

ESF Lord's day (Thanksgiving) service message
11/18/2018

Blessed Life in Thanksgiving

Luke 17:11-19

¹¹Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance ¹³and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" ¹⁴When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. ¹⁵One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

Two men were walking through a field one day when they spotted an enraged bull. Suddenly the bull dashed toward them. Instantly they ran toward the nearest fence. But the bull's speed seemed to catch up to them before they could run over the fence. Terrified, the one shouted to the other, "Put up a prayer, John. We're in for it!" John answered, "I can't. I've never made a public prayer in my life." "But you must!" implored his companion. "The bull is catching up to us." "All right," panted John, "I'll say the only prayer I know, the one my father used to repeat at the table: 'O Lord, for what we are about to receive, make us truly thankful.'"

The Bible says that being thankful in all circumstances is God's will (1 Thessalonians 5:16). By just being thankful, we obey God's will and please Him. Today we look at the story of Jesus' healing 10 lepers. But the key lesson in this story is not just the healing, but thanksgiving. It is the blessings given to those who are thankful. What are the blessings?

They are CHC: **contentment, health and connection** to the Lord Himself who is the source of blessings.

Thanksgiving makes you content in all circumstances

Ungratefulness and complaining make us unhappy. Have you ever seen a person who complains a lot and looks happy at the same time? I bet you haven't. Complains bring more troubles into our lives. When the Israelites complained while they were traveling in the desert, their troubles did not decrease but always increased. Sometimes sickness and death would come to many of them while they were complaining (Exodus 15:22-27, 16:1-36, 17:1-7, Numbers 21:4-9).

But, a grateful attitude makes a person content and happy in all circumstances. Dennis Prager, the author of "Happiness is a Serious Problem" writes, "There is a secret to happiness and it is gratitude. All happy people are grateful, and ungrateful people cannot be happy. We tend to think that it is being unhappy that leads people to complain. But, in fact, it is complaining that leads to people becoming unhappy. Become grateful and you will become a much happier person."

The one who appreciates life more becomes more content and happier. Gratitude is the secret to happiness. When you see a person who is grateful always that person usually looks peaceful and happy although the person may not be free from troubles.

Paul was a man who could rejoice in all circumstances not because there was no trouble in his life, but because he was always content. His contentment came from being thankful in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:18). He confessed the secret of a content life, "*I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want*" (Philippians 4:12).

For the ten lepers in today's text, healing of their leprosy was a great blessing. But that one blessing wouldn't make the healed lepers' lives free from troubles. Although they were healed of leprosy, there would still be many other troubles in their lives.

In those days, lepers were separated and cast off from other healthy people. They were shut out from their families and friends. To the day they died they could never enter into a social contact with others. Eventually they became poor and the only way to survive was to receive generous givings from others.

So even if they were healed, they faced many difficult challenges to get their lives back to normal. People might still be reluctant to get close to them. Some of them might have lost several of their fingers or might have disfigured faces, arms or legs. It wouldn't be easy for them to get a job. Although healing of leprosy was a miraculous blessing, it was just the beginning of a new life and they needed more encouragement and help to turn their lives back to normal.

At that point, by giving thanks to the Lord who healed them, they could have received further encouragement and help from the Lord. But most of them did not do that. If they had given thanks to the Lord, the Lord would have given them the spirit of contentment. Then with the spirit of contentment, they would have been able to overcome many challenges in their lives.

There was a man who lived with his 6 children in the suburbs of Philadelphia. Just before school was to start all of his children were in need of new shoes. At the same time the washing machine wore out. To top it all off, because of bad weather, his work as a carpenter had dwindled to almost nothing. He was able to scrap together enough money to buy the children shoes, and then he ran an ad in the paper for a used washing machine. One day the phone rang, and it was someone

who had a used washing machine to sell. He went to the home and noticed they had all the things he had wished for his family. After talking to the man of the house concerning the washing machine and how he would get it home, the conversation got around to children. Claude, the out of work carpenter, began complaining about how expensive it was to raise 6 children. Especially when they all needed shoes at the same time. The woman of the house ran out of the room crying. Her husband explained that they had only one child who had been paralyzed from birth and he had never needed a pair of shoes. When Claude got home, he picked up the worn-out shoes, worn out from skipping rope, kicking rocks, and jumping puddles, and he went off to be by himself. Kneeling by his bed he gave thanks to God for the worn-out shoes in his house. Claude was thankful for the deliverance he had been granted, his children could walk, run and skip rope. They could wear out a pair of shoes. Claude had been delivered from the pain of the other family who could not watch their child run, kick rocks, jump and wear out shoes.

We have constant challenges in our lives. We face one problem after another. But when we are thankful for what we have now, the Lord will give us the blessing of contentment with which we can overcome all troubles gracefully.

Thanksgiving makes you healthy

There are many diseases and harmful things in this world which constantly threaten us. How can we maintain our health?

Some people exercise regularly, eat a healthy diet, get regular doctor check ups, and follow the doctor's instructions. Of course, physical exercise, a healthy diet and following a doctor's instructions may help us to maintain our health.

But there is another safe and inexpensive way to maintain our health always. It is to live with a thankful heart in all circumstances.

