

Thankful or Thankless

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon highlights the importance of gratitude towards God, illustrated through the story of the ten lepers and the Samaritan's return to thank Jesus.

Duration: 1:02:43

Scripture: Luke 17:11

Topics: "Thankfulness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Jesus healing ten lepers in Luke chapter 17. The ten lepers cry out to Jesus for pity and he instructs them to go show themselves to the priests. As they obeyed and went, they were cleansed of their leprosy. However, only one of them, a Samaritan, returns to Jesus to thank him and praise God. The preacher emphasizes the importance of gratitude and obedience to Jesus, warning that those who do not thank God and follow his voice are on the path to destruction. The sermon concludes with a prayer for understanding and a plea to let go of human logic and intelligence in order to follow Jesus.

Transcript

Shall we pray? We ask you, dear Lord, that through your Holy Spirit, you would touch our ears and our eyes, that we might see marvelous things from your word. Be amongst us. Even though it might be cold outside, but that our hearts would be warmed.

We ask you, Lord, to be merciful and gracious to us. Be here with us, Lord. May this service not be in vain.

Amen. Our word for this morning we find in Luke chapter 17. From verse 11.

Now, on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance.

And called out in a loud voice, Jesus, Master, have pity on us. And when he saw them, he said, go, show yourselves to the priests. And as they went, they were cleansed.

One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. He was a Samaritan.

Jesus asked, were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except for this foreigner? Then he said to him, rise and go. Your faith has made you well. This journey of our Lord was an amazing journey.

He was on his way to Jerusalem. And he traveled between Samaria and Galilee. That was wrong.

Now, if you are on your way, were on your way to Jerusalem, now understand that in the north was Galilee. In Jerusalem, Jerusalem lay to the south. And between Galilee and Jerusalem was Samaria.

Now, if you wanted to go to Jerusalem, you would travel from Galilee straight through Samaria towards Jerusalem. Now, as Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem, he went between Galilee and Samaria. In fact, one would have thought that he would travel between Samaria and he would go straight to Jerusalem.

But, if you read this, it says that he went through Samaria and then Galilee. If you read this, it was as if the Lord Jesus went from Galilee through Samaria and then, when he was in Samaria, he turned around and he went back to Galilee, past the place where he was. And I say, well, that is wrong.

That is wrong. That he turned around and then went back in the opposite direction to the north. Whereas, in the meantime, he was on his way to the south, to Jerusalem.

There is no logic in this. Now, if you consider this logically, he made a great mistake. He was on his way to Jerusalem, but now he went in the opposite direction.

The way of our Lord and his ways are past and beyond finding out. God's ways aren't our ways. They aren't your ways.

They aren't my ways. It doesn't go where you want to go. There was another message which I thought I would preach about today concerning Enoch who didn't die, but was taken up into heaven.

Now, Enoch was of the offspring of Methuselah who became 969 years old. But it was said of Enoch that he walked with the Lord. Now, that was before the time of the flood.

And their offspring, and of those people at that time, they started going around choosing of the daughters of men, just taking the girls that were left that they wanted for themselves and when God saw that he said I'm going to destroy this world. Those they liked. Those girls they liked.

They took them. Now Jesus was on his way there to Jerusalem and when he was in the middle of Samaria. He turned around and he went back until he came to Galilee in the north.

Now that made a very long trip because that meant that he would have had to come back all the way again from there where he was right down to Jerusalem and he would have had to cross the Jordan River again. Creating for himself a long difficult journey not taking a difficult way. A way that goes against our understanding.

It goes against our feeling and our grain because we know that if you want to get to Jerusalem this is the shortest way. I don't I don't know whether he informed his disciples as to where he was going, what his destination was. If he had I don't doubt that they would have asked him and said but Lord didn't you say we're going to Jerusalem? Why are you now going back? What did you say of a driver of a car who's on his way to Jerusalem? Johannesburg.

When he gets to Harry Smith he turns around and he goes back to Durban but he's actually on his way to Johannesburg. Wouldn't we ask him where are you headed for? You're now going in the wrong direction. Now I've got a question.

Why was it that Jesus having gone through or being busy going through Samaria turned around to now go through Galilee? He knew the right way after all and now he was busy taking the wrong way. For what reason? There was something that Jesus felt. It might be two things.

