

Thanksgiving Reflections: Three Reasons to Be Thankful

As I reflect back on the past year, there is so much for which I am very thankful. I've been blessed with opportunities around the world to share the love and hope of Jesus Christ over the past several months, from Canada to Kenya, the Jersey Shore to the Philippines. I've seen miracles take place this year as I've watched people place their eternal faith in the hands of Christ.

Yet, as I ponder the amazing love of the Lord, it strikes me that so often we view our salvation as commonplace. We have received this unbelievable gift, and rather than bursting with thankfulness and jumping with joy we tuck it into the back of the dresser like a pair of socks.

Let's take a moment to focus on the topic of thankfulness. Luke—the physician—recorded this event in the life of Jesus, showing why we ought to be thankful.

Found in Luke 17:11–19, this is the story of Jesus healing 10 lepers. Once they were healed, the 10 men ran off excited. But only one came back to praise God for what had happened. Just as these men were physically healed of their leprosy, we receive salvation (or spiritual healing) from Jesus that warrants our gratitude.

First, we can be thankful that Jesus came to us (vv. 11–13). The text says that Jesus went through Samaria and Galilee, both of which were made up of people stigmatized by society. Samaritans were considered unclean people. Galileans were misfits and rogues, and yet Jesus made the effort to go to them. They did not have to go to Jesus. Similarly, God came down from heaven some 2,000 years ago in order to redeem mankind.

Second, we need to also be thankful because Jesus hears our cries (v. 14). The text says the men yelled out to Jesus because they were lepers, and the law required them to stay at a distance in order to prevent infecting others. But Jesus stopped and answered their cry for help. This is significant. These men realized their own situation—that they were very sick and they could not help themselves. If they could have, they would have already done so. They realized that only Jesus could help them and so they cried out to Him. Likewise, when we cry out to Christ for our salvation, it is because we understand that we are unable to save ourselves. We are spiritual lepers in need of healing.

Finally, we need to be thankful that Jesus can cleanse us and make us whole (v. 14). Jesus told the men to go show themselves to the priests, and on the way, the men were healed. They exercised faith in Jesus—they believed He could heal them—and showed obedience as they did exactly what Jesus commanded them to do. Only Jesus has the ability to forgive sin and cleanse us spiritually, as He cleansed the lepers physically.

We should be thankful that we serve a God who can heal, cleanse and save—physically and spiritually—and who comes to us and invites us into communion with Him. When we give thanks to God, He is honored and glorified (vv. 15-19). The Bible says that only one man came back to thank Jesus, and when he did, he was honoring God.

We're entering the holiday season and things will begin to get hectic, but I encourage you to be sure that you aren't like the other nine. Please take the time to come back to God and thank Him for what He has done for you. He came down, He heard your cry, and He answered it by healing your soul. My friends, we have every reason to be thankful!

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