**Giving God Thanks**

***Luke 17:11-19***

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Introduction: The very first Thanksgiving proclamation was issued by the Continental Congress in 1777. Penned by Samuel Adams, Congress proclaimed: “Forasmuch as it is the indispensable duty of all men to adore the superintending providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with gratitude their obligations to Him for benefits received & to implore such farther blessings as they stand in need of; and it having pleased Him in His abundant mercy, not only to continue to us the innumerable bounties of His common providence; but also to smile upon us, in the prosecution of a just & necessary war for the defence & establishment of our unalienable rights & liberty; particularly in that He hath been pleased in so great a measure, to prosper the means used for the support of our troops, & to crown our arms with most signal success: It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive powers of these United States, to set apart Thursday, the 18th day of December next, for Solemn Thanksgiving & Praise…’

Having now just observed another Thanksgiving holiday, was it marked by you as an opportunity to pause & give special thanks to God for all of His bountiful provisions? In our text, we learn an important Thanksgiving lesson. Ask yourself this question as we analyze this passage: "Am I just one of the nine, or am I that one out of ten?"

I. The ten lepers (:11-14)

A. We see their **desperate** **condition** (leprosy):

1. They were helpless - no human help.

2. They were hopeless - no human hope.

3. They were honor-less - no human honor (respect) - considered under God's judgment.

Those in captivity to sin are also helpless (Jn. 8:34), hopeless (Eph. 2:12), & honor-less (Rom. 3:9).

B. We hear their **desponden**t **cry**:

1. It was a cry from the heart > *"Jesus, Master."*

2. It was a cry for healing > *"have mercy on us."*

Those in captivity to sin must be honest about their problem & earnest in their petition.

C. We learn of their **definite** **cleansing**:

1. The command - they are sent to the priests.

a. As a test of their faith - "He (Jesus) causes the healing to take place while they, in obedi-

ence to His command & trusting in His power, are on their way to the various priests

under whose authority they are" (Geldenhuys).

b. As a testimony to the priest - cf. Lev. 14:2ff - "The priest acted as a kind of health

inspector to certify that the cure had in fact taken place" (Morris). Illustrate: head lice.

2. The cure - they were all healed [Those in captivity to sin can only be cured by God].

II. The thankful leper (:15-16)

*"One of them... turned back... & he was a Samaritan"* (cf. John 4:9).

A. He **glorified** the Lord Jesus - *"with a loud voice glorified God"*:

1. He returned & cried aloud - "If men do not give thanks quickly, they usually do not do so at

all" (Morris). He was not ashamed nor forgetful to acknowledge his source of healing.

2. He responded when it might have been expected for him to be the last one to do so - Yet,

"Those that have received mercy from God should publish it to others, that they may praise

God too, & may be encouraged by their experience to trust in Him" (Henry). Psalm 107:2.

B. He **worshipped** the Lord Jesus:

1. His outward posture - *"fell down on his face at His feet."*

2. His inward praise - from a heart of gratitude.

C. He **thanked** the Lord Jesus:

1. He offered hearty & affectionate thanksgivings.

2. He was continually *"giving Him thanks."*

III. The thanksgiving lesson (:17-19)

*"Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?”* - "How often this question must be asked by

Him (Jesus) even now as the recipients of His goodness still are ingrates!" (Hobbs).

A. The ones **healed** - it is implied that they were glad:

But why didn't they return?

1. In their hurry - they are soon to be declared *"clean"* by the priest?? – They would be able to return to

society, their family & friends.

2. In their haste - they are shown to be ungrateful.

Illustrate: Lincoln’s Thanksgiving Proclamation in 1863.

B. The one **humbled** - it is indicated that he was glad & grateful:

1. He returned to give glory to God.

2. He represents mankind, particularly you & me, created & saved to glorify God.

Illustrate: “Now Thank We All Our God” by Martin Rinkhart.

C. The one **honored** - it is included that he was "graced":

1. His recognition - as a "stranger" (foreigner, Samaritan).

2. His benediction (blessing) – [Literally, “Thy faith hath *saved* you” – cf. 7:50; 8:48; & 18:42 > the

word refers to both physical & spiritual healing.]

a. "Whole" - "Since all ten were healed of leprosy, evidently it means here to save from sin.

The nine ingrates were cured of leprosy, nothing more. And they might contract it again…  
 b. “But this grateful foreigner received more. He was saved from sin... He was twice blessed:

healed in his body & saved in his soul" (Hobbs).

Conclusion: Consider the case of unsaved people today. They may enjoy God's blessing of health and/or wealth as well as freedom & security in this blessed land of America. And yet, how many are ungrateful & refuse to give glory to God? The Psalmist put it this way, *"Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, & for His wonderful works to the children of men!"* (Ps. 107:10). Recall again the words of Lincoln in his thanksgiving proclamation, "...But we have forgotten God..."

But even more disturbing, consider those who profess faith in Christ, having experienced the cleansing power of Christ's blood, & yet still fail to properly give God thanks. As a believer, are you truly thankful for the Son of God (I Cor. 9:15); if so, when was the last time you told Him? Are you truly thankful for the salvation of God (Eph. 2:8-9); if so, when was the last time you told someone else about it (Ps. 107:2)? Are you truly thankful for the Word of God (II Pet. 1:19); if so, when was the last time you read it privately or with the family in devotions? Are you truly thankful for the church of God (I Tim. 3:15)? Note these words from Vance Havner, "We reward, coax, picnic, persuade, tantalize, trying to get church members to come to church. We have tried banners, seals, diplomas, badges, buttons, pot-luck suppers, oyster stews, trying to induce people to do what they ought to do anyway because they love God. People go where they want to go. Where their hearts are, their heels will follow!" Let me close with this. There is a caption beneath a picture from Rome which reads, "This is the Roman Coliseum where the early Christians died for the faith which we now take for granted" (see Havner quote). How about you this morning? Is your life bringing glory to God? Or do you need to confess your sin of ungratefulness? Again I ask, are you just one of the nine, or are you that one out of ten?