



Title: When Christ Moves Graciously

Theme: Expressing Proper Thanksgiving to the Lord Jesus

“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!’ 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--and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, ‘Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?’ Then He said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." (Luke 17:11-19)

When Christ acts graciously on your behalf, He expects you to express a proper attitude of thanksgiving

Jesus Christ never sinned and His life was not characterized by an ill temper. The passages of Scripture I am about to read hold the account of Jesus healing the ten lepers. Leprosy was a disease which the Jews believed to be afflicted upon people for punishment of some particular sin and as far as they were concerned marked the displeasure of God. The Lord knowing the thoughts of those who would hear of His gracious act took this time to cleanse the lepers who cried out to Him from a distance asking for His mercy.

To have leprosy in the time of Christ had a double whammy because those with this disease were disfigured physically and ostracized socially. Regardless of his previous status in life a leper became known as the cursed and marked with the label “outcast.”

Frank Slaughter wrote in his book The Cross and the Crown, “Wherever the leper went he was required to announce his presence with a cry of ‘Unclean! Unclean! This was a signal for all to draw away lest they be contaminated by the dreaded disease. Lepers could not enter the Temple of Jerusalem nor any walled. Since all religious authorities admitted to being utterly without power in themselves to heal the leper, those having this disease could only find help from God.”

Those being destroyed by leprosy lived a life of hopelessness, crying out to Lord, the only one who could intercede for them.

Luke 17:11-19, "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!' 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--and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, 'Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' Then He said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." (Luke 17:11-19)

I would like to propose to you that when Christ acts graciously on your behalf, He expects you to express a proper attitude of thanksgiving.

Symbolically, leprosy represents the sinful nature that is in all of mankind. Spiritually, non-Christians are easily afflicted with the results of the sins of the flesh, the lures of the world and the lies of the devil. Unrepentant sin keeps them from having fellowship with God and causes sinners to miss the abundant life that is promised to those who will surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives. Jesus Christ graciously gave up His life on the Cross so repentant sinners could have fellowship with the Lord.

Just as the lepers had no hope of being healed apart from God's intervention, mankind, who inherited sin from Adam has no hope of defeating sin without having a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ.

Just what truths does the Holy Spirit of Christ want you to grasp this Thanksgiving season in regard to the gracious working of Christ in your life?

The Lord is always steadfast in His Father's business

There are many truths found in God's Word that you must grasp and cling to this Thanksgiving season. The first is that the Lord is always steadfast in His Father's business. In Luke 2:49 we read of Jesus proclaiming a powerful truth that needs to be illuminated on the hearts of the children of God by the Holy Spirit. He spoke this truth when Joseph and Mary found Jesus in the temple after looking for Him three days. Jesus said, "Why were you looking for Me?... Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?" (Luke 2:49 NIV) The King James Bible has a wonderful translation with "...I must be about My Father's business." (Luke 2:49 KJ)

While affirming His Sonship Jesus was saying that He must be about His Father's affairs or in the things of My Father. He must devote Himself to the work of God. In Luke 4:43 Jesus said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God... because this is why I was sent." He also said, "My food... is to do the will of Him [His Father] who sent Him. (John 4:34)

Remarkably we read in Scripture at the age of twelve Jesus knew of His unique relationship with God and that His chief purpose was to complete the work that God His Father had sent Him to do. Jesus also knew that while doing His Father's will He was completely under the watchful eye and care of God. Even though the Lord's work would often be misunderstood He walked in obedience to His purpose for being sent to earth. (A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory; Matthew Henry Commentary; The Bible Exposition Commentary; The Pulpit Commentary; The New American Commentary; Barnes Notes; The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible)

Christ paid the price on the Cross of Calvary, so every born again child of God may know that he is created to bring glory to Christ. As he walks in obedience he can enjoy being under the watchful eye and care of God. Even though at times their work is going to be misunderstood, the children of God must walk as the Holy Spirit leads them in the counsel of the written Word of God. By prayerfully reading and studying the Word of God every Christian can discern the Lord's will for him. By surrendering to the power of the Holy Spirit he can live a life that says, "I am about the Lord's business and I am fully dedicated to the Lord's will in my life."

