

The Beauty of A Thankful Heart

"Hello, I'm a leper!" The man approached Jesus. *'Please don't run away, Jesus!'*

"What's the matter with your skin?" asked Jesus.

- *"Can't You see I'm covered with runny sores and crusty scabs?' No one wants to look at me -- my face is so horrible.'*

"What do you want from Me?"

- *"You can make me better,"* said the man, falling on his knees, *'If You don't I'll scratch myself to death.'*

Jesus felt sorry for this guy.

"Don't touch me," said the man. *'That's how you get it.'*

- *"I'm not afraid to touch you."* Jesus reached down and pulled him to his feet.

- The itching was gone. The sores started to dry. The scabs began to fall off.

"Thank You, thank You!" shouted the man. *'How can I ever thank You?'*

"Go to the temple, show yourself to a priest and say a prayer of thanks to God."

"Yes, I will, I will!" promised the man hurrying off.

"One more thing," Jesus called.

"Anything?" said the man.

"You don't have to tell anyone what I just did."

"I won't tell a soul," he said; but he was so happy he forgot and told everyone he met.

- The other lepers began looking for the Man with the healing touch.

Jesus was on the border between Galilee and Samaria -- Luke 17:11-19

Ten lepers met Him.

- Jews hated Samaritans but there was at least one Samaritan in this group.

Samaritans were a "mixed race" contaminated by foreign blood and false worship.

Josephus said Samaritans were opportunists.

- When the Jews enjoyed prosperity, the Samaritans claimed their blood relationship.

- . When the Jews suffered hard times, the Samaritans disowned any kinship, saying they were descendants of Assyrian immigrants.

Zerubbabel led a group of Jews back from the Babylonian Captivity, the Samaritans offered to help rebuild the Temple.

- Their offer was rejected so they tried to prevent the Jews from finishing their project
- . - Ezra 4:1-10 (2)

When Nehemiah rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem, Arabs and Samaritans opposed him

- . - Nehemiah 2:10-6:14. (3)

The breach widened when Ezra called for racial purity pressuring Israelite men married during the Captivity to divorce their pagan wives. -- Ezra 10:18-44 (4) 10:10

The final break came when Samaritans built a temple on Mount Gerizim, claiming Shechem rather than Jerusalem as the true Beth-el (house of God).

Though animosity existed between the Jews and Samaritans, Jesus saw men in need and was touched by their needs.

Lepers had to keep away from healthy people. If the leper was upwind he had to stand at least 50 yards away.

- . - The lepers lived in isolation -- leprosy was highly contagious.

A leper had to wear "mourning" clothes, leave his hair unkept, keep his beard covered, and cry, "Unclean" to warn folks.

- . - Everyone avoided him -- He was an outcast.

The lepers came to Jesus for a cure -- He healed them -- ONE came back to give thanks. -- 10%

THAT'S HOW MOST PEOPLE ARE -- THEY GET WHAT THEY WANT AND DON'T COME BACK AFTER THAT -- WE'RE SO UNGRATEFUL IN OUR GENERATION.

1- Ungrateful to parents

- . - When we were babies a day or week's neglect would've meant death.

We were totally dependent on our parents for years -- yet the day can come when an aged parent becomes a nuisance. Many are unwilling to repay the debt they owe for the nurture and care by their parents in those early years.

Someone said "How sharper it is than a serpent's tooth to have a thankless child."

- . - Children should show gratitude and respect to parents.

2- Ungrateful toward each other

- . - We owe those who've nurtured us in the Lord, encouraging and strengthening us.

WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO APPRECIATE THOSE WHO SHOW THEIR LOVE TO US.

3- Ungrateful to God

When in need we cry to God for help -- when things are going good we don't say thanks before our meals. -- Psalm 103:2-5 (5)

Some things to be thankful for:

1. THANKFUL FOR GOD'S LOVE

Nothing said Jesus had to help these men.

- . - He didn't have to care -- He did care!

His love was shown toward a vile, dirty, wretched looking person.

The lepers were unkept. Their putrefying sores stank.

- . - No one would touch or go near them.

The Pharisees didn't expect Jesus to help.

- . - They thought they were better than the lepers.

Society didn't care if Jesus helped -- they wanted to segregate the lepers. (Park ministry)

The Jews didn't encourage Him to help -- they hated Samaritans -- wanted nothing to do with half-breeds.

Why'd Jesus help? -- Compassion -- a heart full of divine love.

Jesus cared so much for these stricken men -- He was moved when they came to Him.

Imagine lepers coming to Saddam Hussein or Osama Bin Laden, and begging for mercy.

- . - They'd been immediately dragged out and shot.

How wonderful Christ's Love is!!

Years ago a Christian lady visited a camp of gypsies.

A boy was dying in one of the tents. She knelt and quoted John 3:16, three times.

- . - His eyes opened -- he feebly said "Tell it again."

She read the words again and the voice gasped, "I never heard that before. You mean God loves me, a poor gypsy boy?" God gave his Son? Whosoever? With his last breath he whispered, "Tell it to the rest", and he went to meet Jesus.

I'M THANKFUL CHRIST LOVES US!

2. I'M THANKFUL FOR CHRIST'S CLEANSING POWER.

These men had a serious problem -- Leprosy was incurable.

- . - Only God could heal leprosy.
- . - Leprosy's a picture of sin.

A. It was incurable

No medicine could touch it -- When a person had the disease they died.

It was like the HIV virus today -- there's no known cure.

Sin's the same way.-- There's no cure in anything man can do. -- Titus 3:5 ⁷

SOME JOIN A CHURCH THINKING THAT'LL TAKE CARE OF SIN.

- . - Being a part of the zoo doesn't make you an animal.

