

Thankfulness – Becoming Part Of Who We Are Luke 17:11-19

Introduction:

1. Here in this text, Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem when suddenly ten lepers cry out to Him for help (vs. 11-13). Back then, leprosy was a terrible, incurable disease.
 - It was a chronic, infectious diseases characterized by sores, scabs, and white shining spots beneath the skin. The symptoms were so grotesque that the victim would become repulsive to others and would have to live in seclusion.
2. Jesus had mercy on these ten lepers (vs. 14), but then notice what happened (vs. 15-19). Only one out of the ten returned to thank Jesus. Do you think people have changed in the past 2,000 years? Do you think the percentages would be better today?
3. If we could somehow poll the people in this town and see what percentage have thanked God for anything this week, what do you think it would be? It was 10% in our text. Do you think it would be better today?
4. Most often, being thankful doesn't occur to a lot of people simply because it doesn't come easy to our flesh. It is much easier to complain and gripe. It's so easy to become consumed with what we **want** rather than be thankful for what we **have**.
5. Thanksgiving Day was on Thursday. Thankfulness is a central issue in the Bible – really from beginning to end. What did Paul tell church-age believers? (1 Thessalonians 5:18) His explanation was very concise and straightforward.
6. Thankfulness should be woven into the fabric of every Christian's life. It should be part of who we are as a person. According to God's Word, we can't be in the will of God if we aren't thankful.
7. Why is this issue of thankfulness so important? I believe this text is very insightful and will help us tremendously to be a thankful people.

First, thankfulness reveals what's in the heart. vs. 15-16

1. This man falls at the feet of Jesus and gives glory to God. What a great definition of thanksgiving – giving glory to God. The Bible says that he gave Jesus thanks. This simply means that he was grateful.

2. But this man's outward thankfulness revealed what was in his heart. It revealed a true humility of mind and heart. He falls down on his face at Jesus' feet. What is your image of a humble person? This is a pretty good image!
3. Humility is freedom from arrogance, recognizing that all we have comes from God. Therefore, humility and thanksgiving are inseparably tied together. God embraces the humble in spirit. James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:5-6
 - Humility is turning your eyes away from off of yourself toward God. Thankfulness demonstrates humility.
4. However, when we are not thankful, it is a sign of pride, and the Bible says that God resists the proud. Luke 14:11

Second, thankfulness gets God's attention. vs. 17-18

1. Look in our text at verses 17-18. After this leper returns and gives thanks, Jesus is impacted. He doesn't just say, "Yea, yea, alright" and keep walking. Jesus doesn't blow it off like it's no big deal.
2. He stops and takes special notice of this man. In fact, Jesus wanted to know where the other nine were. He noticed that they **didn't** return to give thanks and give glory to God. He was obviously disappointed at the response of the nine.
3. Do you think God notices us when we are thankful? Do you think He notices when we are unthankful? Would you consider yourself a thankful person?
4. The Bible teaches that each time we go to prayer that thanksgiving should be a part of it. Philippians 4:6; Psalm 95:2; 100:4
5. Do you remember the story of Daniel in the lions' den, and do you remember how God shut the mouths of the lions and delivered Daniel? Look at what the Bible says about Daniel right before he was thrown in. (Daniel 6:10) God definitely noticed Daniel's thankful heart.

Third, thankfulness pleases God. vs. 18

1. Jesus is obviously very pleased with this man here in our text. When we offer thanks, it is so pleasing to God.
2. In the Old Testament, they were to offer up literal sacrifices to God, and when they did, the Bible says it would be a sweet, smelling sacrifice in the nostrils of God.

3. Today, in the time of grace, we don't offer up literal sacrifices to God because Jesus Christ was the final, once-for-all sacrifice for sin.
4. But the Bible says that when we pray and offer up praise and thanksgiving to God, it's like a sweet, smelling sacrifice in the nostrils of God. Hebrews 13:15; Psalm 107:22; 116:17
5. God is very pleased when we are thankful. Do you desire to please God? If you do, each time you pray, offer up thanksgiving to God.

Fourth, thankfulness demonstrates faith. vs. 19

1. Look at what Jesus tells this thankful man in verse 19. Jesus did a second thing for the thankful Samaritan, he forgave his sins. The others were healed physically, but they weren't saved from their spiritual condition.
 - Jesus knew this man had faith. How? Because of his thankfulness.
2. Did you know the Bible says in Hebrews 11:6 that without faith it is impossible to please God? How do we show God that we believe that He is God? One of the ways is through thanksgiving.
3. When we are thankful, it demonstrates to God that our trust and confidence is in Him and nobody else.
4. How about the other nine? Maybe their faith was in the priests (vs. 14) and that the priests would do something for them. Not the one leper. He turned around and fell at the feet of Jesus. This showed Jesus where his faith was.

In Conclusion:

1. This is a great story in the Word of God reminding us of the importance of being thankful. Thankfulness should dwell in the heart of every believer.
 - Why do we go to church? Do we go to worship God and thank Him for all He has done on our behalf? Part of your worship is to thank Him.
2. Be honest with yourself. Which group would God classify you in? Would you be one the nine or the one who gave thanks? Even in bad situations, there are things that we can be thankful for. Ephesians 5:20
 - One of the only things we can really give God is our thanksgiving. It is a wonderful thing just to thank God.

3. Instead of being like these nine, going our own way and forgetting to return thanks, we must set aside time each day to count our blessings and name them one by one. If we do this, we will become a thankful people.