He might have heard God's voice saying to him turn around now and go back all that distance. That would take him further away from Jerusalem. Jesus didn't use his own logic.

He obeyed as he also says that my sheep hear my voice and obey me. I remember at the beginning of the revival. Just about every day I would say Lord my brain and my understanding brings me into loggerheads with you.

That was at the time when the Russian cosmonauts sent a Sputnik up into space. They wanted to get to the moon and I said oh Lord won't you take my thinking and my common sense and send it up there to the moon. This logic.

Send it to the moon. Let it go to the moon. In German there's a saying if you say that then you really want to part from that thing.

Probably I would respond in that way as well. On my way to Jerusalem if the Lord would tell me to go back I would say but Lord isn't that the wrong direction because Jerusalem is in that direction. I'm going in the opposite direction.

But Jesus said go back and we're going there to Galilee. Right back. The Lord Jesus obeyed God's voice.

He understood God's will that it was God's will for him to turn around and to go back in the direction from which he came. I said Jesus walked the wrong way. Well that's humanly speaking but according to God's will that was the right way.

The Lord Jesus wanting to obey God striving to obey the Holy Spirit turned around. He wasn't stubborn at all. He didn't hesitate but immediately obeyed and went back.

God's will meant everything to him. Now I said there might be two possible reasons why the Lord Jesus turned around. The second possible reason might be that some say Jesus was told there are people up there in the north that are troubled.

People up there with a great tremendous need. And Jesus because of his love for them and the pity that he felt for them turned around to go and help them. He might have gone on to Jerusalem with some of those in great need back there dying because of their need.

Jesus was zealous to do God's will to help those in suffering and need because of the great love that he had. The Bible says that love is stronger and more powerful than death. Death is powerful but God's love surpasses even that.

God's love is so deep and reaches so low that it reaches to the lowest hell. It is so high that it reaches the heavens. It is greater than this world.

Jesus was full of this love. We also ought to love our Lord and say dear Lord and Master because his love reached even us. This great love of his that reaches to the lowest hell and the highest heaven and it is greater than the world.

Jesus likewise ought to grow in our hearts and lives and our love for him ought to grow daily. So Jesus walked until he then got to Galilee. When he got there to a certain village he met there with 10 men who had leprosy.

Leprosy was one of the worst diseases that one could have had at that time. It is a fearsome disease. No one could heal that disease and unless that person was shown mercy by God it was an incurable disease.

You would have boils and sores on your skin all over your body. And the pus and the infection would flow out of these festering sores and blood as well. It was probably a disease worse than any other.

And they had to endure great pain. There were no pain tablets or medicine to reduce the pain. And another aspect of this disease it was terribly contagious.

It was terribly contagious where it would be passed on easily to someone else. If you would wear use the same sheet that somebody else used then you would also be infected. And so it says here they stood at a distance.

And from there they called out in a loud voice Jesus, master have pity on us. They were not allowed to get close to anybody else. If a person was found to have leprosy that person became an outcast.

They had to be in quarantine far away there in the desert from anybody else. They were taken away from family, relatives, all their loved ones. And they had to stay out there on the mountains because of the contagiousness of this disease.

And that's why they stood afar off. They were on the mountains. And if you have a disease, and you don't want to contact anyone, You'll be used as a wondrous person.

They were not allowed to get close to anyone else. And another aspect is that you can't touch a person of any other race. Or any creed of any other people.

You are Second. And even when they would be brought food, they were not allowed to have any contact with that person who brought them food. That person would bring it to an agreed place where that person would put down that dish with food in and then leave.

And only once that person is gone would they come and take the food. They would die out there on the mountains. So there from the distance they cried out in a loud voice saying, Jesus, Master, have pity on us.

And as they called out to Jesus, the heart of Jesus broke. Jesus felt pity for them, and Jesus has pity on anyone that he sees in suffering a need. Remember when Jesus saw that large crowd where he felt pity for them and it even moved his bowels that when he saw those people in need.

And so when he saw the need of these people, he saw their disease, he felt pity for them. For Jesus is our great healer and physician. So the reason why he walked the way that he did and that he turned around was because God was leading him to those people that were in need.

As they cried out saying, Jesus, have pity on us. He saw their faith. The reason that they called out in this way to him was because they had heard of Jesus.

