

Stewardship

Cary Presbyterian Church

Scripture

NRSV LUKE 17:11-19

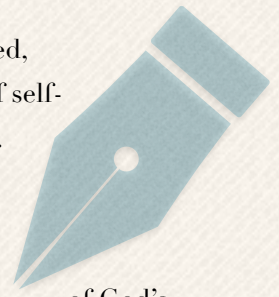
On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

Devotion

The story is told of the 20th Century Reformed Theologian Karl Barth at a speaking engagement when he was asked by someone in attendance, "But Meister Barth, How does one *know* you're a Christian?" To which Barth instantly replied, "Because I'm grateful!"

It is a great pillar of Christian piety - the pillar of gratitude. By this habit of Christian living we are protected from so many evil inclinations:

excessive pride, selfishness, greed, miserly hoarding, the illusion of self-sufficiency - to name only a few.



Gratitude stands at so central a place in the piety of a believer precisely because it reminds us of God's intimate closeness and ultimate grace. Too often I am one of the nine who is touched by God's love and generous kindness and yet I fail to return and give thanks and praise to God from whom all blessings flow!

Our discipline as stewards of God's abundant blessings demonstrates both to God and to others that we are grateful. Grateful people live in a kind of joyful celebration of the abundance that makes them kind and generous too. But to be grateful requires that we acknowledge our indebtedness to God for the gifts we had been given. That is what the Samaritan is doing when he stops in his tracks and returns to say, "thanks." And for that we are assured by Jesus that he is not only healed, but that his faith has further, "made him well."

Prayer

Lord, teach me to be like the Samaritan who returns to give thanks. Amen.