

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - October 14, 2021

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Title: "When Your Life is Missing Something"

Subtitle: "Lepers Anonymous"

Scripture Reference: Luke 17:11-19

"And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, **Go show yourselves unto the priests.** And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God. And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, **Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.** And he said unto him, **Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."**

I. Introduction

A. I want to begin this study session by sharing with you a story about a Lady whose name is Sarah, and her slightly older neighbor whose name is Ms. Gloria. Here is how the story goes.

Sarah decided she wanted to do something nice for her neighbor Ms. Gloria. So, Sarah baked a pie and carried it next door to her neighbor.

When Ms. Gloria opened her door, she was surprised to see Sarah holding a pie. So, Ms. Gloria said, "For me? Oh, thank you so much! You just don't know how much I appreciate it! You are so thoughtful for doing this. Thank you!

Because Ms. Gloria liked the pie so much, Sarah decided the next

week to bake her another one. When Sarah took it over to her, Ms. Gloria opened the door and said, Thank you so much. You are so kind!

Sarah took another pie over the following week and Ms. Gloria simply replied, Thanks. Sarah took another pie over the next week, and Ms. Gloria responded, "You're a day late with this one."

The following week, Sarah baked Gloria another pie. This time Ms. Gloria said, "Try using a little more sugar, and don't bake it so long. The crust has been a little bit hard lately, and I'd like cherry instead of apple filling next time."

The next week Sarah was so busy, she was unable to cook for her neighbor. When she passed by her neighbor's house on the way to the store, Ms. Gloria was looking through the window and noticed that Sarah wasn't carrying a pie. So, Ms. Gloria stuck her head out of the door and yelled, "Where's my pie?"

B. After reading this story, perhaps many of you are saying, "If I were Sarah, I would never have been so patient with that neighbor. I would have cut her off a long time ago." Ok, I hear you, but continue to read on and I'll get to the main points of this lesson.

C. Do you consider yourself to be an ungrateful person? Most people don't. Ms. Gloria probably didn't see herself as being ungrateful.

D. The nine lepers in our Scripture reference verses who were healed by Jesus, didn't consider themselves to be ungrateful. We are usually blind to our own ingratitude. It's not that we don't want to be grateful. We just sometimes "forget" to be.

Does that (i.e., being forgetful) describe you?

II. Introduction (Continued)

A. It's easy to get upset with the lepers when we read it in the Bible. After all, it is pretty obvious that they were not thankful. It's just not as obvious when we forget to thank God.

B. The difference between being grateful and ungrateful is a lot more than two letters (i.e., Ungrateful). It is the difference between pleasing God and grieving Him.

C. It is also the difference between rejoicing or complaining, being content or restless, appreciating blessings or taking them for granted.

D. If you were one of those ten lepers on the road that day, would you have returned to thank Jesus? Or would you be like the nine who "forgot" to return to give thanks? Read on and you decide.

III. Discussion - **Fact # 1** - **Obedience goes the first mile, but gratefulness goes the second mile.**

A. Because lepers were unclean according to the Law (Leviticus 13:3), they had to be removed from society lest they defile others.

B. The Jewish Talmud instructed lepers to stay one hundred paces or about three hundred feet away from other people.

Comment: My mind goes immediately to the current Covid-19 Corona Virus and the medical/health safety recommendation to maintain six feet of distance between ourselves and others when we are out in the public square.

C. As outcasts of society, a leper's fellowship was limited to those with the same disease. So, consider this - Although the Jews normally hated Samaritans, an exception was made in the case of these lepers. The group of ten lepers included a Samaritan (Luke 17:16).

D. The leprosy which made them outcasts among their own people caused them to accept this foreigner whom they would normally reject.

E. The narrative in Luke Chapter 17 states that one day, Jesus, "As he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of

Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off." (Lk. 17:11-12)

F. When the ten lepers saw Jesus, they knew this was their opportunity. They stood at the prescribed distance (i.e., one hundred paces) and cried out with loud voices, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

G. Let's pause right here and acknowledge that they certainly called upon the right person (i.e., Jesus) who possesses abundant mercy.

H. "When Jesus saw them, he said unto them, **Go show yourselves unto the priests.**" The reason Jesus told them to do this was in accordance with the Law, because the priests were the only ones who could declare that a leper had been cleansed. After which, a leper could be permitted to enter into society again.

I. As they began their journey toward Jerusalem to see the priests, the lepers started a walk of obedience in accordance with the command Jesus gave them.

J. When they began walking, God healed them. But nine of them forgot one very important thing; They failed to return and thank Jesus for their healing. Where was their thankfulness and gratefulness?

K. Have there been times before a meal when you thanked God out of ritual, but not because you were truly grateful? When you needed God to answer a prayer, did you really thank God? Or did spiritual amnesia of your heart set in?

L. Many Christians put great emphasis upon believing and obeying God (both of which are especially important), but they put very little emphasis upon gratefulness.

Points:

- 1) It is possible for us to hear God's Word, believe it, even obey it -

and still miss doing God's will.

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

- 2) Don't forget to give God thanks for what he does in your life and do it with a heart of gratefulness. Then, His will becomes complete in your life.

M. Obedience and gratefulness are **not** the same. Gratefulness always goes beyond obedience. Obedience goes the first mile, but gratefulness goes the second mile.

Point: It's not enough for us just to be obedient (although extremely important). God also commands us to be thankful.

IV. Discussion - **Fact # 2** - People who have been blessed are divided into two categories.

A. Whenever we receive a blessing from God (we all receive many blessings each day ((i.e., the air we breathe, the food we eat, etc...)) we are separated into one of two categories: **Grateful** or **Ungrateful**.

