

Every parent has had to do it. With the gift giving season approaching, they will probably have to do again. When a gift is opened, the child may get excited at what is inside the present. They may even squeal in delight. Still, the parent may have to remind them, “Did you say, ‘Thank you?’” It is considered the polite thing to do. It is a way of expressing gratitude for something which has been done for you. It has been drilled into us by our parents — don’t forget to say, “Thank you.” As we get older, we generally are pretty good at remembering to do it. When it is a present for our birthday or for Christmas, we may even write a thank you note to express our deep appreciation for what has been given to us.

Still, there are times when we also need to be reminded to say, “Thank You!” This evening we have gathered in the Lord’s house for that very reason, because we do not want to forget to say, “Thank You!” to Him for the many blessings which we have received from Him. It is so easy to begin to take His blessings for granted, and then we may forget to go back to thank Him for what He has done for us — we have come to expect those blessings to come our way. It is for that reason even our nation has set aside a national day of Thanksgiving, to remind us all not to forget to say, “Thank You!” So this evening, before we sit down tomorrow at the feast to enjoy some of the blessings which God has given us this past year, may we also be reminded, *Don’t Forget To Say, “Thank You.”* 1) Recognize what Jesus has done for us, and then 2) Return to thank Him.

In the account before us, we read, **As Jesus 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!”** (12-13) Leprosy was an incurable disease, and anyone who came down with that disease was separated from the rest of society, and forced to call out to anyone who came near that they were unclean — an extreme form of social distancing. These men must have heard about Jesus’ power to heal, for when Jesus approached, they called out to Him, asking Him to have pity upon them and their condition.

This is exactly what Jesus wants us to do, isn’t it? *Call upon me in the day of trouble*, is Jesus’ invitation to us, and His promise is that He will deliver us. (Ps 50:15) So we take Him up on this invitation. When our sins trouble us, when our health fails, when the weather is not how we would prefer, when we face a pandemic in life, we do call upon Him in those troubles, and ask Him to deliver us from them, just as these lepers did. According to His promise, Jesus does hear, and He does answer our prayers.

When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed. (14) Jesus heard their request, but His answer was probably not quite what they expected. He did not heal them immediately. He told them to go to the priests, who were the ones authorized by God to announce a person cleansed of his leprosy. Still, the ten men took Jesus at His word, trusting that something special was in store for them, and set out for the priests. While on their way, they discovered that their leprosy was gone. Jesus had healed them, just as they had asked! What an amazing blessing! How their hearts must have been filled with joy, and their steps quickened now that they had received this healing from Jesus! They knew what a miracle this was, and they knew Who had given them this blessing.

The same thing can be said in our lives as well. How many times do we not take to the Lord in prayer every trouble and trial which we feel in our lives. Jesus does hear, and He does answer our prayer for His help and healing. As we appreciate all that He does for us, our hearts will also be eager to acknowledge what He has done for us. But that is where the problem lies, isn’t it? We have a tendency to take for granted the blessings which Jesus gives to us. When we come to His house with a soul burdened by our sin, and we hear Him announce to us that our sins are all forgiven, that we are His dear children who have a place reserved for us with Him in heaven — do we appreciate the wonderful gift which has just been announced to us? Or do we yawn a little because we have heard that announcement so many times before. When we leave the Lord’s house and join our family in our fine homes and sit down at the feast

prepared for us to enjoy, do we realize how wonderful all of that is, or do we expect it all to be ours because of our hard work and sacrifice to bring it to our family?

The more that we open our eyes really to acknowledge the many blessings we have been given, the more we should be reminded to say, "Thank You!" to the One Who gives us these blessings. That is why it is good for us to set aside this day each year to stop for a moment to recount the wonderful blessings which we have received. May we not take them for granted, but recognize all that Jesus has done for us. Then we will truly desire to return to give Him thanks.

That is what one of the healed lepers did. **One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice.** (15) When he realized that he had been healed of this incurable disease, there was only one thought in his mind — not to continue on his journey to the priests, but to go back to say "Thank You!" to the One Who had given Him that blessing. There must have been some sort of discussion with the other nine before he left them, but we will never know what was said. What we do know is that this man could do only one thing when he recognized the blessing that had been given to him, and that was to go back to Jesus to thank Him. There was nothing more important to him at that moment because he appreciated the gift which had been given to him.

And he did not go back quietly either. Did you catch what he did — he praised God in a loud voice. He wanted everyone to know what had happened to him, and Who it was that had given him such a wonderful blessing. I can only imagine the stir which he must have caused. Everyone must have come to know what had happened to him and Who it was that had given him this blessing. Then, when he got to Jesus, **He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him.** (16) Not only did he thank God for this wonderful gift, he also fell at Jesus' feet to thank Him for this blessing. He simply could not stop himself from expressing his deep appreciation for the healing which he had just received. In humble reverence, he bowed lowly before his benefactor, and thanked Him for this gift of healing.

Jesus truly appreciated this act of thanksgiving. We know this from the hurt in His voice when He asked about the other nine who had not returned. He was not putting down this one man who had returned, but there was sadness in His voice as He pointed out that the others did not feel the need to properly express their thankfulness to Him by returning to give Him thanks.

This evening, as we have gathered in the Lord's house for this national day of thanksgiving, we have done so like that one leper who returned to give thanks. We have recognized where the blessings we have received have come from, and Who it is that has given them to us. We have decided that there was nothing more proper for us to do than to come to give Him thanks for these blessings. And it fills our Savior's heart with joy to have us do so. But we may not always remember to say, "Thank you" as we ought. Each night before we go to sleep, we have many things to ask of our Savior for the coming day, but we do first remember to thank Him for the blessings which He has given us throughout the day now drawing to a close? Do we also need that reminder to say, "Thank you"?

There are many ways of saying "Thank you." The smile on the face of a child, the excitement of their actions, are a way of saying "Thank you!" Sometimes there may even be hugs given in appreciation. All of that was in addition to the words which the parents reminded them to say for the gift given. May we remember to say thank you to the Lord for His gifts, but may we also show our thanks to Him in our attitudes and our actions each day of our life, just as the healed leper came back with a loud voice, praising God, and falling at Jesus' feet in thankfulness. May we continually return to our Savior with our voice, with our thoughts of appreciation, as well as with our lives showing Him how much we appreciate all of His gifts each day.