

Thanksgiving 2023 | 11.26.2023 | Rock of Hope Church

Title: FOUR WAYS TO SHOW GRATITUDE

Text: Matt. 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 17:11-19

## Happy Thanksgiving!

### FOUR WAYS TO SHOW GRATITUDE

Matt. 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45

- (Calvin Miller, *The Family Book of Jesus*, Bethany House, 2002.)
- Describes the text in a way that was told to him by a friend named Bill Griffin:

"Hello, I'm a leper!' A man popped out from behind a building and stood right in front of 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 Me to do?'

"You can make me better. I know You can,' said the man, falling on his knees in front of Jesus. 'If You don't, I'll scratch myself to death.'

"Jesus felt sorry for the poor man.

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

"I'm not afraid to touch you.' Jesus reached down and took hold of the man's arms 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, thank You!' shouted the man. 'What can I do to thank You?'

"You can go to the temple, show yourself to a priest and say a prayer of thanks to God.'

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

"One more thing,' said Jesus.

"Anything, anything,' said the man.

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

"I won't tell a soul,' said the man as he skipped toward Jerusalem; but the man was so happy and the walk to the temple was so long that he forgot and told everyone he met. Then all the other lepers along the road began to look for the wonderful Man with the healing touch."

### **I like the way the writer describes this last verse which states**

- *But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.*
- People were coming to him to "all the other lepers along the road began to look for the wonderful Man with the healing touch."

- You would think word may have gotten around in the leper communities.

And the word got out, and the leper community began looking for Jesus. Today's text reveals a moment when other lepers found Jesus seeking His aid.

### **Luke 17:11-19**

*<sup>11</sup> On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance <sup>13</sup> and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." <sup>14</sup> When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed.*

*<sup>15</sup> Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; <sup>16</sup> and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup> Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? <sup>18</sup> Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" <sup>19</sup> And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."*

Leprosy in the Bible is not the leprosy, or Hansen's disease, we know today, with its deformity of limbs and decay of hands and face. Biblical leprosy is described in Leviticus 13 as a progressive disease that causes scabs and crusts on the skin, leaves white patches (similar to vitiligo) on the skin, turns hair white and causes bald spots.

### **Leprosy**

The word "leprosy" comes from the Greek word, *lepra*, which refers to "scabs" or "peeling." The Jewish word is *tzaraat* (or *zara'at*), which can mean "to have a skin disease." However, *tzaraat* also comes from a verb meaning "to smite." In Jewish tradition, a leper was considered smitten by God.

In the Bible, leprosy was a physical ailment, but it also had a spiritual dimension. This is explained in an article by five Jewish authors at the Jewishencyclopedia.com website, including Rabbi Emil Hirsch, professor of rabbinical literature and philosophy at the University of Chicago.

"There is much reason to believe that the segregation of lepers was regarded," they explained, "... more in the light of a religious ceremonial than as a hygienic restriction. *Tzara'at* was looked upon as a disease inflicted by God upon those who transgressed his laws, a divine visitation for evil thoughts and evil deeds. Every leper mentioned in the Old Testament was afflicted because of some transgression.

– Patricia Kasten | The Compass | October 7, 2016

- The Moment
  - On the way to Jerusalem in a village He is approached by ten lepers
  - From a distance they call for mercy
  - He saw and he spoke
  - Unclean must be declared clean – to the priests
  - They became clean
- The Memory
  - What does Jesus focus on and therefore generations who have heard this story are focused on
  - The memory here is about the thanks that was shown by the ONE leper

### **90% did not come back to say thank you**

C.S. Lewis said that ancient man approached God out of a strong feeling that he was approaching a judge. "For modern man, the roles are reversed," says Lewis. Modern man is the judge and God is in the dock (cited in *A Hunger for Meaning*, InterVarsity Press, 1984, p. 114).

Maybe this is why we feel we have no obligation to thank Him. I suspect this is what lies behind the reason we are developing a culture without a sense of thankfulness. For me, our thanklessness smacks of a lazy atheism. Remember, one old definition of atheist is "someone who sometimes feels gratitude, but has absolutely no one to thank for it!"

### **What is Gratitude? The attitude and act of being grateful**

- Grateful, ingratiate
- Greatest desire is to be loved and appreciated
- Extending favor towards or giving grace and kindness as a response

### **What are the Benefits of Gratitude?**

- It will bring better health
- It will impact all around you
- It will change your life

Easy to live in the victim and blaming mindset

- Doom and gloom in the world
- If you desire a better world, put it there!

"Be grateful for what you have and stop complaining - it bores everybody else, does you no good, and doesn't solve any problems." – Zig Ziglar

## How do we show gratitude consistently?

### ATTENTION

#### Luke 17:12-14

<sup>12</sup> And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance <sup>13</sup> and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." <sup>14</sup> When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."

