



St John Lutheran Church

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Text: Luke 17: 11-19

Theme: "Giving Thanks Using the Lord's Prayer"

17:11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

17:12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

17:13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

17:14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

17:15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

17:16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17:17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

17:18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

17:19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

The ten men in this Gospel all suffer from a particular need that is well-known to them and to the society in which they live: **They are lepers. This need is** always with them, occupying most of their attention and shaping every aspect of their lives. **Not only does** this contagious skin disease eat your skin and flesh away and leave oozing sores behind... **but** it also separates you from the rest of the world. It makes you an outcast, undesirable and forgotten, and finally, it kills you.

So when these men petition Jesus, begging Him to have pity upon them, they know very well the thing for which they ask. **And Jesus answers** the prayer, directly, completely, and without hesitation: **"Go, show yourselves to the priest.' And as they went, they were healed"** (Luke 17:14).

One man then returns. "He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him-and he was a Samaritan" (Luke 17:16) **Please notice the** plain fact that the man was a Samaritan and that fact that he was the only one of ten men to give thanks to God for good gifts received. **Please focus upon** flow of action here... **the** man realized his need, **God met his** need, and then man thanked God for meeting his need. **"He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him."**

Accordingly, we may conclude from this Gospel that thankfulness to God hangs on two hinges. **The main hinge**, obviously, is the realization that God has fulfilled your needs. **But the lesser hinge, the first hinge** which creates your faithfulness, is the very fact that you realize you have any needs at all. **The leper has** no reason to thank Jesus if the leper never realizes he has leprosy. **The sinner has** no need to thank God for salvation if he does not yet first realize his sin. **And you, dear** saints, you would

have no reason to gather here and pray your prayers of thanks and praise, **except** for the God-given realization that you need those things which you have been given by God. **The leper's need** led to Jesus' direct act, which in turn led to an expression of thankfulness for that which Jesus had done.

Now some of you have quite particular, acute needs, just like the leper. **You know what** those needs are better than anyone else... **be they** health needs or financial needs or whatever. **In addition to** these well-known needs, each and every one of us has all of the needs that are common to man. **We all need** to eat and drink... **we all** need shelter and safety... **we all** need companionship and compassion. **When you realize** your needs, whatever they may be, bear the thought process of this Gospel in mind: **The leper's need** led to Jesus' direct act, which in turn led to an expression of thankfulness for that which Jesus had done. **And then, make** this thought process your own: **My need leads** to Jesus' **indirect** act, which in turn leads to my thankfulness for that which Jesus has

done. **Your need likewise** leads to Jesus' **indirect** act, which in turn leads to your thankfulness for that which Jesus had done.

And please notice: I said that your need leads to Jesus' **indirect** act, rather than His direct act. **The leper enjoyed** his Lord's voice spoken directly to his ear, "**Go, show yourself to the priest.**" **Jesus now meets** your needs with the same, quick compassion and mercy, **but He does so indirectly.** **That is, He** meets your needs through others. **He provides you** with parents, or employment, or other benefits in order to feed, clothe, and shelter you. **He provides you** with government agencies to protect and comfort you. **He places other** people in your life, **not only** for you to serve them **but also** that they may serve you. **He gives you** the stuff of the sacraments and the preached Word of the Gospel to give you eternal life and **to guard you** against any doubt that your sins truly are forgiven before your Father in heaven. **Jesus acted directly** to serve the leper... **He now works indirectly** to serve you. **But the action** remains the same: **Your need leads** to Jesus' act, which in turn leads to your thankfulness for that which Jesus had done. **May that which** this leper has done also be that which you do: "**He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him.**"

But how shall you measure all that your Lord has done for you? **How shall you** take stock... **not** only of those great gifts of life and salvation by His cross... **but** also of those countless, lesser gifts that He so abundantly and so patiently provides? **Today, we will** order our prayers of thanks according to the Lord's Prayer, that great and perfect prayer our Lord Himself has given us to pray. **And you may** feel free to take such prayers home with you and use them in your private lives as well on this day of thanks, during which we pray together as God's congregation and family.

In the Lord's Prayer, we have a summary of everything for which we could ever need to pray. **There is no** need you can ever experience that cannot be found in one of the petitions of this prayer. **There is no** need in this prayer that your Jesus will not meet; **indeed,** that He has not already met for you in His suffering and death.

Do you fear for your employment or your livelihood? **Pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."**

Do you struggle with the guilt of past sins? **Pray, "Forgive us our trespasses."**

Do you suffer weakness or doubt or depression of any sort? **Pray, "Lead us not into temptation" and pray "Deliver us from evil."**

But pray with the thought process of this Gospel in mind... **Your need leads** to Jesus' act, which in turn leads to your thankfulness for that which Jesus had done. **So when you** pray in the first petition, "**Hallowed by Thy Name,**" thank God that His name is indeed holy, and that He has given you His name so that you may participate in His holiness. **When you pray,**

"Forgive us our trespasses," thank God that your trespasses and sins are indeed forgiven, because of the fact that your Lord Jesus became the trespasser for you and bore the debt of your sin upon His cross. **When you pray, "Give us this day our daily bread,"** do so with the thankful realization that your God indeed opens His hand and satisfies the desires of every living thing.

This, dear saints is how we shall pray... **not** because we must, but because we are able. **We pray thanks... not** because we are small children who must learn their manners... **but because** we are the people of the new life created in Christ Jesus. **We pray thanks** because this is what faith does... **in fact,** this is what faith is. **We pray thanks** because God has cured the leprosy of our sins and He has provided meat for our tables and clothes for our backs. **We pray thanks** because a much greater home waits for us beyond the one in which we now live. **We pray thanks** because our need has led to Jesus' act, and He has indeed acted mightily for us, yesterday, today and forever. **In the Name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit...Amen.**

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