Christians who are illuminated with this truth say as C.T. Studd, "If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him." The child of God who takes to heart the Great Commission holds to that promise that says "And surely I am with you always..." (Matthew 28:20) This attitude of heart enables Christians to enjoy living a life of thankfulness because they know that they are under the watchful eye and care of God.

The Lord Jesus gives this exhortation for those who want to express a life of thankfulness. John 9:4 says, "As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent Me..." Day here means the time allotted for Jesus and His church to work. It is still day. The bride of Christ is still upon the earth and she is to be about the work of spreading the gospel and showing the mercy and love of God through meeting the needs of the people in Christ's name. At all times the church is to be pointing lost souls to Christ and teaching all who will listen how to live out the Christian life. Just as God had sent Christ, the Lord has commissioned His church to go and make disciples. (Barnes Notes; The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Bible Commentary: The Pulpit Commentary; The Daily Study Bible Series: The Expositors Bible Commentary)

While praying for Himself Jesus said, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you have given Me to do. (John 17:4) In this passage of Scripture Jesus is praying to God for Himself, full of confidence because of obedience to His Father's will. Obedience to God always births forth the peace of God in a Christian's life.

Jesus was getting His work finished and knew God would help Him stay obedient even to death on the Cross. (John 14:4) Jesus had exercised His authority over people humbly and out of showing God's love offering everyone eternal life. He revealed Himself to those who God had given eyes to see who He really was. He had prayed for those who were His and for those who would come to Him in the fullness of time. (John 17:2,6,9,24) In everything He had done Jesus brought glory to God His Father. (John 17:4) "Glory" (*doxazo*) means recognize, live a life of praise to, keep in a place of honor. This involves recognizing God for who He is and celebrating Him in praise, worship and in adoration. (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament; The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament; Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament) Jesus faithfully preached the Word of God. (John 17:5) and He gave believers a Name in which they can enjoy the power of God, the Name of Jesus Christ. (John 17:11-2) (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Just as God fulfilled His plans and continues a work through Christ, Christians can rest assured that the Lord will do a complete work in them, enabling them to complete all He calls them to do. They must walk in obedience to accomplish a work for the Lord, showing the love of Christ to others, offering prayer for everyone, preach and teach God's Word, and live a life that brings glory to God.

Recently, I read the story of a child who was invited to Vacation Bible School by some friends. The young boy decided to start going to the church that hosted the Bible school. That church had a bus ministry which would go out each Sunday to pick up kids or whoever wanted to go to church. Week after week the bus driver would prayerfully prepare the bus and pray for people who wanted to get a ride to church. For 359 Sundays this bus driver sacrificed time and energy to accomplish God's work. No doubt many times he thought of letting that ministry go. I'm sure that there were many times he thought he was not doing any good, and especially for that one boy who started attending church because of his friends' invitation to VBS. This little boy rode the bus back and forth to church for 359 Sundays and all that time he refused to surrender his heart to the Lord. The bus driver no doubt listened to the lies of the devil, saying things like, "This kid is going nowhere spiritually, why waste any more time on him?" In his senior year in High School, on that 400th trip to the same church, driven by a bus driver from that church, Norman Geisler gave his heart and life to the Lord Jesus. (10,000 Sermon Illustrations)

That church and bus driver expressed a life of thanksgiving for the sacrifice that Christ made for them. They stayed faithful to the call and expressed a heart that said, "I must be about my Lord's business."

Thanks living moves God to meet needs

The first step to living a life of thanksgiving to Lord begins with a hunger for a heart and life that says, "I must be about my Father's business." A second step to thanks living is to have a heart that moves God to meet needs. Psalm 105:4 says, "Look to the Lord and His Strength; seek His face always. Amos 5:4 says, "This is what the Lord says... 'Seek Me and live.'" Isaiah 55:6 says, "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near."

There are many truths to grasp in the one leper who came to Christ and expressed thankfulness. Understanding these truths will prepare heart led by the Holy Spirit to express a life of thankfulness to the Lord.

