

Daily Devotional, April 16, 2021 Remember to Give Thanks Always

“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. Luke 17:12-16 (NIV)

Leprosy is a disease that is mentioned throughout the Bible. It is a disease that has ravaged people for centuries. When a person becomes infected, it begins to damage the body. Over time the skin begins to degenerate, and the body becomes disfigured. We now know what causes leprosy, and we can even cure it. During Jesus’ life, the only way to treat a person with leprosy was to isolate those infected. Not only were they sick, but now they faced the removal from society and everyone they loved.

The pain and seclusion experienced by those with leprosy was dreadful. It is no wonder that those ten men who were infected went looking for Jesus. When they found him, they called to Jesus. They begged for mercy. Jesus, full of mercy, healed them all. He restored their bodies and sent them back into society to be reunited with their loved ones. What is most intriguing is that the only one to return and thank Him was a Samaritan, the most “unclean” of them all, as he was a “foreigner”, not a part of the Jewish people who Jesus was sent to favor in His ministry. Not one of the Jews returned to thanked Him. Does Jesus reject the man’s thanks? No, instead he tells him that his faith has made him well. The one thought to be most unclean was the cleanest one of all!

Over the past week I have thought about this scene in Luke’s Gospel. I have found great comfort in this encounter between Jesus and these ten men. It reminds me that, even in the midst of trials, sickness, and isolation, we can go to God, filled with the knowledge that God’s actions are guided by mercy. God does not abandon us. God is with us, and God cares for us. It is God’s presence and God’s loving mercy towards us that offers us peace in these difficult times. And like the Samaritan, we too should be grateful for every mercy and touch of grace that God has blessed us with. As hard as it feels right now to be grateful for what we have had to all endure over this past year, we are still here, there is still hope for the future, for us and for our loved ones.

Let us all be thankful for the blessings of the scientists and doctors who have been gifted with the abilities to create and engineer vaccines at such a rapid pace and to distribute them throughout the many channels available to us without haste. And let us not forget all of the other cures that they have helped bring about for others dealing with numerous other afflictions in the midst of this great trial. God is in this in every way, directing every step of each process. Let us give thanks, just as the one Samaritan who returns to do so, and not be negligent and unthankful as those nine who fail to return to worship Jesus for his mighty miracle of healing and life-giving grace.

Let the focus of our prayers never fail to recognize how fortunate we are to have a God who loves us so dearly. And also to recognize Jesus, the “chip off the old block” who loved us to take things one step further to love us that we might have life beyond this temporary one.

Prayer: You remind us over and over in your Word that you are always with us. You tell us not to fear and you draw us close into your Presence. You are our place of refuge in the storms that surround us right now Lord. You are the only place we can find peace and strength. May your words of truth and power strengthen us in our inner being and may we turn our hearts to you. Thank You for your healing and goodness. We look to you today, for it is your plan we seek. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.