If they hadn't heard of Jesus, they wouldn't have called out like this to him saying, Jesus, Master, the Bible says that faith comes through hearing and hearing comes through the word of God, the preaching of God's word. So when they heard that Jesus of Nazareth was coming, coming past and coming by, they cried out saying, Jesus, Master, and I say, they had faith. If they didn't have faith in the Lord Jesus, if they didn't trust that he could save them, they wouldn't have cried out in that way to him.

But they believe that Jesus had the power to heal them from their disease. Saying, Jesus, Master, have pity on us. By that, they were confessing that they were totally unworthy of being helped, but they called out to God and to the Lord Jesus for his mercy and his grace, but they realized out of themselves, they didn't deserve it.

They had no rights. They could only call upon his mercy, saying, Master, have pity on us. And indeed, Jesus did have pity on them.

He said, go show yourselves to the priests. Because that was the way, according to the scriptures, that they had to do it. If anybody saw that he was free from that disease, they had to go to the priest, where the priest could examine them and see that indeed he was free of that disease.

So as he said to them, go to the priest and go and show yourself to them. And indeed, Jesus did have pity on them. He said, go show yourselves to the priests.

Because that was the way, according to the scriptures, that they had to do it. If anybody saw that he was free from that disease, they had to go to the priest, So as he said to them, go to the priest and go and show yourself to them. And indeed, Jesus did have pity on them.

Because that was the way, according to the scriptures, that they had to do it. So as he said to them, go show yourselves to the priests. He said, go show yourselves to the priests.

Because that was the way, according to the scriptures, that they had to do it. And indeed, Jesus did have pity on them. And indeed, Jesus did have pity on them.

So as they were on their way, going along to the priest, along the way, all of a sudden, they discovered that they were healed. They were cleansed. Because of their obedience to the Lord Jesus.

Because of honouring his word and doing as he commanded them. If they hadn't obeyed him, they would not have been healed. If they hadn't obeyed Jesus, if they hadn't started walking, going to the priest to go and show themselves to the priest, they would not have been healed.

But they believed on the Lord Jesus. They obeyed his word because he said, go to the priest to go and show yourself to them. So as they went along, on the way they discovered all of a sudden that the leprosy had disappeared.

Now amongst these ten, most of them Jews, there was one who was a Samaritan. Now amongst all the nations and different races, there was probably no nation or race as despised as the Samaritans amongst the Jews. They were looked down upon.

They were absolutely nothing. Some say that the Jews despised the Samaritans to the extent that they saw them as dogs. Just taking them as being like dogs.

Now one of those ten was a Samaritan. Now as they were going on their way, these ten, this one turned around, this Samaritan, where was he going? Going back to Jesus to go and say thank you. Now amongst these ten, there was one who was a priest.

Now amongst all the nations and different races, there was one who was a Samaritan. Now some commentators say that he first went to show himself to the priest and only after that did he go back. Some say he turned around immediately and went back.

Well it doesn't matter, whichever way it was, the fact is he went back to the Lord Jesus to go and say thank you. Now if you've been removed from your family and relatives for a long period of time, you've got love towards them. You long to see them.

But this man said, Jesus is greater to me than my father and mother. He's greater to me than my brothers and sisters, than my own home and family. I need to go back to him first and need to go and say thank you to him.

And as he came and he saw the Lord Jesus, he came and he threw himself at Jesus' feet, thanking him from all his heart. Not only from his heart, but he thanked and he praised him. He humbled himself.

He denied himself. Throwing himself at Jesus' feet, thanking him and praising God. When Jesus saw and heard that, he was grieved in his heart.

Now you might ask, where do I get that from? I get it here from God's word. For Jesus asked, were you not ten? Where are the other nine? Where are they? Didn't they all get well? Weren't they all cleansed from their leprosy? Was no one found to return to give praise to God's name except for this foreigner? No, these other nine, these Jews, they were so happy that they were healed and cleansed and they went rejoicing to their families, maybe even being proud, maybe going to show, oh, I'm well now, but not one of them was found to turn around to go back to the Lord Jesus to thank him. Jesus asked, was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner? And then he said to them, rise and go, your faith has made you well.

I said that these people had faith in the Lord Jesus. They trusted in him. That's why they could cry out and say, Jesus master, have pity on us.