This first step involves a desperate need for God's Holy Spirit to cleanse, birth forth faith and move a person to prayer. The man who expressed proper thanksgiving was in the same situation as the other nine who did not return to give praise to God. The men had leprosy, the most feared disease in Jesus' time. Symbolically, leprosy represented sin. Just as leprosy caused a person to become an outcast, be seen as unclean and marked by society as being among the living dead, unrepentant sin will cause sinner to remain an outcast from heaven. Unrepentant sin causes anguish, heartbreak and many times bring separation from family members.

Theologians tell us that in Jesus' time, God was the only one who could bring healing to a person afflicted by leprosy. God is the only one who can bring true healing from sin and it is only by having the Holy Spirit of Christ living in you that you can enjoy all the benefits of living a Spirit-filled life.

The Bible says that everyone is in the same condition and if left to ourselves without the Living Christ dwelling within us by the person of the Holy Spirit we will succumb to the death of sin. We are desperate for God's intervention and in great need of the Lord to have mercy on us. It cannot be said often enough, "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer that you want to stay and cost you more than you want to pay."

A heart of true humility

The first attitude that opens the door for sinners to become Christians and begin to express a life of thankfulness is a heart desperate for God's forgiveness and deliverance of sin. The next characteristic found in the leper was a heart of true humility. Psalm 34:18 says, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will lift you up." Psalm 51:17 records the words of repentance found in the heart of David, a man who was after God's own heart, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God you will not despise."

These lepers were no doubt brokenhearted just as many today are brokenhearted over their condition in life. Some have brought their circumstances upon themselves by the choices in life they have made. Others are just going through a severe trial of life. Christ is ready and able to intercede in either case. The lepers had a faith that enabled them to cry out to Christ, pleading for mercy. They had heard the stories of the compassion of Christ and the pity He had shown to those in great need.

The righteous in Christ have come to an understanding that the Lord hears the prayers of those who desire to turn from sin and those who have emptied of self. They have come to know the comfort of the Lord in their life as they trust in a God who is almighty, and they put no trust in themselves. The Lord is always ready to raise up those who have a contrite spirit and He gives new life on the ruins of their old life before Christ. God looks out for them, revives their hearts and saves them from total discouragement.

Timothy Smith shared this true story about Bill and Gloria Gaither. "In late the 1960's Gloria was expecting a child. The couple was going through terrible trials. Bill was seriously sick, their music had been attacked as not being spiritual. On New Years Eve, Gloria sat alone in the darkness thinking about the rebellious world and all of their problems – and about their baby yet unborn. Gloria wondered in her mind, 'who would want to bring a child into this world like this?' She was at the height of her fear and discouragement when something happened. The Holy Spirit came, and suddenly she felt a release from it all. The panic that begun to overtake her gently dispelled and a reassuring presence came into her heart. The Lord was speaking to her spiritual heart, 'Don't forget the tomb.' Then Gloria knew she could have her baby and God would see them through. Gloria said, 'The Holy Spirit reminded me that it is all worth it just because He lives.' Gloria wrote, 'How sweet to hold a newborn baby, and feel the pride and joy he gives; but greater still the calm assurance, this child can face uncertain days because He lives. Because He lives I can face tomorrow, because He lives all fear is gone, because I know He holds the future. Life is worth the living just because He lives.'"

In his heart was a cry for mercy

The child of God who allows the Lord to minister to him when his heart is broken will be used of God to remind others that Christ is redeemer and friend all the time. There is another heart attitude in the leper who came back to express thankfulness that must be grasped. In his heart was a cry for mercy. The New American Standard Bible records the lepers saying, "...Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

The word "Master" (epistata) means Chief, the Commander... the one who has authority and power to meet needs. (The Completer Word Study; Thayer's Greek-English; The Bible Exposition Com.)

These lepers knew that Jesus had total authority and command over death and disease and they trusted Him to help them. They were not looking for instructions but trusting in one who had mercy and authority to bring healing, not only physically but from spiritual sin. Jesus is the Master who can heal both disease and the human spirit that is dead apart from having Christ.