B. When Jesus healed the ten lepers, the two groups were immediately formed. **The Grateful Group** - which had a membership of only one leper, and the **Ungrateful Group**, which had nine members, better known as **Lepers Anonymous**.

C. Group Two have gone into obscurity, never to be heard from again. Every person on earth is a member of one of those two groups.

D. Compare your attitude to the descriptions that follow to see whether you are grateful or ungrateful.

- **Ungrateful** people always see the bad in every good situation.

- Grateful people always see the good in every bad situation.

E. Ungrateful people immediately find the negative in any given situation. In a stack of a hundred things, the ungrateful person is able to detect the one bad thing in a matter of seconds.

F. One family sat down to a meal, and the father asked his son to offer a prayer of thanksgiving. The son said, "It won't do any good." The father asked, "Why not?" The son replied, "Because we're having broccoli!"

G. Some people can only see broccoli and never enjoy the rest of the meal. On the other hand, thankful people tend to see the good in any given situation. They are able to see the vitamins in the broccoli, even if they don't care for the taste.

- Ungrateful people complain about how bad they have it.
- Grateful people realize how good they have it.
- Ungrateful people think they deserve more than they get.
- Grateful people realize they don't deserve what they get.

Points:

- 1) When a grateful person receives something, they know it is by God's grace that they have it.
- 2) God is kind to ungrateful people (Luke 6:35), but he enjoys blessing His grateful children.

V. Discussion - **Fact # 3** - Grateful people take extra steps that ungrateful people don't take.

A. The grateful leper was on his way to show himself to the priests, but when he saw that he had been healed, he "turned back." He had already walked some distance and decided to turn around.

B. His attitude of gratitude separated him from the fellowship of the ungrateful. He took steps to return to thank Jesus and as a result, he would have to now walk further than those lepers who kept walking toward the priests.

C. Thankfulness always requires that we take extra steps. It will also require extra time out of our schedule. Because the leper turned back to thank Jesus, his journey to Jerusalem would take him longer. But consider this; his positive actions are recorded in Scripture and provides a powerful lesson for us.

VI. Discussion - Fact # 4 - Grateful people never have to be reminded to give thanks.

A. God never forces anyone to be grateful. True thankfulness always arises from within our soul and can never be extracted by external forces.

B. Jesus didn't heal the lepers and then remind them to thank Him. No, this Samaritan leper looked at his new flesh and he felt compelled, convicted, and thankful so he turned back; "And with a loud voice glorified God. And fell down on his face at his ((Jesus')) feet, giving him thanks, ..."

C. When was the last time you got down on your face in prayer and truly thanked Jesus for all He has done for you?

D. We can be so quick to ask God to answer our prayers, but then we forget to thank Him when He does answer.

VII. Discussion - Fact # 5 - Jesus also expects the ungrateful people to thank Him.

A. When the one thankful leper returned, Jesus asked - "**Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?**" Jesus wasn't just expecting the grateful leper to return. He was also expecting the other nine as well.

Point: Even though Jesus never forces us to thank Him, He still desires us to do so.

B. Whenever we do something for someone, we generally expect

to at least be thanked in some way. If we are honest with ourselves, when we don't receive thanks, it bothers us. How do you think God feels when He blesses us, and we neglect to thank Him?

VIII. The Leprosy of Ingratitude

A. Although we may not have the physical condition of leprosy, we may need to be cured of the leprosy of ingratitude. This disease can only be cured by giving thanks to God for what He has done, and all that He is currently doing in our lives.

B. What do you have to be thankful for? I won't provide a long list but let's start with thanking God for His Son Jesus Christ paying our sin debt and the gift of Salvation. Let's add just a couple of more items to this brief list and then you fill in the rest. How about thanking God for food, clothing, shelter, etc....

C. Some people have been blessed more abundantly than others. And yet, many people remain empty inside; something is still missing.

D. Let me tell you what's lacking. The biggest thing missing in a person's life is a thankful heart.

Are You Grateful for all that the Lord is doing in your life?

It is once again interactive time. Please fill in the blank spaces to complete the biblical passages listed below. As always, each passage has been taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

"I will wash mine hand in _____: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord. That I may publish with the voice of _____, and tell of all thy _____ works."

[Psalm 26:7]

"And there was one Anna, a _____, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of _____: she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband _____ years for her virginity; And she was a _____ of about fourscore and _____ years, which departed not from the temple, but _____ God with fastings and _____ night and _____. And she coming in that instant gave _____ likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for _____ in Jerusalem."

[Luke 2:36-38]

"Be _____ for _____; but in every thing by _____ and _____ with _____ let your requests be made _____ unto God."

[Philippians 4:6]

Then I _____ up the princes of _____ upon the wall, and _____ two great companies of them that gave _____, whereof one went on the _____ hand upon the wall toward the _____ gate:"

[Nehemiah 12:31]

"Giving _____ always for all _____ unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord _____."

[Ephesians 5:20]

"Let us come before his _____ with _____,

and make a _____ noise unto him with _____."

[Psalm 95:2]

Replacing the Missing Ingredient

- Make a list of every blessing God has given you (Ok, I know it will be a long list). Pray through the list every day, thanking God for all of the blessings.
- Whenever someone gives you something, find a unique way to thank that person.
- Make a concentrated effort to see the positive, even in negative situations.

Thank you for joining in this study session and my prayer is that you have been blessed. Feel free to share with others what you have learned.

Jude 3

Pastor Austin