

LIVING THE GRATEFUL CHRISTIAN LIFE

Text: Luke 17:16

Intro:

In this story we have one of the many occasions of the healing of the afflicted by Jesus. And in the same incident, we have depicted, first, extreme gratefulness, and on the other, extreme ungratefulness.

Jesus had been at Ephraim and was on his way to Jerusalem to the Passover, via Samaria and Galilee. As He entered a certain village, He met ten lepers. Leprosy was one of the most deadly and dreaded diseases of the Orient.

These men, at the sight of Jesus, implored Him to help them. They said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Jesus in His compassion said, "Show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were all cleansed. One of the men, seeing he was healed, turned back, fell down at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks and glorifying God.

Then Jesus said, "Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?" Then He said to the one, "Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." Here were 10 men who received a like blessing from the Lord, but only one took time to return and thank Him for it.

As I thought of this incident again, I was made to think that we are a good bit like the nine lepers, many times. I know I must plead guilty here.

We're the recipients of all the good things which come from God's hand, and yet so often we pass them over lightly, and accept them as a matter of course.

There are many things to be thankful for.

Body of Sermon:

I want to enumerate some things I feel we too often pass over lightly and should be grateful for:

1. The proper function of the body.

When every organ of the body is functioning to its highest efficiency, the net result is what we call health. We all have health tonight in a reasonable measure at least. All of us have 2 good eyes.

Have you ever thought what a change it would make in our lives if this lone blessing was suddenly taken from us? We'd be living in total darkness, and how dependable we'd be! Yet many have never seen the light, nature, friends faces.

All of us have ears to hear. We can hear the singing of the birds, the ripple of a stream, the beautiful strains of music, the friendly voices of those we love. What a blessing this is! Many are not so blessed.

All of us have tongues with which to express ourselves. We can enunciate clearly. Little do we know how empty Life would be if we couldn't converse the one with the other.

Then again, all of our minds function properly. What a blessing this is! It seems to me a most pitiful plight is to see people who are mentally deficient. And yet there are institutions dotting our land that are full of such folk. Why are we so privileged?

All of us have hands with which to work and earn a livelihood. We have limbs that will support us. We are not crippled. In my practical work at Bethany, I saw many at Cook County hospital who will never walk. Let's be more thankful for our health.

2. We ought to be more thankful for food.

We plant our gardens; God sends the rain and sun to make things grow. We remove sanitary food from our refrigerators and surround the family board, laden with the fruits of the earth, little thinking many times, of those who do not have. In many poverty-stricken areas there will be people this night, no doubt, who will lie down to slumber with empty, gnawing stomachs.

In this land of plenty, we ought to be grateful for good, pure food, and share with those who do not have,

3. Closely allied with food to eat, is water to drink.

There is no substitute for it. And to verify this fact, they tell us that one could live only about 14 days without water.

4. We need to appreciate God's great outdoors.

After spending the winter in the city, I'm sure I can appreciate the wide, open spaces the more. My friends, I think we in the rural districts have something which those living in the industrial centers do not have. There's something about handling the soil, and being among crops, trees and flowers, that does something to us.

As a boy I did not like to mow the lawn. I should rejoice in it now. Have you ever noted the almost perfect formation of the tree by the well here? Truly, "The heavens declare of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork."

5. We need to be more thankful for Christian neighbors and friends.

We live in a land, a community that has been largely Christianized. Our friends stand ready to help us, in time of need. Our friends trust us; they believe in us. Little do we know what contribution they make to the success of our lives. Someone has said: "We are a part of all we've met."

A minister, when asked about the success of his life, said, "I had a friend." If our lot would have been cast in a pagan land, rather than a Christian one, where would we be? The chances are, many of us would still be unchristian.

6. We need to be thankful for the church.

Would you like to live in a community where there was no church—no place for public worship? I know you wouldn't. The place where this church stands is "holy ground" to us.

In all fairness and kindness to other denominations, let me say, we need to be more thankful for the church, for our Christian heritage, for principles and convictions that our fathers had. The church ought to mean more to us than ever before.

7. Finally, we ought to be More thankful for Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Jesus lived the perfect life here on earth. His death was the very essence of love. He "bought us with a price," the price of His own blood. If we follow and serve Him a few short years here, we shall live eternally with Him and the saints. This is possible only through Him. He's worthy of all praise.

Conclusion:

These are only a few of the many blessings we enjoy. Let us be thankful as the one leper, for in so doing, life will be richer and fuller. Let us live our christian lives gratefully.