

Thankfulness

The Leper Who Came Back

Foundation

Bible passage : Luke 17.11-19

The miracles of Jesus show his authority over the material and spiritual world, over people, sickness, sin and death. But the gospel writers were selective about they recorded (see John 20.30-31) and often what they record has significance in addition revealing Jesus' authority.

The fact that Jesus was able to tell the ten lepers to go and they were healed as they went is another incredible revelation of Jesus' power over sickness. But it is what follows where both Jesus in what he said and Luke in what he recorded that draws our attention.

“praising God with a loud voice... he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks.”

The Ten lepers were healed of their terrible and distressing disease. The main point in what follows is clear, though all ten received a great gift in being healed only one thought to give thanks to Jesus and could be bothered enough to go back and do so.

We often take for granted things that are given to us or things that are done for us, and we don't say than you. The children can probably think of times they did not say thank you and a parent or teacher had to remind them to do so. In a similar way everything we have comes from God, but we can just take it for granted and don't think to say thank you to God.



But this incident has two twists. The first is that the leper who came back was a Samaritan. For historical reasons these people and the Jews did not get on, and Jesus is clear elsewhere that the Samaritans were mistaken in their views. Luke did not know or did not know about the other nine, but it seems likely that some, if not all were Jews. Therefore, just as it was the outcasts more than the respectable people who responded most readily to Jesus, here it is the outsider who was made sure he gave thanks to Jesus.

The second twist comes when Jesus said to him “your faith has made you well”. They had clearly gone to see Jesus, standing at a distance, because they believed Jesus might be able to heal them. What is more when Jesus told them to go to see the priests they went, even though at that point nothing had changed in their condition. But for the other nine that appears to be all there was to it - they believed something about Jesus, but that was not true faith. The leper who went back wanting to thank Jesus demonstrated that he had true faith in Jesus. True faith in Jesus changes people's lives because as people understand His love for them, they respond in love and gratitude.



We often take things for granted and forget to give thanks. Thankfulness to God is one of the fruit of genuine faith.