Research shows that being thankful is good for our health. Robert Emmons, professor of psychology at the University of California in Davis, says, "Clinical trials indicate that the practice of gratitude can have dramatic and lasting effects in a person's life: It can lower blood pressure, improve immune function and facilitate more efficient sleep." The University of California San Diego's School of Medicine linked gratefulness with better heart health, specifically less inflammation and healthier heart rhythms. Paul Mills, another researcher, found that thankful people "showed a better well-being, a less depressed mood, less fatigue, and better sleep."

Gratefulness gives you a pleasant spirit. When you are grateful, you are emotionally healthy and strong. So you do not easily get hurt. It removes bitterness and depression from your heart. It heals your wounded heart and revives your depressed spirit. It gives you strong spirit that protects you from the devil's attacks. There is an old legend of a man who found the barn where Satan kept his seeds ready to be sown in the human heart. On finding the seeds of discouragement more numerous than others, he learned that those seeds could be made to grow almost anywhere. When questioned, Satan reluctantly admitted that there was one place in which he could never get them to thrive. "And where is that?" asked the man. He replied sadly, "In the heart of a grateful person."

That was the blessing the thankful man received in today's text. There are many more diseases in the world than leprosy. The healed lepers could get sick with many other diseases. They even could get sick with leprosy again. To live healthy lives, they needed more than just one healing. But when they forgot or ignored giving thanks to the Lord who had healed them, they lost confirmation of further healing blessings.

However, the leper, who thanked the Lord for the healing, received confirmation of his health: *Rise and go, your faith has made you well.* He could boldly ask for healing if he was to get sick again.

When you live with a thankful spirit, the Lord will give you confidence of healing even if you get sick from time to time. When you give thanks to the Lord for His blessings, He will always confirm your healing and health. Do not forget to give thanks to the Lord for His blessings given to you today. Don't neglect giving thanks to the Lord today. Don't postpone giving thanks to the Lord today. Give thanks to Him for his little, small blessing today.

Thanksgiving connects you to the source of all blessings

When only one healed leper came to the Lord and gave thanks to Him, He was surprised at the others ungratefulness. He actually asked where the other nine healed lepers were. He must have been waiting and expecting them to return and say "Thank you, Lord, for healing me." He must have felt very sad when the nine lepers did not say "thank you."

Why did they not give thanks to the Healer? After they received healing, they made their way to their family and their friends, to hug and kiss their wives and children, to visit their moms and dads, to see their friends. Their minds were occupied with all that the healing brought to their lives and forgot the Healer. Some of them might have considered postponing thanking Him to a later time when it would be more convenient.

Whatever the reasons might be, right after receiving a blessing of healing, they lost connection with the Healer. They missed a great opportunity to get connected to the source of healing, and the source of all blessings, the Lord Himself.

But one out of the ten healed lepers gave thanks to the Healer. He loved his wife and children just as much as the others. He wanted to spend time with his friends just as much as the others. He wanted to enjoy the blessing just as much as the others. But he had his priorities in order. He did not get so wrapped up in the blessing that he forgot the blesser. He put family, friends and all other things on hold so that he could worship the one who made being with his family and friends possible.

When the one out of ten came and gave his thanks to the Lord, He was really glad. The Lord's heart was pulled to that grateful man. The Lord acknowledged his faith. It means that the grateful man got connected to the Lord Himself. The man got connected to the Lord who is the source of healing, and the source of all blessings. From then on, it was possible to have an intimate relationship with the Lord and receive more than just one physical healing. He could receive every blessing he would ever need in his life from the Lord.

When you are thankful, the Lord gives not only one blessing but also Himself who is the source of all blessings. When you do not thank the Lord after you receive a blessing, the blessing from the Lord may stop at that one blessing. But when you are thankful for one blessing, the Lord will keep bringing one blessing after another. By being thankful always, you can connect yourself to the heart of the Lord who is the source of all blessings.

Give thanks to the Lord...

Remember the wonders He has done, His miracles...

He remembers His covenant forever...

(Psalm 105:1,5,8).

Jesus wants to do immensely more for us than giving just visible blessings that may not last long anyway. He wants to give us a relationship with Him which lasts forever and which gives us all the best blessings at the right times.

So, don't postpone giving thanks to the Lord for any blessing you receive. Give thanks to Him for all your blessings as soon as you receive them. Then the Lord who is the source of all blessings will connect Himself to you.

The best way to give thanks to the Lord is witnessing His name and what He Has done for us.

A medical missionary who worked in India for many years served in a region where people had cases of what is called progressive blindness. People would be born with normal eyesight but eventually they would lose their site completely as they grew older. This medical missionary developed a treatment that actually worked and it stopped this problem. So people would come to him and after he had performed the treatment they would realize that their site had been saved and they had been healed. But he said not one of them ever said thank you. But there was a reason. That phrase was not in their dialect. There were no words for it. Instead they spoke a word that simply meant "I will tell your name." Wherever they went they would tell the name of the missionary who had cured them.

We must do the same. Everywhere we go tell the name of the one who cured us the one who saved us. Jesus Christ.