Hebrews 4:14-16 has this wonderful promise for the children of God, "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet [He] is without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

This passage of Scripture shows the greatness and absolute deity of Christ who knows the joy of being in the presence of God. He also had the grief of every sin and affliction laid upon Him. The English Standard Version says, "Surely He has bore our grief and carried our sorrows... He was wounded for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace." (Isaiah 53:4-5) These experiences had three effects upon Christ that are of great benefit to the child of God.

What Christ suffered made Him sympathetic. Just as we have sympathy when our children are hurting due to disease or some other physical affliction, Christ sympathizes with us. Even we see our children being chastised because of willful sin, we sympathize with them. So does Christ. When we suffer from some form of persecution, Christ sympathizes with us.

What Christ suffered gave Him the quality of mercy. Our Lord understands what we are going through when we face trials or the results of being in the battle for the souls of mankind. In one of John Foster's books, he tells of a time in the thirties he came home to find his daughter in tears. She had just heard a news bulletin on the radio saying that Japanese tanks entered Canton. Most people heard the news release and felt only a feeling of regret. To most people around the world it made little difference.

Why then did the news bring tears to John Foster's daughter? Because she had been born and raised in Canton. To her Canton meant home, a nurse, a school and friends. She understood what the people she loved were going through. It is the same with Christ. He knows how we are feeling and what we are going through and He is able to do something about it according to God's purpose in our lives.

The Lord's victory over His suffering enables Him to help us. The best person to get advice or direction from is the person who has gone through what you are going through. Because the Lord is so aware of our lives He is fully able to give us sympathy, mercy and power to get us through while maintaining our faith in Him.

There must also be a heart of believing and obedience

A heart that trusts in the mercy of God expresses a life of thankfulness to the Lord. There must also be a heart of believing and obedience. Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God." Our key text today says, "When [Jesus] saw them, He said, 'Go, show yourselves to the priests.'" And as they went, they were cleansed." (Luke 17:14)

The lepers in Luke's gospel had faith to cry out to Jesus for mercy and then had the faith to do what he had said to do. This is the great legacy of faith that has made the Christian life express a trust that the whole world takes note of. When God's Word says something and the Holy Spirit has brought revelation of a truth found in Scripture, then it is the responsibility of the child of God to walk in obedience.

The lepers took off for the temple to fulfill what was written in the Word of God. The Bible says as they obeyed they were cleansed from leprosy. It is when the child of God seeks out the Lord in faith and then puts his faith into action that he experiences the power of God in his life.

An attitude that expresses public gratitude

The last heart attitude that must be reside in those who desire to live a life of thankfulness is an attitude that expresses public gratitude. One of the ten lepers did have such a heart. Our key text says, "One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him." (Luke 17:15) Christ expects us to return to Him continually giving worship because He is the source of our power to live the life He wants expressed before a sinful world. 1 Peter 2:9 says, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light..."

Christians who have received the graciousness of the Lord in their lives should proclaim it to others, telling others that they have received blessing from God so they may be encouraged to seek the Lord's intervention in their lives. There should be heartfelt thankfulness given to Christ.

If you take a dish of sand and put small metal shavings in the sand, you could run your fingers all through the sand and most likely find only a few of them.

However, you take a magnet and sweep through the sand it will draw those metal shavings out of the sand.

An unthankful life has no drawing affect. In contrast, a life that expresses thankfulness to the Lord Jesus has a drawing affect and causes people to consider the life that can be found in Christ Jesus. It is God's will that His children live in a way that brings glory to God.

The Holy Spirit's call to Christians at this time is to make this thanksgiving season the beginning of a more committed life that responds to the graciousness of Christ. Recognize your need to let Jesus be Lord of your life. Live a life of true humility before the Lord Jesus. Cry out to Christ, He longs to be merciful to Christians. Make it a point to seek the counsel of God's Word and express a life of belief through obedience and praise to the Lord continually.

Let us pray!!!!

Let us pray! Visit our Free Website www.standatthecrossroads.com