

“THANKS... DON’T MENTION IT!”

Luke 17:11-19

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1. [11am ONLY... Read Text: Luke 17:11-19 and Pray].
2. Sometime during the day this next Thursday, most of us will probably sit down around a table with family and friends.

 A--We'll probably carve up a turkey, ham, or chicken, serve some dressing and gravy, and have all kinds of good food to eat.

 B--And before we start eating all of this good food and enjoy all that good fellowship, we'll hopefully do the most important thing of all -- we'll take time to bow our heads and give thanks to God for the blessings that He has given us this past year.
3. Unfortunately, though, many people (& many of us) often take their blessings for granted.

 A--We're like the little boy who, after returning home from his friend's birthday party, was asked by his mother: "Bobby, did you thank Johnny's Mom for the party?"
 And Bobby said, "No Mom, I didn't." And of course, Bobby's mother was frustrated by this, because she'd raised him to always express gratitude when something nice was done for him.
 So she asked, "Bobby, you know Johnny's Mother went to a lot of trouble to see that you and everyone else had a good time. So WHY didn't you say thank you to her?" And Bobby looked up and said, "Well Mom, I was going to. But a girl ahead of me said, 'Thank you,' and Johnny's Mom told her not to mention it. So I didn't." ¹

 B--Well, in today's scripture from Luke 17:11-19, Jesus teaches us at least several lessons about the value and importance of “mentioning it” -- of saying “thanks.”
 [9am ONLY... Let me read it for you... *"11 On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he entered a village, ten men with skin diseases approached him. Keeping their distance from him, 13 they raised their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, show us mercy!” 14 When Jesus saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” As they left, they were cleansed. 15 One of them, when he saw that he had been healed, returned and praised God with a loud voice. 16 He fell on his face at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus replied, “Weren’t ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 No one returned to praise God except this foreigner?” 19 Then Jesus said to him, “Get up and go. Your faith has healed you.”]*

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4. The **first lesson** we find here is that **an openly expressed “attitude of gratitude” allows us to experience *more* of God’s blessings than if it's *not* expressed.**

A--Remember that in today’s story, *ten* lepers had been healed, but only *one* returned to say thanks. WHY? Well, we don’t really know why the nine didn’t turn back.

1--Perhaps some thought they'd have time later.

2--Perhaps some thought the healing was just a "coincidence."

3--Perhaps some wanted to see if the healing would last.

4--Whatever it was, the end result -- as is often the case with many people today -- was to take their blessing for granted.

B--At the same time, of course, we *also* don’t know why the ONE leper *did* turn back.

1--Perhaps he'd been taught better by his parents;

2--Perhaps he had more for which to be thankful;

3--Perhaps he was hoping to find out more about the one who'd healed him.

C--But whatever the reason, I wonder if his action of *expressing* thanks enabled him to experience something *more* than the other nine who *didn't* express it.

1--Remember how Verse 12 tells us that all *ten* lepers came to Jesus saying, “*Jesus, Master, show us MERCY*” (or “*...have MERCY on us*”).

2--Yet, think about it: the need for “mercy/forgiveness” is not something that requires *physical* healing. No. It's a *spiritual* need.

3--So, while the nine lepers who never turned back *did* receive *physical* healing from Jesus, perhaps what they missed out on by not expressing thanks is a *spiritual* healing that the one leper who *did* turn back *did* experience.

D--In other words, perhaps the lesson here is that an openly expressed “attitude of gratitude” (illustrated in the actions of the one leper) allows us to receive blessings from God that we would otherwise *miss* without that expression.

5. A **second lesson** this story teaches I think has to do with identity of the one leper who turned back to say “thanks.” Verse 16 tells us... “*He was a Samaritan.*”

A--Remember that in Jesus’ day, Samaritans were considered racially impure -- they were half-Jewish, half-Gentile, shunned by both groups, and accepted by neither.

B--Yet, in this story, it’s the detestable “foreigner” -- the “different” outsider -- who turns out to be the “good guy”... the *only* one who doesn’t take his healing for granted.

C--In other words, the lesson we learn here is that **those who we consider to be “different/outside” are often the best ones to teach how appreciate our blessings!**

D--When I served at a church in August, GA, one of the important ministries that our church sponsored was a ministry called "Super Saturday," and each month, a different Sunday School class took turns serving lunch to about 150 special needs adults from around the community, along with a program that we'd always put together for them.

1--The November program, however, always consisted of myself and other program leaders taking a live microphone around the Fellowship Hall, inviting our guests to share what it is that they were thankful for -- they *loved* getting to talk into the microphone and hearing their own voice over the speaker system!

2--And why I remember this so well is because the things our guests shared that they were thankful for were things that sometimes get taken for granted in our world today -- things like food, friends, chocolate, flowers, a free country, love, and many others.

3--In many ways, those special needs adults were the "Samaritans" of that community, but THEY (perhaps more than the rest of us) properly understood and appreciated the "little things" that often get missed today.

4--And as a result, I believe they were *especially* blessed in a way that made the rest of us jealous!

E--So, WHO is it that's outside your normal activity sphere of life that might teach you better about appreciating your blessings?

1--Is it a special needs adult or child that you know? ...Someone of a different race or ethnicity? is it perhaps a child/grandchild? ...or someone who lives a different lifestyle or sexual orientation than you?...or someone who has a different set of politics from you? ...or even someone whose religion or belief system is not the same as yours?

2--Whoever it is, today's story reminds us that, quite often, it's those who are *different* from us who can teach us the *most* about what it means to be thankful.

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7. So as I wrap up, let me simply remind us that, when it comes to sharing "*thanks*" to God for His blessings, much of today's world is like the nine lepers who never turned back -- in our actions and inactions, we say "*Don't mention it.*"

A--But those of us who are in Christ Jesus should never take our blessings for granted.

B--Like the one Samaritan whose openly expressed “attitude of gratitude” enabled him to receive more than just a *physical* healing,...

C--...And like those in our society today whose differences from us enable them to see and understand things that we often miss,...

D--...It’s important for us to take time to “mention it” -- to say and live our “thanks” to God for his many blessings.

9. [PRAY]

ENDNOTES:

¹ Like this boy, many people in today's world *assume* that people know that we are thankful for what they do for us or what they give us, and so we don't think it's necessary to go to the trouble of actually *saying* it or even *writing* it in a “thank you” note. And the result is a world in which a simple "thank you" is often on the list of endangered species.