and without being flustered at all, the 5-year-old said, "I was about to get to him."

Are we really going to get to him this Thanksgiving?

2) He blessed the one

10 healed, 1 saved.

The principle is simple. We are instructed to be thankful.

In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 1 Thessalonians 5:18. IN EVERYTHING?

Matthew Henry robbed - Later that evening when he was reflecting upon the situation, this is what he prayed. *Lord, I thank you that though I was robbed today . . .*

*I've never robbed before
They took my money, but not life,
They took all but it wasn't much.
I was the one robbed not the one robbing.*

Have you said it today? If not, maybe it is because you are focusing on what you don't have rather than on what you do have. Get your eyes on the wonderful blessings of God and you will be thankful.

EVERYDAY THANKSGIVING

Even though I clutch my blanket and growl when the alarm rings, thank you, Lord, that I can hear. There are many who are deaf.

Even though I keep my eyes closed against the morning light as long as possible, thank you, Lord, that I can see. Many are blind.

Even though I huddle in my bed and put off rising, thank you Lord, that I have the strength to rise. There are many who are bedridden.

Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when socks are lost, toast is burned, tempers are short, my children are so loud, thank you, Lord, for my family. There are many who are lonely.

Even though our breakfast table never looks like the pictures in magazines and the menu is at times unbalanced, thank you, Lord,

for the food we have. There are many who are hungry.

Even though the routine of my job is often monotonous, thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to work. There are many who have no job.

Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day to day and wish my circumstances were not so modest, thank you, Lord, for life.