

## A Moment of Gratitude

Today we want to take a look at gratitude or being thankful.

Gratitude is defined as the quality or feeling of being grateful or thankful.

There are many things we can be grateful for. I am thankful for each day the Lord gives me. I know each day he has given me is to be enjoyed and used to serve others. I am thankful for my wife and family and all the love and support they give to me. The more thankful or grateful we are, the less selfish we become. We also draw closer to God the more grateful we are.

There's a story of Jesus performing a miracle and a great example of gratitude that we want to share with you today. Let's look at Luke chapter 17 verses 12 through 19.

(12) As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance (13) and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" (14) When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. (15) One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. (16) He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him--and he was a Samaritan. (17) Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? (18) Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" (19) Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

We still have leprosy in the world today. It is a mildly infectious disease and is easily treated today, however that was not the case in Jesus' day. It was the cancer of the day and with no way to cure it, lepers were kept away from everyone else so the disease would not spread.

Leprosy has such a reputation that its reference has taken a place in society to refer to anyone unwanted by others; for instance, a "social leper".

In this passage from the book of Luke, we see a group of 10 lepers calling out to Jesus. They no doubt had heard of his miracle powers. They had heard how Jesus heals people. They were desperate. Verse 13 says, "they called out in a loud voice". They had to yell to him. They couldn't approach him. They couldn't approach anyone. So from a distance, they yelled out, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!".

They were desperate. They had nowhere else to turn. They had a disease with no known cure and could have no contact with anyone. Can you imagine having a disease where you could not come in contact with anyone? You couldn't even come close to anyone; anyone at all. How horrible! We need human interaction and contact for our personal wellbeing and these 10 lepers had none, so they yelled out to Jesus, the master, the healer, to have pity on them. I can almost hear their voices now. The cry of despair.

Jesus' response was so simple. He said, "Go show yourselves to the priests". Plain and simple. No fanfare. With Jesus, it's not about the notoriety or glory. With him it is about serving, it is about making someone whole and giving the glory to God the Father. Jesus didn't make a big production about anything or draw attention. In fact, often he would perform miracles and then disappear. In this case, he simply told them to go show themselves to the priests.



I wonder if Jesus' instruction to them was a disappointment to them in some ways. They had heard about the miraculous things this Jesus did to heal people. He brought sight to the blind, made the lame walk, and others. These guys call out to him and his response was to go present themselves to the priests. You know I can almost hear the grumbling, "That's not what I was expecting, why didn't he heal us like the others?" That is so like us, isn't it? We are always thinking about ourselves.

But, they set off to see the priests. While they headed off to do that, we read that they were cleansed. The leprosy was gone! They were healed! This is cause for great joy! This is a miracle! Jesus healed them! But only one came back to thank Jesus. Only one had an attitude of gratitude for the new lease on life he was given.

We read how one of the ten lepers returned as soon as he saw that he was healed. As he came back to Jesus he was praising God in a loud voice. You know loud like your football team just intercepted a pass at the goal line with only seconds left to win the super bowl loud.

He came back praising God in a loud voice and threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. This guy was thankful! Jesus' response was so insightful. We can learn so much from his response to this. Jesus asks, "Weren't there 10 who were cleansed?" He's about to make an awesome observation and point. Every moment an opportunity to teach his disciples, and here is a great one.

"Weren't 10 cleansed? Where are the other 9?", he asked. Jesus cleansed 10 lepers. All 10 hollered out to him and he healed all 10, yet only 1 came back to thank him. Jesus continues to make his point, "Has no one returned to give praise to God, except this foreigner?" In other words, the others were Jews, they were the chosen children of God, and they went on their way. They didn't return to give thanks to Jesus. They didn't return praising God. They didn't return to see how they could serve and learn from Jesus. Only the Samaritan did that.

The Samaritans were related to the Jews but they were considered foreigners after they remained in their homeland during the Babylonian captivity and intermarried with their captors. It was unlawful for Jews to associate with Samaritans, though Jesus interacted with Samaritans often and used them in parables as he taught about God and the Kingdom of Heaven.

We can assume by Jesus' response that the other 9 were Israelites. He was pointing out that the only one to return was the foreigner, the Samaritan. The Israelites went on their way. I'm sure they were happy, overjoyed even. Who wouldn't be? But they didn't even come back to say, "Thanks".

We learn from this that we can often get so comfortable in our surroundings and what is happening around us that we start to take it for granted. It's not becoming selfish on purpose, but our human nature and inherent selfishness starts to show more and have more of an effect on us. These other 9 had no doubt heard of all the things Jesus did for people. It is easy to surmise that they expected him to heal them and would have been upset if he hadn't.

How familiar does that sound today? We get so used to things that others provide that we forget what goes into it. We forget to thank people. We forget to live with gratitude in our hearts.

Romans chapter 6 verse 23 says:



(23) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What we deserve in life is death. What we deserve is an eternity separate from God. What we deserve is Hell. However, Jesus paid our sin debt we owe to God. He paid it in full.

Philippians chapter 2 verses 10 and 11 say

(10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Whether we realize it or not, we will one day acknowledge Jesus for who he is and what he has done and continues to do in and for us. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

I choose today to show my gratitude, first to the Lord for the life-saving sacrifice he made on that Roman cross 2000 years ago.

I choose today to express my gratitude to everyone who ministers to me in even the smallest ways.

I am thankful for the people in my life. I am thankful for the blessings the Lord has given me.

I am thankful for my family, and my every need.

I am thankful for the dreams the Lord has given me and the plans and purposes he has placed in my heart.

I choose today to live a life of gratitude. Do you? I encourage you to do so. Each day take a moment for gratitude and see how your outlook on life starts to change.

