

## Union Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **A Lifestyle of Thanksgiving**

November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Philippians 4:1-9; Luke 17:1-11**

### 1. **Gratitude and Thanksgiving - A Must with God**

#### □ **The Healing of the 10 men with Leprosy: Luke 17:11-17**

In this passage we see that

“As he [Jesus’ was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” Luke 17:12-13 NIV

To understand why these men “stood at a distance” as they called out to Jesus for help, it is helpful to review what the Old Testament says in Leviticus 13 and 14 about leprosy.

#### □ **Background**

In Leviticus 13 and 14, The Lord gave to Israel through Moses specific rules and instructions on what must happen if a person acquired defiling and infectious skin diseases collectively termed leprosy.

- Leviticus 13: A person with this skin disease was to report to a priest who would certify their condition and temporarily isolate them. If the person’s disease persisted and was deemed chronic, the person was to live alone, outside the camp.
- Leviticus 14: If a person was healed of leprosy, they were again to be examined by a priest who would certify their healing and perform certain rites - including offering animal sacrifices. The healed person also had to go through a cleansing process - including having their clothes washed, haircut, bathing with water, etc. followed by further isolation for 7 days.

It should now be clear why these 10 men stood at a distance to call out to Jesus. They were not allowed in society so long as they had this skin condition...

□ **Healing: Through Obedience to Jesus' Words**

**"When he [Jesus] saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed."**

Luke 17:14 NIV

Jesus operated in faith and expects faith. Here we see Jesus's faith in action. He asked them to go and show themselves to the priest.

- The fact that they were already isolated means a priest had certified them to be unclean.
- Under the law (Leviticus 14) the only reason to have the priest examine them again is if they were healed.
  - Jesus asked them to go to the priest in faith, believing they were healed, with no prior evidence whatsoever.
- Important Lesson: **"And as they went, they were cleansed"**  
Many times, we look for the results before we obey God's word. We may depend on how we feel, for instance, before obeying.  
**That is backwards, so far as a life of faith is concerned.**  
***It is as we obey that we see the results.***  
***Obedience is acting in faith in God's word.***

□ **What The Lord Expects When We Receive Blessings**

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? 18Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."** Luke 17:15-19 NIV

God expects, as we see from Jesus' questions here:

- **Giving credit where credit is due - all glory and praise must be given to God** for the blessings we receive.
- **Gratitude** - genuine sense of gratitude in our hearts
- **Thanksgiving** - expressing thanks is important.

It is not enough to feel grateful. Gratitude must be expressed.

Jesus said:

**“out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”**

Matthew 12:34b NRSV

If we have hearts full of gratitude, we will give thanks with our lips.

If we have hearts of discontentment, we moan and complain with our lips.

If we have hearts full of anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, etc. that is what will come out of our lips as well.

## 2. **A Lifestyle and Disposition of Thanksgiving**

Every Christian is **called** to live a life filled with peace and to have a thankful heart and lifestyle. Paul puts it this way:

**“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.”** Colossians 3:15 NRSV

Today I have five words and phrases, gleaned from scripture, that show how to attain this lifestyle:

Recognize, Acknowledge, Remember, Love and Forgive, Rejoice and Express Thanks.

### □ **RECOGNIZE the Lord’s acts of goodness, mercy, and blessing.**

This is an intentional effort of looking out for signs of God’s blessing. It involves expectancy as we trust God, and it involves conscious effort.

As we see with the Samaritan leper Jesus healed,

**“...when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God...”**

In other words, he recognized the miracle God had performed in his body. He didn’t just obey, he also expected a good result and recognized it when the healing happened.

□ **ACKNOWLEDGE what the Lord has done and is doing.**

Many recognize the results of God's blessing but do not want to acknowledge that it is God who blessed them. This is the act of intentionally giving God credit for one's blessings. We must avoid the temptation to give the credit to someone or something else when we experience the Lord's goodness and blessings.

15One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice.

Praising God is acknowledgement of the Lord's work in our lives.

□ **REMEMBER what the Lord has done and never let go of that.**

Remembering what the Lord has and is doing in our lives is a really big deal to the Lord. All through the scriptures, God's people are instructed to remember great acts of God in their lives.

For us Christians, this is why we have holy communion. The Lord Jesus has instructed us to have communion regularly ... "do this in remembrance of me" ...

We must remember that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Ephesians 1), and any peace and wealth we possess in this life is the result of those blessings. Moses said this to Israel, and we do well to remember these words - they apply to us too!

"You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." **18But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.**"

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 NIV

Remembering is an act of intentional acknowledgement, usually with specific acts of commemoration.

□ **LOVE AND FORGIVE others always.**

In our first reading from Philippians 4, Paul pleads with two women in the church (Euodia and Syntyche) **“to be of the same mind in the Lord.”** These were clearly two women devoted to Christ and to the missionary work of Paul. As Paul says, “they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel.”

However, at this point, it seemed the women were in strife or conflict with each other. So, Paul pleads with (urges) them to become one in mind in Christ.

As Christians, as Paul says in Colossians, we are to

**“Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts ... and be thankful”** Colossians 3:13-15 NRSV

Forgiving others is a disposition of humility and thankfulness, as we remember how much the Lord has forgiven us.

□ **REJOICE & EXPRESS THANKS always.**

Paul’s words are self-explanatory:

**4Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!**

5Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

**6Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

8Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” Philippians 4:4-8 NIV

**16Rejoice always, 17pray without ceasing, 18give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.** 1Thessalonians 5:17-18NRSV