

THANKSGIVING AND FAITH

Luke 17:11-19

November 18, 2007 Sunday a.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. Sometimes we're like the little boy who came home from a birthday party. His mom met him at the door and asked, "How as it?" He showed her all of his candy and trinkets and cheap toys they'd given out. She said, "Wow, that's a lot of stuff! Did you remember to say, 'thank you'?"

"Well," he said, "I was going to, but when I was in line at the door and the girl ahead of me said, 'Thank you' to the woman, the woman told her, 'Don't mention it.' So I didn't."

B. READ TEXT

1. The story of the lepers is a story about faith-the faith to receive God's blessings.
2. In the first century, leprosy was a death-sentence. (Ostracized, etc.).
3. Jesus told them to go and show the priests that they had been healed even though at that moment they hadn't.
4. It was only when they acted on their faith that they were healed.
5. Let's notice two things in this story that tie faith to thanksgiving.

I. FIRST, OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S BLESSINGS IS AN INDICATION OF OUR FAITH.

- A. According to one of our Baptist publications there were 90 Native Americans and 52 Pilgrims at that first Thanksgiving in 1621 at what would become Plymouth, Massachusetts. The *Mayflower* launched on September 6, 1620 with 102 passengers, as well as at least two dogs. One baby was born during the trip and named *Oceanus* Hopkins. About half of these emigrants died during the harsh conditions of their first winter. Still these Pilgrims, which means "wanderer", were thankful for God's blessing of surviving the winter in America.
- B. In our text, only one lone healed leper responded to God's blessings with thankfulness. Why didn't the others return too?
1. In their excitement at being healed perhaps they simply forgot.
 2. Perhaps they were grateful for being healed but were afraid to give Jesus the credit for fear of the Jewish religious leaders.
 3. Perhaps they intended to thank Jesus later.
 4. Maybe they just took their healing for granted.
- C. Jesus' question about where are the other nine reveals how seriously God considers our gratitude and thanksgiving.
1. We're experts at asking for God's blessings.
 2. However, like the nine in our story we may not be good at expressing our thanks to God.
 3. What if God's blessings don't come? What if our prayers aren't answered the way we think they should be? What if the cancer persists? What if the marriage or job is lost after all?

If for no other reason we should still thank God for the strength to endure and survive yet another experience, just as the first Pilgrims did.

II. THE SECOND THING WE CAN SEE IN THIS TEXT IS THAT DEMONSTRATING OUR FAITH LEADS TO MORE BLESSINGS.

- A. What benefit did the returning leper receive?
1. Obviously he was healed, but so were the other nine, even though, they didn't return to say thanks. So what was the benefit of returning?
 2. He received a spiritual blessing when Jesus said to him "Rise and go: your faith has made you well."
 - a. He not only received a physical healing, he also received a spiritual one as well.

- b. What was the spiritual benefit? His salvation! That's what the phrase "made you well" means.
 - c. If he had not returned he would not have been blessed this second time. He would not have been saved.
- B. Is it possible we are missing God's second blessings because we fail to give thanks for his other blessings?
- 1. Physical and material blessings are wonderful.
 - 2. Spiritual blessings, though, are far more lasting and satisfying.
 - 3. We all know people who have been abundantly blessed physically and materially, yet are still miserable.

CONCLUSION

- A. Thanksgiving is about thanking God for past blessings.
- B. Its also about expecting God's future blessings, both material and spiritual.
- C. These second blessings come only to those who express thanks for God's first blessings.
- D. Let's not miss out on these second blessings because we fail or refuse to be thankful for God's first blessings.