- The lepers came and gave attention to Jesus
- The lepers got the attention of Jesus
- Jesus gave His attention to the lepers

**What is it?** -Showing up and being in the moment with them

- Putting outside things aside
- Giving them your full attention
- Jesus wants to abide with you – His presence with you
- People want more presence – be present
  - More than presents

### Ways to show it

#### Be Present

- Put aside anything that would hinder the focus
  - Phone, work, shows, duties

Isaiah 26:3 - *You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.*

- Making a point to be there in special moments
  - parties, games, grieving moments
  - empathy – undivided attention is an emotional hug

#### Be Timely

- Respond quickly
  - In the day you hear it.... Respond

#### Be Inquisitive

- Discovery Questions

- Study the Word to know more of God.
- Ask others questions to discover their passions.
  - Discover the beauty of differences and what ignites their lives.
- Choose a word that you want to bring to the room.
- What adjective can you use to describe the room.

“Keep your eyes open to your mercies. The man who forgets to be thankful has fallen asleep in life.” – Robert Louis Stevenson

## APPRECIATION

### Luke 17:15-16

*<sup>15</sup> Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; <sup>16</sup> and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.*

- One healed man turned back.
- He praised God.
- He humbled himself before Jesus.
- He gave thanks for what was done.

### What is it?

Recognition and enjoyment of the **value** of something or someone

- Strengthens relationships.
  - Builds others up and ignites their days toward blessings.
- Someone is blessed by hearing the gift of appreciation that you give.
- All desires to be heard and understood.

### Ways to show it

#### Be Specific in Word

- Say something.
  - “I appreciate this, and here is why.”
- Saying thank you with clarity
  - Triplets
- A specific compliment of appreciation for what they bring to the table.
  - Tailoring it to the individual.
- Intentionally focus on the small things to be thankful for.

- A call, a text, a note, a card

## Be Specific in Deed

- An act of kindness builds gratitude
  - Holding a door, buying the coffee for the person in front of you
  - Baked goods
  - Selflessly for another person

## APPROVAL

### Luke 17:16

*...and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.*

- A Samaritan bowing before a Jew
- Fell on his face
  - Complete acknowledgment of who Jesus was and what he had done.

**What is it?** – Recognizing and Affirming someone's decisions and actions

- God – affirming and agreeing with Who He is and does
  - God's qualities
    - God's choices
    - God's actions
  - Others

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”

– William Arthur Ward

## Ways to show it

### Verbal Approval

- I love the way you did that
- God – You did good

### Psalm 7:17

*I will give to the Lord the thanks due to his righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High.*

## Supportive actions

- Affirming someone publicly
  - Private and public
  - Defending or advocating another
- Endorsement
  - Telling others of God's goodness
  - Public approval
- Walking alongside someone
  - Mentoring, training
  - Helping someone get ahead
- Celebrating wins
  - Giving Praise when the answer comes
  - Get up and "do a little jig"

## ADMIRATION

### Luke 17:13

*...and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."*

One can look back at the previous leper who had met Jesus

### Mark 1:45

*But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news...*

**What is it?** - Celebrating someone else's qualities and allowing them to inspire us

### Examples

- Jesus
- Biblical characters
- Heroes of faith or heroes of history
- People in your daily life

### Ways to show it

#### Tell Them

- Learn to accept admiration will help teach you to give it
  - Humbly yet graciously receiving praise

- Learn the joy of admiration
- Verbal
  - Tell them what you admire
    - Individually and collectively
- Written praise, letter or journal
  - A post, a note, an email,

### **Learn from them**

- Listening to the person
  - Gain understanding and engaging with them
  - Asking questions to discover more
- Mimic their behaviors
  - Do what they do
  - Follow Christ's model
  - Memorials – take the baton that is passed on to you
    - Who will fill that space

Let others know who you admire.

### **Psalm 35:18**

*I will thank you in the great congregation; in the mighty throng I will praise you.*

“I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.” – Gilbert K. Chesterton

Let us not be like the other nine

- Also healed individuals

### **Luke 17:18**

*<sup>17</sup>...“Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? <sup>18</sup> Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?”*

Calvin Miller writes of the 90%

Ninety percent of all the lepers in Luke 17 are ingrates—bad lepers pretending they never met Jesus. What a shame! They were so completely healed that there was not a smidgen of their former state of decay left to them. They were so healed, they headed back to the social centers of their communities. These pretenders were free to run for office—any office they might imagine. They were free to return to their former bridge clubs, Kiwanis clubs, golf clubs. Their once former scourge-word-confession, "Unclean!" had been replaced by, "Give me five!"



The untouchables were now the embraceables. The infected had become the respected. The isolated tomb-dwellers had become the officers at Toastmasters.

There are two sides in the issue of all self-righteous abundance. These two categories are the thankful and the thankless. The thankless tend to act as though they and their circumstances are entirely self-made. The thankful see the providence of God in all they hold. The thankful believe that it is not how much we have or have not in life, but what we see as the source of what we have or don't have that is the real issue.

### **Who am I going to show this to today?**

- The Lord
- A loved one
- A co-worker, colleague
- A mentor, teacher, leader
- A stranger

Let us be people of Praise and Gratitude

### **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, I'm deciding right now to give you thanks with all my heart. You have blessed me today with air in my lungs and surrounded me with your presence. Lord, I want to declare today the wonderful things you have done! Help me to see your hand of blessing upon my life. Remind me daily of Your goodness. Remind me to bless others by giving thanks and showing gratitude to them as well. In Jesus' Name, Amen.