But Jesus complains, saying, was no one found to return and give praise to God except for this one man, this foreigner? In other words, Jesus' heart broke. He was grieved in his heart. He experienced pain in his heart that none of them was willing to come back and to say thank you, to give praise and honor to God.

Oh, how terrible it is when somebody does something good to you and for you, and you cannot even say thank you. Now Jesus said to him, your faith has made you well. Now, weren't they all diseased? Weren't they all made well? In other words, Jesus blessed him.

Jesus said, you can go now. Your faith has made you well. His faith caused him to go back to the Lord Jesus, to go and say thank you.

And then Jesus said, you can go now. And he blessed him. So these are the nine.

They were made well physically in their bodies. They were cured of their leprosy. But this one man, this Samaritan, wasn't only made well physically, but spiritually he went away being made well and having received salvation.

Jesus worked in his soul and saved his soul. But he went and died. So these are the nine.

They went back to their families and relatives and asked them, what happened to you? No, we are well. Jesus made us well. But it was only a physical healing.

It didn't go further and deeper than that. They weren't made well in their souls and their spirit. If they had felt that prompting, if they had experienced something deeper than just a physical healing, they would have gone back to the Lord Jesus.

But it didn't even come up in their minds that they should go back and say thank you. Their faith was just sufficient for their physical healing, but it went no further than that. These nine, they were healed from a terrible disease, one of the worst.

But not one of them went back to the Lord Jesus to go and say thank you to him. If they hadn't repented from that after that, they had a debt to God and they would be in hell today. So these nine, having been made well, having been healed, they didn't turn around to Jesus to go and say thank you.

They didn't bow and humble themselves. They were full of pride and going on their own way to hell. They were full of pride and going on their own way to hell.

This Samaritan said, I need to go back to the Lord Jesus to go and say thank you to him. To say thank you is not something insignificant. He said, I must go back and thank him for that which he did for me in my life.

And when he got to the Lord Jesus, the Lord Jesus gave him an extra blessing, saying, go, your faith has made you well. He had truly been transformed, not only physically, but inwardly as well, being made well. I said that Jesus experienced an indescribable pain.

When he saw how these men had received such a great thing, such a great thing was done for them, but they were only helped physically, not spiritually. Jesus said to him, rise up and go, your faith has made you well. So he went, being made well, not only from physical leprosy, but from spiritual leprosy as well.

And that which is done in your life, do you thank and praise God? Are you like this man, where you come and you throw yourself at the Lord's feet, where you humble yourself? It's difficult for such a person to become unfaithful, to go halfway and then turn around, because he says, how can I ever forget that which God has done for me? So he went, being made well, not only physically, but inwardly as well, being made well, not only physically, but inwardly as well, being made well, not only physically, but inwardly as well. So Jesus turned around and went, continuing on his way to Jerusalem, rejoicing because of those that have been helped, but feeling pain, an indescribable pain for those who didn't turn around to say thank you, but nevertheless rejoicing concerning that one, a dog in men's eyes, but who was saved. The Bible says, thank God continually, without ceasing, not that you criticize, but that you thank God.

For all things, and thank Him for all things, for that is the will of God. That's what the Bible says. In Romans it says that because people didn't thank God and give Him honor, God gave them over to all sorts of lusts and perversions, even to homosexuality.

And I say that these men, through their not going back to the Lord Jesus and thanking Him, they went on their way to hell. They were going Satan's way, not thanking the Lord Jesus. In Romans it says that because people didn't thank God and give Him honor, God gave them over to all sorts of lusts and perversions, even to homosexuality.

They continued on their way to destruction, but may we rather obey the Lord Jesus, listen to His voice and follow His voice, even if it goes against our grain and our understanding and our intelligence. Your intelligence will only serve to lead you to hell, but listen to Him, obey His voice, and then you will be saved. And that you would then thank Him for what He has done for you.

I would be so grateful if you would understand this, if you would find a place in your heart, this which God says to us from His word. Shall we bow our heads and pray? Lord, great are the mysteries found on the way of following Jesus. Lord, great are the mysteries found on the way of following Jesus.

You walk according to your own thinking and knowledge, but you walk the way that was according to God's will. Lord, may we always be found in your way, that way which is not according to the ways of men.

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