



July 21, 2024

## The One Who Said Thank You

Luke 17:11-19

---

### Opening Observations

A story that spotlights virtue of gratitude

And makes a connection between gratitude and faith

Some social commentary in the fact that a Samaritan, and not nine Jews, return to give thanks

### Gratitude: the Central Posture of the Creature

God never gives thanks to humans (**we have only done our duty: Luke 17:10; Who has given to Me?: Job 41:11**)

Creaturehood by definition implies dependence on something outside itself

Thankfulness is at the same time a recognition of a gift and a need

When I receive a good gift, it is good because it betters my life in some way (fills up some lack)

Receiving a gift without gratitude means we do not believe it helps us in anyway

Even when I receive a useless trinket, I can be grateful for the care and love behind the gift (which I need)

As such, the posture of gratefulness “completes” the gift by receiving it into the actuality of need

On the contrary, lack of gratefulness “resists” the gift’s potential service to the person

The unsolicited advice of a grandparent: the wisdom either is embraced or goes unheeded

The humble gratitude of the Samaritan leper “completed” the gift of physical healing into whole-person healing

This then is the connection between gratitude and faith:

Faith is banking on the Person of God to come through in light of our need

Gratitude is the recognition of God as the answer to that need

Gratitude feeds a cycle of faith: remembering that leads to trusting & obeying (**15 times in Deuteronomy!, e.g. 8:18**)

Forgetting, unbelief, and ingratitude are all close cousins

In Luke we see a theme of Gentile “outsiders” accessing God (**Luke 3:8; 4:24-27; 7:1-10; 10:25-37; 14:21-24**)

The Samaritan (or other marginalized person) is closer than the entitled Jew to the humility proper the creature

The Jew who thought to have claim on the kingdom was in danger of missing the heart of the God-relationship

And so the mysterious nine receive undeserved grace and permission to re-enter their lives, **BUT...**

They have missed the deeper “salvation” of having Jesus blessing, “rise and go your way”

Cultivating gratitude begins in recognizing need, limitation, frailty, dependence.

Gratitude flowers in recognition of the grace that comes to us from God and others and activates that grace