

Giving Thanks in Word

The Leper who came back

Foundation

Bible passage: Luke 17.12-19

This incident has featured previously in both units 6 in Module 3 when the purpose was to look at the ministry of Jesus. But it was also used to think about thankfulness in unit 1.

In the Bible there are different types of leprosy, in the Middle Ages all sorts of skin diseases were considered to be leprosy whilst in modern times the term is used in a more limited restrictive way.

What is clear from leprosy as described in the Bible, is how unpleasant it was for those who had the ailment. It was very uncomfortable and could lead to other complications and death. But because it could be quite contagious those who had the disease were to be kept separate from the general population to restrict its spread. In modern times the response to the coronavirus has been met by similar attempts at distancing and isolation. Therefore, lepers were often shunned by others and might end up finding themselves in groups or colonies because they could not infect one another.

“one of them .. returned ...
giving Him thanks.”

So it was that Jesus was in a certain village between Samaria and Galilee when he was met by a group of ten lepers. They, knowing the fears about their condition kept their distance but clearly like everyone else they had heard about the amazing things Jesus had been doing. Whereas on another occasion Jesus touched a leper to heal him, here Jesus simply told the lepers to go and



Guérison de dix lépreux by James Tissot (1836-1902) - The Brooklyn Museum.

show themselves to the priests. This was the way set out in the Old Testament law. When they did so they were found to be cleansed.

What is shocking is that having been cleansed nine of the ten did not return to give thanks to Jesus. Only the one man did, and Jesus made it clear that in the case of that man his faith had made him well!

It is very easy for any of us to take things for granted and fail to give thanks where it is due. There may be times when the children have received help or a present from others but have forgotten to say thank you. But we also have so much for which we should give thanks to God but often do not do so.

Booklet:

What did the leper give thanks for? - Healing
How did the leper give thanks - He went back to Jesus, praised God, fell on his face at Jesus' feet and gave thanks.

Reflection:

Have you sometimes forgotten to give thanks?
Are there times when words are not enough?
Perhaps you might just give a big hug or shout out with joy. How does this link to what we



It is very easy to take for granted the good things God gives to us and, like the nine lepers, fail to give Him thanks.