OTHERS TRY TO WASH IT AWAY BY BEING BAPTISED -- THAT DOESN'T WORK EITHER.

- . - Christ's Blood washes away sin, not water.
- . - I'm not a "dunk em' and save em' preacher." Blood salvation is the only kind.

SOME HOPE TO REVERSE THE EFFECT OF SIN BY LIVING A RESPECTABLE LIFE.

There was no cure for sin until Jesus came. -- He took care of every sin on the cross.

- . - There's no sin left unforgiven.. Calvary covered it all...

Sin can be cured, but it takes Christ's Blood to cure it.

- . - Thank God He provided the cure for an incurable disease.

IMAGINE HAVING AN INCURABLE DISEASE AND SOMEONE FOUND A CURE FOR IT.

- . - You'd want to meet that person and thank them.

That's what Jesus did for you. He cleansed you and took away the sins that defiled and corrupted your life.

William Cowper wrote, There is a Fountain ---
*"Dear dying lamb, thy precious blood, shall never lose it's power,
 till all the ransomed church of God, be saved to sin no more."*

We're cured and cleansed through what Christ has done for us.

B. It Was Defiling

The person with leprosy wore a covering over his mouth and cried, "*Unclean, Unclean.*"

- . - He was shut outside the camp and couldn't fellowship with others.
- . - There was the time we were shut out of the Family of God.

Now if you're saved, you're a citizen of Heaven.

We have a right to enter in prayer -- one day we'll have a right to enter the gates of Heaven.

The Bible says, "*Nothing can enter Heaven that defiles.*" "No problem!"

- . - Jesus took care of it when He saved us.

10 men did what Jesus said -- on their way to the priest's house, they were healed.

3. I'M THANKFUL CHRIST WANTS MY FELLOWSHIP

Why'd Jesus mention that 9 didn't come back?

Jesus wanted them to come back and fellowship with Him and give thanks.

- . - One of best ways to fellowship with Christ is to give Him thanks for what He's done for you
- . - Are you amazed Christ would want to fellowship with you?
- . - If not you should be.

He wants you to spend time with Him.

Who'd think a king would want a beggar to spend time?

- . - Most kings would have a beggar removed from his sight.
- . - He wouldn't bother with such a low life. -- Hebrews 4:16

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God wants you to come to Him with your needs.

- . - Not just with needs but to tell Him how much we love Him.

You want to hear from those who love you, even when you know they love you.

- . - Spend time telling God how much He means to you -- make sure to back it up with your daily living!!!!

4. I'M THANKFUL FOR THE CHANGE HE'S MADE

The lepers looked different -- no longer repulsive

- . - They smelled different -- No more festering sores.
- . - They walked different -- Because they were healthy.
- . - They talked different--No longer having to cry, "*Unclean.*"

"What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, since Jesus came into my heart!"

We're not all we want to be -- thank God we're not what we used to be.

Jesus totally transforms a life.

I'M THANKFUL FOR GOD'S LOVE, HIS CLEANSING POWER, HIS DESIRE FOR FELLOWSHIP, AND THE CHANGE THAT'S BEEN MADE

5. I'M THANKFUL FOR SAVED FRIENDS.

Before those men met Jesus, they didn't enjoy one another's company.

. - They were so miserable; they didn't know how to communicate.

Thank God for saints who encourage us, help us mature, point us toward God and remind us of a better country.

Whatever you do, don't fail to thank God for spiritual blessings and for everything.

My Thanksgiving Top Ten List

Theme: We have much for which to be thankful!

Object: Thanksgiving wordsearch puzzle.

Scripture: Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. Psalm 100:4 (NIV)

Do you enjoy working puzzles? I do, I especially enjoy word puzzles and I have a word search puzzle this morning. At the end of the children's sermon this morning, I will give each of you one of these puzzles so that you can find all of the words that are hidden in there. The title of the puzzle is "My Thanksgiving List." I looked at all of the things on this list and made another list. It is a list of the top ten things for which I am thankful. Your top ten list might be different from mine, but here is my Thanksgiving Top Ten List.

10. My house – there are many people in this world today who have no place to live. Many of them sleep on park benches and under bridges.

9. Food - we always have plenty to eat at our house. Many people don't. Every day as I drive home from work, I see people standing beside the road holding a sign that says, "Will work for food."

8. Clothes – I never have to worry about whether there will be clothes in my closet for me to put on each day. Many people only have the clothes that they are wearing.

7. Health – I am thankful that I am blessed with good health. Many people have a serious illness which keeps them from enjoying a full and happy life.

6. My country – I am thankful that I live in a country where I enjoy great freedom. In many countries you don't have much freedom. In some countries you can be put in prison, or even put to death, for telling others about Jesus.

5. Teachers – I am thankful for the teachers that I have had in school and in church who have taught me the things I needed to know to live a happy and successful life.

4. Friends – I am thankful for my many friends. In times of trouble, I have always had friends who were there to help me.

3. Family – I am thankful for my family. God has given me a wonderful wife and son and many other family members whom I love very much.

2. Parents – I am thankful that God blessed me with wonderful parents who loved me, cared for me, and taught me about Jesus and his love.

1. Jesus – Jesus is number one on my list of things for which I am thankful. No one ever loved me like Jesus. He loved me so much that he was willing to die on a cross so that I can have everlasting life. Thank you, Jesus.

Well, that is my top ten list. I have been given much. The Bible says that God blesses us and gives us much so that we may show our thanks by sharing it with others. I hope that this Thanksgiving, we will share what God has given us with those who do not have as much as we do.

Dear Lord, thank you for all of your rich blessings. Help us to share what you have given us with those who are less fortunate than we are. Amen.